

D K

32

.L732219

1991

23767666

DK

32

.L732219

1991

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



3 1293 00773 3920

1-337217

WITHDRAWN

LIBRARY

Michigan State University

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

217

WITHDRAWN

PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.  
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY

FEB 27 2017

WITHDRAWN



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2019 with funding from  
Kahle/Austin Foundation

# Reflections on Russia

---



CCRS SERIES ON  
CHANGE IN CONTEMPORARY SOVIET SOCIETY

Nicolai N. Petro, Series Editor

*Reflections on Russia*, Dmitrii S. Likhachev, edited by Nicolai N. Petro, translated by Christina Sever, with a Foreword by S. Frederick Starr

*Russia Beyond Communism: A Chronicle of National Rebirth*, Vladislav Krasnov

*Christianity and Russian Culture in Soviet Society*, edited by Nicolai N. Petro

*Self-Government and Freedom in Russia*, Sergei Pushkarev, with an Introduction by Nicholas V. Riasanovsky

*Christianity and Government in Russia and the Soviet Union: Reflections on the Millennium*, Sergei Pushkarev, Vladimir Rusak, and Gleb Yakunin

Published in cooperation with  
the Center for Contemporary Russian Studies  
Monterey Institute of International Studies

---

# Reflections on Russia

---

Dmitrii S. Likhachev

EDITED BY  
Nicolai N. Petro

TRANSLATED BY  
Christina Sever

WITH A FOREWORD BY  
S. Frederick Starr

Westview Press  
BOULDER • SAN FRANCISCO • OXFORD

*CCRS Series on Change in Contemporary Soviet Society*

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Copyright © 1991 by Westview Press, Inc.

Published in 1991 in the United States of America by Westview Press, Inc., 5500 Central Avenue, Boulder, Colorado 80301-2847, and in the United Kingdom by Westview Press, 36 Lonsdale Road, Summertown, Oxford OX2 7EW

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Likhachev, Dmitrii Sergeevich.

[Selections. Russian. 1991]

Reflections on Russia / by Dmitrii S. Likhachev ; translated by Christina Sever ; edited by Nicolai N. Petro.

p. cm. — (CCRS series on change in contemporary Soviet society)

Translation from the Russian.

Includes index.

ISBN 0-8133-7743-9

I. Soviet Union—Civilization. I. Petro, Nicolai N. II. Title.

III. Series.

DK32.L7322I7 1991

947—dc20

91-17304  
CIP

Printed and bound in the United States of America



The paper used in this publication meets the requirements of the American National Standard for Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials Z39.48-1984.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

# Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	ix
<i>Foreword</i> , S. Frederick Starr	xi
<b>1 Reflections on Russia</b>	<b>1</b>
Nature. Spring. Native Land.	
Simple Kindness, 1	
Nature and Kindness, 3	
Expanse and Space, 6	
More About Kindness, 10	
Nature and the Russian Personality, 16	
About Russian Landscape Painting, 20	
Nature in Other Countries, 23	
Ensembles of Art Monuments, 34	
Gardens and Parks, 35	
Pushkin and the Nature of Russia, 42	
The National Ideal and National Reality, 47	
Patriotism Versus Nationalism, 53	
The Greatness of Kiev, 62	
The Ecology of Culture, 77	
<b>2 On National Feeling</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>3 The Baptism of Rus' and     the State of Rus'</b>	<b>97</b>

<b>4 The Experience of a Thousand Years: A Preliminary Assessment</b>	119
<b>5 Pangs of Conscience</b>	139
<b>6 Memory Overcomes Time</b>	153
<b>7 Russia</b>	159
<i>About the Book and Author</i>	181
<i>Index</i>	183

## Acknowledgments

The fifth book in the CCRS Series on Change in Contemporary Soviet Society brings to a close our study of the changes occurring in the USSR, against the backdrop of Russia's history. This translation of Dmitrii Likhachev's erudite analysis of Russian history and culture is the product of many scholars' contributions. Christina Sever served as translator and text editor, aided by Dr. Vladislav Krasnov, Liudmilla Cole, Elena Tsytkin, Eduard Kayukov, and Dr. Harvey Mayer. Special thanks to Rebecca Ritke of Westview Press for her enthusiasm, guidance, and patience throughout. The Library of Congress transliteration system was used, with the exception of commonly accepted proper names. I alone bear responsibility for any errors remaining in the text.

*Nicolai Petro*  
Series Editor



## Foreword

If the spirit of an age is reflected in its heroes, then Dmitrii Sergeevich Likhachev may well be one of the keys to understanding the present era of reform in Russia. In 1989 the popular pro-reform newspaper *Arguments and Facts* polled its readers to determine who among deputies to the new Congress of People's Deputies were considered most outstanding. Fifteen thousand responses flooded in. A number of people received strong votes, among them the famed dissident Andrei Sakharov and political leaders like Boris Yeltsin or the newly elected democratic mayors of Moscow and Leningrad. Only one, however, had a more favorable ratio of positive to negative votes than Likhachev. Thus, while Sakharov had the most total votes, he also received seventy-five negatives. Likhachev had only one.<sup>1</sup>

Dmitrii Likhachev's daily schedule reflects the public esteem in which he is held. Letters and telegrams pour in from every corner of the USSR, both from organizations and individuals. These contain pleas for help, requests for assistance, entreaties for the revered man to lend his name to some worthy cause, expressions of thanks for something he has written or done, or simply revelations of conscience from unknown persons who have come to trust Likhachev. To millions, he combines the roles of public ombudsman, civic conscience, moral preceptor, and personal confessor. Those turning to Likhachev include both the educated and uneducated, the elderly and the very

---

1. See the analysis of this poll in *Orbis*, Winter 1990, pp. 107-108.

young. One must look far to find another person to whom greater responsibility has been entrusted by more diverse people.

Most remarkable of all is the fact that Dmitrii Sergeevich Likhachev is a quarter century past the normal retirement age and had never held public office until very recently. Far from being a veteran activist, Likhachev spent three score years in the realm of pure scholarship, his field being philology and his area of specialization being the arcane world of medieval Russian manuscripts. His secondary scholarly interests, if anything, have pulled him still further from the public mainstream. Until recently he wrote very little on immediate questions of the day, but Likhachev has produced a shelf full of monographs and articles on such seemingly irrelevant themes as laughter in ancient Russia, the comparison of Russian and European ideas on gardens, and links between the cultures of Bulgaria and Russia a millenium ago.

This elderly scholar was selected in 1986 to preside over the Soviet Culture Fund, a kind of national foundation established under the patronage of Raisa Gorbachev to protect the legacy of Russian culture. The Culture Fund in turn named him deputy to the new Congress, where he quickly established himself as both more fiercely independent and more closely in touch with the aspirations of the broader public than his colleagues.

From the moment he first addressed the Congress, Likhachev sounded a clear message. Not long before that session a devastating fire had broken out in the great library of the Academy of Sciences in Leningrad. In this disaster, a kind of "Chernobyl of culture," Likhachev saw in microcosm the plight of the country as a whole. This underscored his conviction that all that is living and good from the past is imperilled, and must be harbored carefully for the future. "I interpret interest in the past as concern for the future," he has written, and this has been his credo in the Congress of People's Deputies.

\* \* \*

Dmitrii Likhachev was born in St. Petersburg, the capital of the Russian empire, in 1906. His parents were members of the intelligentsia, that group of educated Russians with a broad commitment to the life of the mind and to civic responsibility that was

rare among the population at large. The Likhachevs were privileged, in that they had money to frequent the imperial Mariinskii (now Kirov) Ballet, buy books, and live in comfortable urban apartments or fashionable *dacha* [summer home] suburbs in the former Finnish territories northwest of the city.

Young Likhachev was sent to the best private schools, including the Gymnasium of the Philanthropic Society and the renowned K. I. Mai Gymnasium, where some of the most eminent figures in Russian science, arts, and letters had been educated. But there was nothing snobbish about Likhachev's background. The fancy apartments came with his father's job as one of Russia's leading electrical engineers, while the Mai Gymnasium recruited the promising sons of doormen, as well as of bankers.

In secondary school Likhachev was introduced not only to the major West European languages, including English, but also to drawing. Years later he was to use this training to contrast Russian and West European culture, and also to expand his study of early Russian literature into art and iconography. Thanks to this, generations of Likhachev's students learned how to perceive history not only through the written word but through painting, architecture, and urban topography.

Neither Likhachev nor his family took any part in the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, which he described as "somehow standing off to the side for me." At the time of this national upheaval, Likhachev Sr. was managing the electric generating plant at a typographical factory in the capital. The director, one Ilia Ionov, chose to spend several years abroad, during which time he entrusted his private collection of rare early Russian books to the Likhachevs. Dmitrii plunged into them and resolved to devote his life to the study of ancient Russian culture. Throughout the mid-1920s he studied at the Philology Faculty of Leningrad State University.

There were many student circles at Russian universities in those years, and Likhachev participated in one of them, a light-hearted group whose members took walking tours in the summertime, wrote humorous poems and songs, and generally had a good time. Parodying the name of the newly baptized Communist Academy of Sciences, they called themselves the Cosmic Academy of Sciences. In 1928 such frivolity was a serious mistake, however, and Likhachev, along with

fellow members of the Cosmic Academy, was rounded up and sent to prison camp in the far north, where he was to remain six-and-a-half years.

He spent nearly a third of this time on the banks of the White Sea in the notorious prison created by the tsars in the ruins of the seventeenth-century fortress-monastery of Solovetsk. His fellow prisoners included many distinguished leaders of the old Russian intelligentsia, and also some of the toughest swindlers, thieves, and murderers in the land. Not one to waste an opportunity, the young philologist began collecting the colorful argot of the criminal underworld, as narrated to him by his camp mates. The resulting study, issued in the prison journal, was Likhachev's first scholarly publication.

The last four-and-a-half years of his internment were spent at the construction of the White Sea Canal, one of Stalin's most brutal projects, in which hundreds of thousands perished. Likhachev served as a train dispatcher and somehow survived. He thus entered the ranks of Russian thinkers--first among them being Dostoevsky--whose world view was shaped in part by their prison experiences. Far from bearing any grudges, Likhachev came to look back on his prison years as essential to his intellectual and moral development. At the same time, in various autobiographical sketches issued over the years (and as recently as 1987) Likhachev found it convenient to pass over his prison years in silence.

Upon his release from the White Sea Canal project, Likhachev returned to Leningrad and found work as an editor at the Academy of Sciences' press. At the age of thirty his scholarly career finally began in earnest. Eventually he produced a dissertation on writings from the ancient Russian city of Novgorod and joined the staff of the Institute of Literature of the Academy of Sciences. Housed in an early nineteenth-century building on Vasilevskii Island in Leningrad not far from the former home of the Mai Gymnasium, the "Pushkin House," as it is called, was to be Likhachev's intellectual home for half a century.

During the Nazi encirclement of Leningrad, Likhachev was one of those who remained in the city. Half his family and friends perished during the blockade, but he nonetheless continued to work. Friends recall spotting him on bitter cold nights in 1942 posted on the roof of the Pushkin House prepared to fight any fires that might be caused by bombardment. A poignant sight! In the archives within the building

were preserved Pushkin's manuscripts and those of other luminaries of Russian literature. High on the rooftop, like some figure in a Chagall painting, shivered the future champion and defender of all that is most valuable yet perishable in Russian culture.

The post-war years were immensely productive for Likhachev, resulting in the publication of countless books and monographs. While continuing to focus on his beloved early Russian literature, he also ranged into other themes as diverse as the novels of Gogol and Dostoevsky, the poetic prose of Boris Pasternak, and the intellectual topography of St. Petersburg. Graduate students competed to study with him. Historic preservationists consulted with him in the 1960s when Dostoevsky's last house was threatened with demolition. Families who had inherited old Russian icons or paintings turned to him for advice on what they should do with their treasures. Gradually, this very private scholar found himself addressing a larger audience with essays on such topics as "The Social Responsibility of Literary Studies" and "History, the Mother of Truth." By the time Dmitrii Likhachev reached the normal retirement age in the late 1960s he had already embarked on his further career as civil leader.

\* \* \*

It is quite impossible to summarize in a few pages Dmitrii Likhachev's scholarly work of a lifetime. A convenient overview, however, can be found in the thoughtful essay by Francoise Lesourd, "Une expression nouvelle de l'idée nationale russe: Dmitri Lihachev" (*Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, (XXVIII) (3-4), July-December, 1987, pp. 323-346). Dipping into Likhachev's life's work at any point, however, one is struck by his remarkable ability to combine the most specific and the most general insights. On the one hand, he believes in concreteness; his regard for evidence and hard facts would arouse the admiration of any lawyer. Yet on the other hand, he manages always to find the link between these and his most sweeping themes. Likhachev relishes generalization, and in the midst of the most meticulous reconstruction of facts he often takes flight in pages of lyrical prose that belie his passion for the grand themes of Russian history.

Likhachev's firm views on the hoary "Varangian controversy" epitomize this duality. This theory holds that the first Russian state in the city of Novgorod was created not by Russians but by Norsemen ("Varangians") from Scandinavia. Likhachev sifted the literary and archaeological evidence and reached the conclusion that this hypothesis is more myth than reality. His argument turns on linguistic minutiae that engage the interest only of the most ardent philologists. However, Likhachev draws implications from his study that are breathtaking in scope. Russia did not have to be drawn into the European mainstream by Norsemen, Likhachev argues, because it was already part of that mainstream through its involvement with the world of Orthodox Christianity. Long before Mikhail Gorbachev began speaking of "our common European house," Likhachev had shown that Russia's dwelling place in Europe had been standing for nearly a millennium.

In a series of further studies, Likhachev analyzed ancient Russia's participation in the larger world of Byzantine civilization. In its language, poetics, art, and architecture, ancient "Rus" represents a distinctive variant within the larger orbit of the Eastern Mediterranean world. It may be true that Russia did not experience the Renaissance, as generations of scholars and polemicists have claimed. But Likhachev argues that it participated fully in a "pre-Renaissance," thanks to its intimate involvement with the same culture of Constantinople and the Balkans from which leaders of the Italian Renaissance also drew their texts and inspiration.

It is exhausting to contemplate the sheer labor involved in Likhachev's scholarship. Meticulous surveys of the lives of scores of medieval chroniclers are but one example of his penchant for labor-intensive projects. Yet for all the variety of Likhachev's research, it returns again and again to a very few common questions: What is Russia? What does it mean to be Russian? How has Russian culture addressed the question of the individual's relationship to other persons, to society, to nature, to God? And above all, what is the balance between continuity and change in Russian civilization?

Predictably, Likhachev's answers to these questions are not simple. His arguments abound in nuances which would be lost on most non-specialists, but which reflect fault lines dividing rival schools of historical thought. Nor are Likhachev's conclusions always consistent

over time. Never the dogmatist, he has always been open to fresh information and insights.

Whatever the issue before him, Likhachev frames it with an independence and detachment that has astonished his Soviet contemporaries, even if it has gone largely unnoticed in the West. Over a half century in which Marxism-Leninism was considered the sole basis for true scholarship, Likhachev steered his own course. He rejected not only the tendentious answers of party-line researchers but also the very questions they posed and the terminology with which they framed these questions.

Nowhere is this more clearly evident than in his many discussions of what we might now call the "mentality" of medieval Russia. To the Marxist faithful, medieval Russia was merely another feudal society, with certain peculiar features arising from Russia's social structure, its location astride Eurasia, and from the backwardness of its development. But for Likhachev, medieval Russia constituted a distinctive civilization within the European whole, a culture in which individuality was subordinated to cooperative values. This ethos was both rooted in and broadened by Orthodox Christianity, which acknowledges the individual's subordination to a collective whole yet affirms individual experience as a "given." Hence Likhachev is interested both in the communal whole and the various strains of individualism running through Russian thought. By embracing both sides of the polarity of individual and society, Likhachev deftly resolves one of the most "cursed questions" of Russian and European thought.

Unlike the Marxists, Likhachev's conception of Russia's past is organic. Official Party historians contrasted "progressive" Christian elements in medieval Russia to "regressive" pagan elements. For the seventeenth century they would ferret out "progressive" secular elements and juxtapose them to the "regressive" religious elements. Likhachev rejects all this, preferring to see each period as an integrated whole and to stress the long-term continuities which give wholeness to Russian life in its entirety. For Likhachev, there are no watersheds, whether the era of Prince Vladimir, Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, or Lenin.

Rejecting simple notions of progress, Likhachev urges his readers to accept each historical phenomenon on its own terms. It is true that old Russian literature does not exalt the individual author, yet

neither the writers nor the readers of the thirteenth century perceived this absence of freedom as a constraint. The written word, Likhachev argues, was less a channel for personal expression than a sacral rite. It is our task to stretch our minds to grasp this.

Such paradoxes are common with Likhachev. Baroque art, he reminds us, is exuberant and joyful, yet he finds a tragic sense in the baroque art of Russia. In a similar vein, he revels in the concreteness of medieval Russian literature, yet underscores the way in which its "symbolic systems" succeed in putting the reader in touch with abstract and eternal issues. Further, Likhachev attacks the notion that it was necessary for foreigners (e.g. "Varangians") to establish the Russian state, yet he then enumerates the various nations from which the Russian princes drew members of their entourages.

By such means, Likhachev cautions his readers against embracing any of the one-sided conceptions of Russian history that have been so popular in the twentieth century. He is a truth-seeker, and hence a quintessential representative of Russia's intelligentsia.

All this helps explain how Likhachev has stimulated and provoked his readers for half a century. It does not, however, explain why he has inspired them. For this we must look to the deeper values permeating his work, specifically to his vision of a new sense of Russian nationhood, his lyrical voice, and his compelling call to conscience. Crystallized in a number of powerful essays produced in the past five years, these values contain the key to the extraordinary position in Russian life which Dmitrii Likhachev has come to occupy.

\* \* \*

No country has ever gone as far as the USSR in elevating optimism to the status of a national cult. For half a century barrel-chested orators bombarded the public with talk of the "radiant future" and the "gleaming heights" which the country was destined to attain.

Against this background, Dmitrii Likhachev's mood of deep gloom and profound foreboding is all the more arresting. Where official spokesmen see endless progress, Likhachev perceives a declining level of culture. Where official statisticians hail the march of literacy, Likhachev underscores the declining interest in the classics of literature. Language itself has been degraded, and not simply by the

semi-educated masses. Since 1953 he has meticulously noted down all the grammatical mistakes in Russian committed by luminaries of the Academy of Sciences at their periodic meetings.

Likhachev reminds us that the physical heritage of Russian culture has suffered as much as the language. Churches have been reduced to rubble, and historic cities leveled in order to erect monuments to the grandomania of bureaucrats. True, a few fragments have been preserved and even painstakingly restored. But these, he argues, have been "theatricalized," turned into Soviet Disneyland devoid of life.

Facing such ruin, it would not be surprising if Likhachev had turned into a cultural pessimist. What separates him from other purveyors of gloom in the USSR is that his foreboding leads to action. Where people half his age have withdrawn from the fray, Likhachev has waded into the depths of struggle, holding up a banner of renewal. At the heart of Likhachev's positive message is the simple concept of "cultural ecology." All elements of culture are interrelated, just as culture and nature are intertwined. The present task, Likhachev argues, is to save from material death all in both culture and nature that is deathless in spirit.

As a preservationist, Likhachev is utterly democratic. He is as prepared to give battle over the protection of some rustic wooden *izba* or wood-block printed chap book as over a palace or gold-embossed chronicle. Nor is he concerned just with material things. The Orthodox Christian faith of traditional Russia, village lore, family histories, and even the utopian enthusiasms of avant garde artists rank as protected species with him.

Likhachev's goal is to put Russians back in touch with their essential selves and thereby to foster a new national ideal. He is a Russian through and through and believes that a Russian is bound to flourish best within and through his culture. Not suprisingly, Likhachev worries greatly about youth and supports all efforts to reconnect young Russians with their culture. An enthusiast, Likhachev peppers his speech with such time-worn phrases as "the broad Russian soul" or the "truth-seeking" character of Russia's intelligentsia. His goal is to renew and perpetuate the realities standing behind such cliches.

Is this learned academician a nationalist? Shortly after Likhachev was named head of the Culture Fund, this charge was

levelled against him by many journalists, particularly in the West. But the label does not fit. Likhachev himself insists that nationalism is a pathology, a "manifestation of a nation's weakness." He proudly counts himself a patriot, but abjures the vainglory and deceit of nationalism.

The gulf separating Likhachev from narrow nationalism is evident in his enumeration of Russia's faults. He is blunt in decrying the violence of Russian history from Ivan the Terrible through Stalin. He acknowledges the achievements of Peter the Great but considers the brutality of his reign inexcusable, particularly in light of the fact that so much that he championed was coming to pass even before his accession to power. Surveying Russian history as a whole, Likhachev states that "there was in the Russian people not only much good but also much that is bad." Conversely, he is quick to point out that even Russia's positive attributes are not unique and that each of them can be found in other cultures elsewhere. Nationalism implies exclusivity, to which Dmitrii Likhachev is unalterably opposed.

Here again, Likhachev's strength lies in what many see as a paradox: his unflinching readiness to acknowledge all the dark sides of Russian history and yet remain, in the end, an ardent patriot. His call to affirm the positive amidst all the dross is central to his message, as is the fervor with which he issues that call. In his scholarship, Likhachev had frequently written of the "passion and temperament" of Russian art, of the "lyric principle" in Russian culture, and of the emotional intensity infusing everything from folk lyrics to avant garde painting. These qualities abound in Likhachev himself. He is analytic yet passionate, and his call to embrace the beauty of the nation's heritage springs as much from the heart as from the mind. Here is that rarest human type, the realist who acknowledges all the flaws of that which he loves, but loves it all the more for the good in it.

No less important than Likhachev's affirmation of a new national idea for Russia is the call to conscience which he issues to every individual person. He laments that Russians have nearly lost the ability to listen to their consciences. Unless renewal takes place at the level of each individual, he argues, it will never take place in society at large. As a historian, Likhachev stresses the communal spirit of early Russia but then goes on to trace the slow rise of individualism from the seventeenth century onward. Acknowledging that both collectivism and individualism are part of the Russian character, Likhachev in the

end gives special emphasis to the sacredness of the individual person. No wonder that he identifies the portrait as the most characteristic form of Russian art, and hails such great individual creators as the composer Mussorgsky or the painter Malevich. One finds no longing for some lost communitarian past in Likhachev. At bottom he is a modern and individualistic European, yet one who is unwilling to jettison certain collective values created over the millennia.

Who then, is Dmitrii Sergeevich Likhachev? Philologist, scholar, historian, social philosopher, art critic, preservationist, cultural ecologist, activist, and patriot--these are among the many titles which fit him perfectly. Above all, however, Likhachev is a moralist. Speaking in universal terms, he pleads for his fellow Russians to affirm what decent people have always affirmed and to protect what decent people have always protected. "There are no little lies and big lies," he writes, since truth is indivisible and absolute. At a time of national renewal, he appeals to his fellow Russians to be honest with themselves and each other, both in words and deeds.

As millions know, he practices what he preaches. In 1975 a petition against Andrei Sakharov was circulated among members of the Academy of Sciences. When Likhachev refused to sign, so-called "hooligans" (looking for all the world like plain clothes cops) beat up the elderly scholar. More recently, when he saw the Culture Fund slipping increasingly into the hands of nationalists, he wasted no time in distancing himself from that body. On big issues and small he has followed his own credo, thereby inspiring others to do the same.

In recent years, few have outdone Likhachev in their savage criticism of the systematic desecration of Russian culture by Russians. Reading his dire warnings or hearing his earnest voice at the podium of the Congress of Peoples' Deputies, one cannot avoid the feeling that perhaps the roots of Russian culture have finally died, and that the patient is beyond recovery. Yet from this pessimistic scene Likhachev characteristically snatches a large measure of optimism. Dostoevsky once noted Russians' uncanny ability to castigate themselves and to expose their flaws before the whole world. From this the great novelist drew the paradoxical conclusion that precisely the capacity to point out one's flaws contains the seeds of regeneration. As Likhachev puts it, "When a person is thus conscious of his illness he has found the source of his recovery and the ability to cure himself of disease." This is the

hope which has sustained Dmitrii Sergeevich Likhachev, and which he trusts might sustain Russia.

*S. Frederick Starr*  
Oberlin, Ohio

## Reflections on Russia

**Nature. Spring.**  
**Native Land. Simple Kindness.**

We Russians write a great deal about our roots, the roots of Russian culture, but we are doing very little to properly inform the general reader about these roots. Our roots include not only ancient Russian literature and Russian folklore, but also all of the culture that surrounds us. In Russia, as in a large tree, both the widespread root system and the huge crown of leaves come in contact with the crowns and roots of other trees. We do not know some of the simplest things about ourselves. And we do not think about these simple things.

I have gathered separate notes that I have made on various occasions, but they all revolve around one theme--things Russian--and I have decided to present them to the reader.

Naturally, when notes are made on different occasions, they are quite different in style. At first I thought I would organize them and give them a unified format, to impart structural and stylistic harmony, but then I decided to let them remain disorderly and unfinished. The disorderly nature of my notes reflects the random nature of the occasions when they were written: some are in answer to letters; others are notes in the margins of books I had read or reviews of manuscripts; still others are simply entries in notebooks. Notes must remain notes; in this way they will be less pretentious. I could write volumes about things Russian and never exhaust the subject.

What I say in my notes is not the result of my research; it is only a quiet argument, an argument against the extremely widespread misconception both here and in the West that the Russian national character is one marked by extremism and refusal to compromise. It is "mysterious" and in every way pushing the limits of the possible and the impossible (and in essence, evil).

You will say, "but even in an argument proof is required!" But has anyone proved the validity of this mistaken impression, widespread in the West and even somewhat in our own country, of the Russian national character and of the features of Russian national culture, particularly the literature?

My understanding of things Russian has developed from many years of studying ancient Russian literature (but not just from that) and seems more convincing to me than this negative impression. Of course, here I will only touch on these impressions of mine, and only for the purpose of refuting the other impressions which circulate and become in their own way like "Icelandic moss," which tears away from its roots in the autumn and "wanders" through the forest, kicked by feet, washed by the rain or moved along by the wind.

National qualities are endlessly rich. And there is nothing surprising in the fact that each person perceives these national qualities in his own way. This is precisely what I am doing in these notes about things Russian when I speak of my perception of what can be called Russian--Russian in the disposition of the people, Russian in the characteristics of nature, of cities, of art and other things.

Each individual's perception of national qualities does not necessarily contradict another's individual perception, but rather adds to it and deepens it. No one personal perception of national qualities can be exhaustive or indisputable, nor can it even simply claim to be the main one. And my perception of all that is Russian does not exhaust even the main aspects of the Russian national character. In these notes I speak about what seems the most valuable for me personally.

The reader has a right to ask why I think that my notes about things Russian are worthy of his attention if I myself acknowledge their subjectivity. First of all, because in anything subjective there is still some objectivity, and second, because I have spent my whole life studying Russian literature, particularly ancient Russian literature and

folklore. This life experience of mine, it seems to me, also deserves some attention.

### Nature and Kindness

A young French translator once came to see me in Komarovo.<sup>1</sup> She was translating two of my books, *The Poetics of Ancient Russian Literature* and *The Development of Russian Literature from the Tenth to the Twelfth Centuries*. It is natural for the French to have many difficulties with quotations from ancient Russian texts and Russian folklore. They have, so to speak, the usual problems: how to communicate all the nuances which exist in Russian, the various endearments and diminutives--all the vibrancy of feelings which is so well reflected in Russian folklore in its relation to the environment, people and nature. But there is one area which had already caused her serious difficulty. In one of her lamentations Irina Fedosova<sup>2</sup> speaks about marrying again after the death of her husband:

Poor wretch that I am, again I throw myself  
After another father's son...

Francoise asked: "What does this mean? Did she marry her husband's brother or another son of the father of her former husband?" I said, "No, this is simply an expression. Fedosova is saying that her second husband also had a father." Francoise was even more surprised: "But every man either has or had a father." I answered her, "Yes, that is so, but when you wish to remember a man with tenderness, that idea automatically revolves around the fact that he had relatives, perhaps children, perhaps brothers and sisters, a wife or parents. In the winter I saw a man run over and killed by a truck. The crowd of people talked less about him than about the fact that he might

---

1. Komarovo is a resort town near Leningrad on the Bay of Finland--trans.

2. Irina Fedosova was a nineteenth century Russian storyteller. She wrote of the world views, daily lives, and social protest of Russian peasants in byliny, lyric poetry and songs--trans.

have children, a wife or parents left behind at home. They pitied them. This is a very Russian trait. And our sympathy is often expressed with words such as *rodnen'kii* [one's very own, native], *rodimen'kii* [one's very own, but more intimate], *synok* [son], *babushka* [grandmother].<sup>3</sup> Francoise exclaimed, "So that's what that means! On the street I asked an elderly woman how to find a street I was looking for, and she called me *dochen'ka* [an affectionate term for daughter]." "Exactly. She wanted to address you affectionately." "Does that mean that she was trying to say that I could have been her daughter? Didn't she notice that I was a foreigner?" I laughed: "Of course she did. But that is precisely why she called you the pet name, because you were a foreigner, new to the city, and you had asked her for directions." "Ah!" Francoise was fascinated. I continued: "If you are a foreigner, that means you are alone in Leningrad. By calling you a pet name, the old woman certainly did not mean to say that you were her daughter. She called you that because you have a mother or you are a mother. And in just this way she tried to make you feel at home." "How wonderfully Russian!"

Later, we discussed where and when in Russian poetry or literature endearment is expressed in the fact that a person has relatives. For example, in the *Tale of Grief and Misfortune*,<sup>4</sup> unusual tenderness is shown towards its dissolute hero, a young man, and the story begins with the fact that this young man had parents who cherished and took care of him and even taught him how to live. But when things turn bad for the young man in the *Tale of Grief and Misfortune*, he sings a "happy little tune" which begins as follows:

My mother bore me without tears;  
 She combed my curly locks;  
 She dressed me in expensive little trousers  
 And looking me over from every angle, she admired  
     me.  
 Do the expensive little trousers fit well?  
 A child in expensive little trousers is priceless.

---

3. All diminutive forms of the original words.

4. A seventeenth century prose story, a highly metaphoric and poetic variation of the Prodigal Son story--trans.

This means that the young man has a beautiful memory of himself with his mother--how his mother looked him over and admired him.

Francoise remembered that Chekhov's *Three Sisters* was performed in her hometown of Besancon, and the French truly love this play. Of course this story is specifically about three sisters, not three friends or any three women. The fact that the heroines are sisters is very special and necessary for the Russian audience, so that the spectator will empathize with the sisters and have sympathy for them. Chekhov brilliantly discerned this characteristic of the Russian reader and audience.

Then we began to recall how many words in the Russian language have the root *rod* [family]: *rodnoi*, *rodnik*, *rodinka*, *narod*, *priroda*, *rodina*. . . [native, spring, birthmark, people, nature, native land]. And *poroda* [breed] is the best that nature has to offer in combination with peoples' efforts. Even rocks belong to some *poroda* [species].

These words somehow flow together--*rodniki rodimoj prirody, prirozhdennost' rodnikam rodnoy prirody* [springs of dear nature, innateness in the springs of mother nature]. A confession to the earth. The earth is the most important element in nature. The earth giving birth. The earth of harvest. And the word *tsvet* [color]--from *tsvetov* [flowers]! *Tsveta tsvetov* [colors of flowers]! A Rublevian combination,<sup>5</sup> would be like cornflowers among ripe rye. Or perhaps the blue sky over a field of ripe rye? All the same, cornflowers are a weed, and too bright a weed at that, intensely blue, not like the pale blue in Rublev's "Trinity." A peasant does not consider cornflowers his own, and Rublev's blue is not dark blue, but more like sky blue. The sky is gleaming with a dark blue shade, the color of the sky, under which ears of rye are ripening in the field (this word--*rozh* [rye]--also contains the root associated with *rost* [growth], *urozhai* [harvest] and *rozhdienie* [birth]. Rye is what the earth brings forth [*rozhi rozhaet zemlia*]).

---

5. Andrei Rublev (c. 1365 to c. 1430) was perhaps the finest Russian icon painter. He was famous for his brilliant, complex, and distinctively Russian color combinations. The "Trinity" is Rublev's most famous icon--trans.

### Expanse and Space

For Russians, nature has always meant *svoboda* [liberty], *volia* [freedom] and *privol'e* [spaciousness]. Listen to the language: *poguliat' na vole* [to walk at will], *vyiti na voliu* [to go free]. Freedom is the absence of worries about tomorrow; it is security and blissful immersion in the present.

Open space has always been dear to the hearts of Russians. It spills over into concepts and ideas which do not exist in other languages. How, for example, does freedom differ from liberty? It differs in that freedom is unrestricted, it is liberty combined with expanse, with anything not circumscribed by space. The concept of crowdedness or that of depriving a person of space, on the other hand, is linked with the concept of melancholy. To oppress a person is above all to deprive him of space, to crowd him. A Russian woman sighs: "*Okh, toshnekhon'ko mne!*" [Oh, I feel so hopeless!]. It not only means that she feels bad, but that she feels hemmed in; there is nowhere to go.

Unrestricted freedom! This freedom was felt even by barge haulers, those who walked along the tow path, harnessed to the strap like horses, and even sometimes harnessed together with horses. They walked along the tow path, along the narrow path on the riverbank. Freedom was all around them. Their labor was forced, but nature all around was unrestricted. People needed the great, open natural world with its vast horizon. This is why "*Poliushka-pole*" (Meadowland)<sup>6</sup> is such a favorite among folk songs. Freedom is the vast space through which a person can walk and walk, wander, swim with the current of wide rivers and for great distances, and breathe the free air, the air of the wide open spaces. People can inhale the wind deeply into their lungs, feel the sky over their heads, and be able to move in different directions at will.

What is unfettered freedom? It is well defined in Russian lyrical songs, especially robbers' songs which, however, were composed and sung not by robbers at all, but by peasants longing for unrestricted

---

6. A popular World War II song about soldiers going to war, riding across an open field--trans.

freedom and a better lot in life. In these robber songs the peasant dreamed of having no cares and of taking revenge on his enemies.

The Russian concept of courage is boldness, but boldness is courage in large scale action. It is courage multiplied by the space in which to exhibit this courage. It is impossible to be bold if you are courageously sitting out a siege in a fortified place. The word *udal'* [boldness, daring, impetuosity] is very difficult to translate into foreign languages. The concept of motionless courage was incomprehensible even in the first half of the nineteenth century. Griboedov laughs at Skalozub, as he puts the following words in his mouth: ". . .on the third of August we sat in a trench; they presented me with a ribbon for my companion." Griboedov's contemporaries would have considered this ridiculous--how can you possibly "sit," especially in a trench where you cannot move at all and receive a military decoration for this?

The root of the word *podvig* [heroic feat] also contains "movement": "po-dvig" [literally, by movement]--that is, something which is accomplished by movement. This action is prompted by the desire to move something that is stationary.

In a letter written by Nikolai Rerikh<sup>7</sup> during May and June 1945 and kept in the files of the Slavic Anti-Fascist Committee in the Central State Archive of the October Revolution, Rerikh makes the following point:

The Oxford dictionary legitimized several Russian words now accepted in the world; for example, the words *ukase* and *soviet* are listed in this dictionary. Another word should be added to this list--the untranslatable, variously defined Russian word *podvig*. As strange as it seems, not one European language has a word with anything close to this meaning. . .

And later,

Heroism, proclaimed by the sound of trumpets, cannot convey the immortal, all-inclusive idea invested in the Russian word *podvig*. A heroic act is not quite it; valor is not comprehensive enough; self-denial is also not it; improvement does not hit the mark.

---

7. Nikolai Rerikh was an early twentieth century Russian painter, archaeologist, traveller, and public figure. He was known for leading the movement to preserve cultural monuments--trans.

Achievement has a completely different meaning because some kind of completion is implied, while podvig is infinite. Take a number of words from various languages signifying the ideas of movement, and not one of them will be equivalent to the compact but precise Russian term podvig. How beautiful this word is; it means more than movement forward; it is podvig.

And further,

One can see podvig displayed not only in the leaders of a nation. There is a multitude of heroes everywhere. They all work; they all study constantly and move true culture forward. Podvig means movement, swiftness, patience and knowledge, knowledge, knowledge. And if foreign dictionaries contain the words ukase and soviel, then they must without fail include the best Russian word--podvig...

Later we shall see how profound Rerikh was in his definition of the nuances of the word podvig, a word which expresses the innermost traits of a Russian person.

But let us continue our discussion of movement.

I recall from my childhood seeing a Russian dance on a Volga steamboat owned by the company *Kavkaz i Merkurii* [Caucasus and Mercury]. A dock worker (they called them stevedores) was dancing. He danced, throwing his arms and legs out in all directions and in a frenzied state he ripped his cap from his head, throwing it far into the crowd of spectators and cried: "I am torn apart, I am torn apart, oh, I am torn apart!" He tried to occupy as large a space as possible with his body.

A long Russian lyrical song also expresses the longing for expanse. And it is sung best of all out in the open, in a field.

The ringing of a bell had to be heard as far away as possible. When a new bell was being hung in a bell tower, people were sent to listen in order to find out how far away it could be heard.

Fast driving is also a striving for space.

This same special attitude toward expanse and space can be observed in the *byliny*.<sup>8</sup> Mikula Selianinovich walks behind the plow

---

8. Byliny are the Russian national epic songs about epic heroes who defended their people from foreign invasion. The singular form of the word is *bylina*--trans.

from one end of his field to the other. It takes Prince Vol'ga three days to overtake the young Bukharan<sup>9</sup> stallions.

They heard the ploughman in the clear field  
 The ploughman, the dear ploughman.  
 They rode across the clear field each day;  
 They did not meet the ploughman.  
 And they rode from morning to evening the next  
 day;  
 They did not meet the ploughman.  
 And they rode the third day from morning to  
 evening;  
 And they met the ploughman.

There is also a sensation of space in the introductions to the byliny. These introductions describe Russian nature as well as the desires of the Bogatyri.<sup>10</sup> For example, Prince Vol'ga's wishes:

Vol'ga wanted to be very wise:  
 To swim in the blue ocean like the ling cod,  
 To fly in the clouds like the falcon,  
 To roam the clear fields like the wolf.

Or in the introduction to the bylina "About Solovei Budimirovich":

How high are you, skies,  
 How deep are you, ocean,  
 An expanse as wide as the whole earth,  
 And deep as the whirlpools of the Dnieper.

Even a description of the towers which the courageous bodyguard of Solov'ei Budimirovich built in the garden at Zabava Putiatchna contains this delight before the immensity of nature:

Beautifully decorated are the towers:  
 In the sky the sun--in the tower the sun,  
 In the sky the moon--in the tower the moon,

---

9. Bukhara is a region in the Central Asian republic of Uzbekistan--trans.

10. Bogatyri were the epic heroes of the byliny--trans.

In the sky the stars--in the tower the stars,  
In the sky the dawn--in the tower the dawn,  
And the whole beauty of the earth.

Delight in the wide open spaces also pervades ancient Russian literature--it is found in the Chronicles, in *The Lay of the Host of Igor*, in *The Tale of the Ruin of the Russian Land*, in the biography of Alexander Nevsky, indeed in almost every work of the most ancient period from the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries. Everywhere events either encompass a huge territory, as in *The Lay of the Host of Igor*, or take place in the midst of huge spaces and have repercussions in far distant countries, as in the biography of Alexander Nevsky. For a long time Russian culture has considered freedom and expanse the greatest aesthetic and ethical blessing of mankind.

Now look at a map of the world: the Russian plain is the largest on earth. Did the plain determine Russian character, or did the Eastern Slavic tribes settle on the plain because it suited their spirit?

### More About Kindness

The trite descriptions of the Novgorod and Pskov churches do not seem right to me. They are described as being full only of power and might while being unadorned and laconic in their simplicity. Above all, they are too small for that.

It was as if the hands of the builders fashioned these churches, but did not face them with brick and did not trim their walls. The builders placed them on hills, where they were more visible, allowing them to "see" to the bottom of rivers and lakes, and to welcome "sailors and travellers." The builders built them in harmony with nature and did not draw up plans beforehand on parchment or paper, but made their drawings directly on the ground. They made adjustments and corrections only during the actual construction, paying close attention to the surrounding landscape.

Moscow churches are quite like these simple, cheerful structures, painted white and in their own way adorned like a bride. Multi-colored and asymmetrical, like flowering shrubs, golden-topped and friendly, they are placed as if in jest, with a smile, but sometimes

even with the gentle mischief of a grandmother giving her grandson an amusing toy. It is understandable that in ancient literary works it was said in praise of the churches: "The churches enjoy themselves." And this is wonderful. All Russian churches are joyous gifts to the people, to a favorite street, to a beloved village, stream or lake. And like all gifts made with love, they are unexpected. They arise unexpectedly among the forests and fields, at the bend of a river or a road.

The Moscow churches of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries remind us of toys for good reason. It is not by chance that a church has eyes, neck, shoulders, feet and especially *ochi* [literally, eyes], that is, windows with or without *brovki* [eyebrows]. The church is a microcosm, like a microscopic world--a child's toy kingdom, in which a person occupies the central position.

In the endless forests, at the end of a long road arise the northern wooden churches, an adornment to the surrounding natural world.

The people of ancient Rus' understandably loved unpainted wood--so warm and fine to the touch. Even today, the village *izba* [peasant's hut] is full of wooden objects. A person cannot hurt himself badly there, and objects do not greet the host or guest with unexpected coldness. A tree is always warm; it is alive and somehow responsive.

All this speaks not of the ease of life, but of that goodness with which people met their difficult surroundings. Ancient Russian art overcomes the stagnation around a person, the distances between people, and reconciles them with the surrounding world. It is good.

The Baroque style, which arrived in Russia in the seventeenth century, is special. It became special particularly in Russia. It does not have the profound and rather heavy tragic nature of western European baroque. In Russian baroque there is no intellectual tragedy. It seems more superficial, but more cheerful and light, and perhaps even slightly frivolous. Russian baroque borrowed from the West only the external elements and used them for various architectural embellishments and inventions. This style is unusual for religious art. Nowhere else in the world is there such joyful and happy religious consciousness and such cheerful religious art. King David, the Psalm-singer, dancing before the Ark of the Covenant, is too serious compared with these cheery, variegated, smiling buildings.

This was true not only during the baroque period but even before it appeared in Russia. One need not walk far to see examples--St. Basil's church is an excellent one. At first it was called the Cathedral of the Virgin's Shawl on the Moat, but then the people christened it the Church of St. Basil--a holy "fool for the Lord," in whose honor one of its side altars was built. Basil was a holy fool. And actually, we need only enter this church to be astounded by its folly. It is crowded inside, and one can easily become disoriented. This church was understandably not permitted inside the Kremlin, but only on the outside, in the marketplace. It is an overindulgence, not a church, but a holy overindulgence and a holy joy. Concerning folly, it is for good reason that the Russian expressions--"Oh my little stupid one," "Oh my little fool"--are the most tender of all the Russian endearments. The fool in fairy tales turns out to be smarter than the smartest and happier than the most successful person: "The oldest fellow was smart, the middle son was so-so, the youngest was a complete fool," is how it is told in Ershov's *Konek-Gorbunok*<sup>11</sup> and told in a very folksy way. In the end the fool marries the tsarevna (daughter of the tsar), and the worst of all the horses, the ridiculously ugly Konek-Gorbunok, helps him accomplish this. But in the end Ivanushka obtains only half the kingdom, not the whole kingdom. And no one knows what he will do with this half-kingdom. Probably he will throw it away. A kingdom in which fools reign is not of this world.

The folly of the architecture of St. Basil's lies in its impracticality. It is ostensibly a church, but it is not a place to go and pray. If you go in, you will get lost. Many of its embellishments have no practical purpose. The architect just thought them up and made them (I almost said, "they were made"; indeed, there is much in this church that seems to have occurred by itself).

It is often asked why architects did something in one way and not in another. Architects would most likely answer, "in order to be more bizarre." And this bizarre church stands, marvelous and strange at the same time, and it is marvelous and strange in the middle of

---

11. Petr Pavlovich Ershov (1815-1869) was a Russian writer and teacher, most famous for his fairy tale, *Konek-Gorbunok* [The Little Hump-backed Horse]. It was very popular because of its satire of the tsar, bureaucrats and merchants, as well as its elegant poetry and folkloric quality--trans.

Moscow in its most visible and accessible place. In ancient Russia the "accessible" place was that point from which it was easiest to reach and to take the fortress by storm. Here enemies could actually breach and storm the Kremlin. But the church cheered the people, unlike the neighboring executioners' block, where edicts were proclaimed and executions carried out.

In the time of Ivan the Terrible, St. Basil's was built as a sort of challenge to order and strictness. Russian fools and holy fools did not so much attest to their own stupidity as they exposed the stupidity of others, especially that of the boiars<sup>12</sup> and tsars.

The fools' position in ancient Russia was next to the tsars; the fools sat on the steps of the throne, although this did not particularly please the tsars. You see the tsar sitting on his throne holding his scepter, and the fool sitting beside him holding his little whip and enjoying the love of the people. It looks as if Ivanushka the fool will become Ivan the tsarevich (heir to the tsar).

But St. Basil's was not built within the Kremlin walls at that time; Ivanushka did not manage to possess the kingdom although he possessed human hearts. And the half kingdom, which he receives in the fairy tale after marrying the tsarevna, is not a real kingdom.

It seems that "Papa" Ivan the Terrible himself envied Ivanushka the Fool's fame and played the part of the holy fool to the hilt. Ivan was married off endlessly; he split the kingdom in two in order to keep half the kingdom and established the *oprichnina* court<sup>13</sup> in Aleksandrova with much buffoonery. He even renounced the kingdom, placed the Cap of Monomakh<sup>14</sup> on the tsarevich Simeon Bekbulatovich from Kasimov, rode a simple horse drawn sledge (that is, he displayed a deeper humility by using a simple peasant's team) and wrote his own humble petitions to Simeon. In his messages to the

12. A category of nobility who were the senior members of the prince's bodyguard and served as the prince's councillors, military officers and administrative assistants--trans.

13. Instituted by Ivan the Terrible as a special bodyguard-type militia. Spurred on by Ivan's paranoid rages, they were often vicious in their enforcement of discipline--trans.

14. According to legend, the cap was bestowed upon Vladimir by the Byzantine emperor Constantine Monomachus to signify that Vladimir shared in the power of the Caesars--trans.

boiars and to foreign sovereigns, he joked that he was supposedly planning to enter a monastery. . . But in the end Ivan did not become Ivanushka. His pranks were vicious. In his petitions to Tsar Simeon he asked permission to "treat the people harshly"; he did not go about Moscow on the horse drawn sledge but was carried at top speed, running over people in the squares and on the streets. He did not deserve the people's love, although historians sometimes even tried to portray him almost as the people's tsar.

In return the fools went throughout Russia; they wandered around and spoke with the wild animals and birds and told jokes and taught the people not to listen to the tsar. Clown-minstrels imitated the fools and played pranks, pretending not to understand, pretending to laugh at themselves, but they taught the people; they taught. . .

They taught the people to love freedom, not to accept the airs and conceits of others, not to hoard kindness, lightly to tear themselves away from what they have acquired, lightly to live and lightly to wander their native land, to take in and feed wanderers, and not to accept any injustice.

The clown-minstrels and holy fools performed a heroic deed (podvig!)-a deed which made them almost saintly, and often made them true saints. Local gossip often declared the holy fools saintly and even the clowns as well. Remember that wonderful Novgorod fable, "Vavilo the Clown-minstrel."

But the clowns are not simple people--  
The clowns are holy people.

Some of the clowns' teachings remained in the hearts of the people, for people themselves create their own teachers. The ideal existed even before it was clearly realized. In Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's opera, "The Tale of the Invisible City of Kitezh," the people appeal to a bear: "Just show us, playful little bear, show us..." Here, V. Bel'skii, the author of the libretto, understood an important characteristic of the people.

The word *khoroshii* [good] in the Russian language signifies kindness above all. A Novgorodian wrote to his wife on a piece of birchbark: "Send me kind readings." A kind reading is a good reading. And kind merchandise is good merchandise, of high quality. Kindness

is a human quality, the most valuable of all. A kind man simply by his own kindness surmounts all human deficiencies. Long ago, in ancient Russia, kindness was not considered foolish. The fool of Russian fairy tales is kind, and consequently, he acts intelligently and will receive his due in life. The fool of the Russian fairy tale about the deformed horse, Gorbunok, caresses even the firebird, which has flown in to steal wheat, and then lets it go. Those who come after him will also do everything that is required in an hour of need. Kindness is always intelligent. A fool tells the truth to everyone because a fool knows neither polite custom nor any fear.

During the reign of Ivan the Terrible, during the worst of the terror, the people's kindness is revealed from time to time. How many kind images did the ancient Russian icon-painters portray in the second half of the sixteenth century: images of church fathers made wise by philosophy (that is, by love of wisdom), or of a group of saints enraptured by a song. How many small family icons of that time showed tender motherhood and concern for people! Hence, not all hearts in the sixteenth century were embittered. There were kind, humane, and fearless people. The kindness of the people was victorious.

Andrei Rublev's frescoes in the Cathedral of the Assumption in Vladimir depict a procession of people on their way to the Last Judgment. The people are going to infernal torment with bright faces; it is possible that in the world it is even worse than in the underworld. . .

The Russian people love fools not because they are stupid, but because they are intelligent. They are intelligent with a higher intellect which does not consist of cleverness and treachery toward others, nor of trickery and successful victimization for one's own selfish advantage. Rather this intelligence consists of wisdom that knows the true cost of any trickery, ostentatious beauty, or miserliness, that sees the value in being good to others, and consequently to one's self as a person.

The Russian people love not just any fool or eccentric, but only one who cares for the ugly horse, Gorbunok, who does not offend even a dove, does not cut down a little talking tree, and later will give what he owns away to others, will protect nature and respect his own parents. Such a "fool" will not simply win the beautiful woman, but will win an engagement ring from the tsarevna herself, and with it half a kingdom in dowry.

### Nature and the Russian Personality

I have already noted how strongly the Russian plain affects the character of the Russian people. In recent years we often forget the geographic factor in human history. But it exists, and no one has ever denied it.

But I wish to speak here about something else--about how man in his turn has an effect on nature. It is not some kind of discovery that I have made; it is simply another subject I want to consider.

Beginning with the eighteenth century and even as early as the seventeenth century, human culture was thought to be in opposition to nature. During this time a myth was created about the "natural man," close to nature and therefore not only unspoiled but also uneducated. Consciously or unconsciously, people believed that the natural state of man was ignorance. But not only was this belief profoundly mistaken, this conviction led to the idea that any manifestation of culture and civilization was unnatural and capable of corrupting a person, and that therefore it was necessary for him to be ashamed of his level of civilization and to return to nature.

The idea of human culture as a supposedly "anti-natural" phenomenon in opposition to "natural" nature became more entrenched with Jean-Jacques Rousseau and was evident in the distinctly Russian form of Rousseauism that evolved in the nineteenth century: in the *narodnik*<sup>15</sup> movement and in Tolstoyan views on the "natural man"--the peasant--as opposed to the "educated class," or intelligentsia.

This going "to the common people" in both a literal and a figurative sense led, in certain sectors of our society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to many delusions about the intelligentsia. The expression "the rotten intelligentsia" appeared, as well as contempt for this group as supposedly weak and indecisive. A false impression was created of the "intellectual" Hamlet as a constantly vacillating and indecisive man. But Hamlet was not at all weak; he was filled with a sense of responsibility; he vacillated not out of weakness

---

15. A member of a populist movement among the Russian intelligentsia of the second half of the nineteenth century--trans.

but because he was a thinking person, because he answered morally for his own actions.

A lie is told about Hamlet, that he is indecisive  
 He is decisive, rough and intelligent.  
 But when a sword is raised,  
 Hamlet is slow to be destructive  
 And looks through the periscope of time.  
 Without hesitation, the villains shot  
 The hearts of Lermontov and Pushkin...  
 (from D. Samoilov's poem,  
 "Hamlet's Justification")

Education and intellectual refinement are the very essence of the natural state of man; ignorance and stupidity are not a person's normal state. Ignorance or half-wittedness is virtually a disease. Physiologists can easily prove this.

In fact, the human brain is designed with a huge capacity. Even people with the most primitive education have a brain with the capacity of three Oxford Universities. Only racists think otherwise. But any organ which does not work to its full capacity becomes abnormal, weak, atrophied, and "ill." The mental illness in this case manifests itself above all in the realm of ethics.

The idea that nature is as a rule opposed to culture is invalid for another reason. Nature of course has its own culture. Chaos is not in any way a natural state of nature. On the contrary, chaos (if it exists at all) is an unnatural condition of nature.

How is the culture of nature expressed? We will speak of living nature. Above all it is alive as a society, a community. Vegetative associations exist; trees do not live haphazardly, but tend to live close to certain species while avoiding certain others. Pines, for instance, have as neighbors certain lichens, mosses, mushrooms, bushes and so forth. Every mushroom gatherer knows this. Certain rules of behavior are peculiar not only to animals (dog trainers and cat lovers know this, as do city dwellers), but also to plants. Trees stretch toward the sun in different ways, sometimes compactly in order not to disturb one another, but sometimes spreading in order to cover and protect another species of tree which is beginning to sprout in their protective shade. A pine grows under cover of an alder. After the pine grows up,

the alder dies out, having served its purpose. I observed this years-long process near Leningrad in the village of Toksovo. During the First World War all the pine trees were cut down, and the pine forest gave way to thickets of alders, which then nurtured little pine trees under their branches. Now a pine forest stands there again.

Nature is "social" in its own way. Its "socialness" is apparent in that it can live side by side with a person and be a good neighbor, if that person is, in his turn, sociable and intellectual.

The Russian peasant, over many centuries of labor, created the beauty of Russian nature. He plowed the ground and in so doing gave it certain contours. He took the measure of his field by walking across it with his plow. Boundaries in Russian nature are commensurate with the labor of a man and his horse--his capacity to walk with the horse behind a wooden or metal plow before turning back. Smoothing the ground, he removed all the sharp edges in it, all the lumps and stones. The Russian natural world is soft; it is cared for by the peasant in his own way. The peasant walking behind the metal or wooden plow or harrow not only created "little rows" of rye, but evened the borders of the forest, formed its edges and created a smooth transition from forest to field and from field to river or lake.

The Russian landscape was formed mainly by the efforts of two great cultures: human culture, which softens the sharpness of nature, and the culture of nature, which in turn has softened all the disruptions to its equilibrium which people unintentionally caused. The landscape was created on the one hand by nature, which was prepared to assimilate and protect everything that was disturbed by man in one way or another; and on the other hand, the landscape was created by man, who softened the ground with his labor and softened the landscape. Both cultures have in some ways improved each other and have produced in each other greater humaneness and freedom.

The nature of the Eastern European plain is gentle, without high mountains, but it is not merely flat. It has a network of rivers which serve as communication pathways, a sky which is not obscured by dense forests, and rolling endless hills with roads smoothly navigating all its heights.

And with what gentleness people have smoothed the hills, slopes and rises! Here the experience of the ploughman created an aesthetic of parallel lines, lines marching in unison with each other and

with nature, like voices in ancient Russian songs. The ploughman placed furrow next to furrow as if he were using a comb, placing hair next to hair. Thus in each hut, beam lies next to beam, block next to block; in fences, post stands next to post. The huts themselves are arranged in rhythmic formation next to the river or along the road, like a flock of animals going out to the watering hole.

The relationship of people and nature is thus a relationship of two cultures, each with its social or communal "rules of behavior." And their meeting is built on distinctive ethical foundations. Both cultures are the fruit of historical development. The development of human culture has occurred under the influence of nature for a long time (for as long as mankind has existed), while the exploitation of nature in comparison with nature's many millions of years of existence, is fairly recent and not always due to the influence of human culture. One (the culture of nature) can exist without the other (human), but human culture cannot exist alone. Nevertheless, during the past many centuries, a balance has existed between people and nature. It would seem that this balance should have kept both parts equal, while remaining somewhere in the middle. But no, the balance everywhere finds its own position and in different places is on its own particular basis, on its own axis. In northern Russia there was more nature, but the closer to the steppe, the more people there were.

Anyone who has been to Kizhi<sup>16</sup> has surely noted how a rocky mountain range extends along the whole island, as if along the back of some giant animal. A road runs along the range. This range was formed over hundreds of years. The peasants cleared their land of rocks--boulders and cobblestones--and piled them here by the road. An extended relief of a huge island was formed. The whole spirit of this relief was permeated by a feeling many centuries old. And it is no coincidence that the Riabinin family of byliny storytellers lived here on this island for many generations.

The Russian landscape with its heroic dimension seems to pulsate, now expanding out and becoming more natural, now condensing in villages, churches and cities and becoming more human.

---

16. An island in Lake Onega in the Karelian Autonomous Republic, northeast of Leningrad--trans.

In the village and in the city the same rhythm of parallel lines continues, those lines which began with the ploughed field. Furrow to furrow, beam to beam and street to street. Large rhythmic divisions are combined with small, separate ones. One turns smoothly into the other.

The city does not oppose nature. It goes out to nature through the suburb. *Prigorod* [suburb] is a word purposely created to unite the idea of *gorod* [city] and *priroda* [nature]. *Prigorod* is *pri gorode* [near the city], but it is also *pri prirode* [near nature]. A suburb is a village with trees and wooden quasi-rural homes. It clings with its garden plots and orchards to the walls of the city, to the ramparts and the moat, but it also clings to the surrounding fields and forests, taking some trees from them, some gardens, some water for its ponds and wells. And all this in the ebb and flow of hidden and visible rhythms--of ridges, streets, homes, beams and blocks of roadways and bridges.<sup>17</sup>

### About Russian Landscape Painting

In Russian landscape painting many works are devoted to the seasons of the year: autumn, spring and winter. These were favorite themes of Russian landscape artists throughout the nineteenth century and later. The main focus in these paintings is not the immutable elements of nature, but more often the transient ones such as autumn early or late, vernal waters, melting snow, rain, thunderstorms, the winter sun peeping out for a moment from behind heavy winter clouds, and so forth. In the nature perceived by Russian painters, there is no emphasis on enduring large objects like mountains or evergreens which do not change during the various seasons of the year. Everything in Russian nature is changeable in coloration and state. The trees at

---

17. There is a most interesting although drily named article about how ancient Russian cities were built--G. V. Alferova, "The Organization of City Construction in the Russian State in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Voprosy istorii* [Issues of History], No. 7, 1977, pp. 50-66; Idem., "Concerning the Issue of Construction of Cities in the Muscovite State in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Arkhiturnoe nasledstvo* [Architectural Inheritance], No. 28, 1980, pp. 20-28; M. P. Kudriavtsev and T. N. Kudriavtseva, "Landscape in the Composition of the Ancient Russian City," *Arkhiturnoe nasledstvo*, No. 28, 1980, pp. 3-12.

times have bare branches, creating the distinctive "picture of winter," then later they wear bright spring painterly leaves. The autumn forest in widely varying shades and richness of color. The diverse states of water, which takes on the hue of the sky or of the surrounding banks and which changes whenever there is a strong wind or even a gentle breeze (Ostroukhov's "Siverko"),<sup>18</sup> the puddles on the road, the varying color of the air itself, the fog, the dew, the hoarfrost, and snow both dry and wet. An endless masquerade, an endless festival of colors and lines and endless movement--within a year or within a single day.

Of course, all these changes take place in other countries as well, but in Russia are perhaps more noticed thanks to Russian landscape painting, beginning with the works of Venetsianov<sup>19</sup> and Martynov. Russia has a continental climate, and this continental climate produces an especially severe winter; an especially hot summer; a long spring overflowing with colors of every shade, each week bringing with it something new. A long, drawn-out autumn in which even at the very beginning the air has that unusual transparency sung about by Tiutchev and a special quietness peculiar to August; and then there is the late autumn so beloved by Pushkin. But in northern Russia, in contrast to the south, especially in places along the banks of the White Sea or White Lake, there are unusually long evenings when the setting sun creates on the water color modulations which change literally every five minutes--a whole ballet of colors--and also wonderfully long sunrises. There are moments (especially in the spring) when the sun "plays"; as if it had been cut by an experienced gem-cutter. The white nights and the "black" dark days in December provide not only a wide gamut of colors, but also an extremely rich emotional palette. And Russian poetry responds to it in all its variety.

---

18. Ilia Semenovitch Ostroukhov (1858-1929) was a Russian artist, famous for his landscapes, especially of Central Russia. "Siverko" (1890), considered his greatest work, hangs in the Tretyakov Gallery, where he was administrator from 1905-1913--trans.

19. Aleksei Gavrilovich Venetsianov (1780-1847) was a Russian painter, one of the founders of genre art in Russian painting. He began with portraits and caricature which was sometimes censored for its satire of government figures; later he depicted the beauty of the peasantry and nature--trans.

It is interesting that Russian painters who found themselves abroad sought these changes in the time of year and the time of day--these "atmospheric" phenomena in their landscapes. One of these exiles was the magnificent landscape artist, Silvestr Shchedrin.<sup>20</sup> He remained truly Russian in all his landscapes of Italy, thanks precisely to his sensitivity to all the changes "in the air."

Venetsianov was virtually the first Russian landscape painter to display this distinctive trait in Russian landscape painting. It was also apparent in Vasil'ev's early spring landscapes. It came to full bloom in Levitan's works. This inconstancy and changeability over time is a feature which somehow unites the people of Russia with its landscapes.

But we should not carry this to extremes. We must not exaggerate national characteristics or make them exclusive. National traits are only certain distinctive features, not basic qualities which other peoples lack. National traits bring people together; they intrigue people of other nationalities and do not isolate people from the national milieu of other countries; they do not lock nations inside themselves. Nations are not communities surrounded by walls, but harmoniously agreeable associations. Therefore, if I speak of elements that are characteristic of Russian landscape painting or of Russian poetry, then these same qualities are also characteristic of other countries and other peoples, although, it is true, to a different degree. The national characteristics of a people do not exist in themselves or for themselves, but for others. They are ascertained only with a view from outside and in comparison; therefore, other peoples must be able to understand them. In some other arrangement they must also exist among others.

If I say that the Russian artist is especially sensitive to the yearly and daily changes and to seasonal conditions, then the name of the great French artist, Claude Monet, immediately comes to mind, who painted the London bridge in the fog, the Rheims Cathedral, or one and the same haystack in different kinds of weather and at different times of the day. These supposedly Russian traits of Monet do not in

---

20. Silvestr Fedosievich Shchedrin (1791-1830) was a Russian realist painter and landscape artist--trans.

any way refute my observations; they only say that Russian traits are to some extent common human traits. The difference is one of degree.

Does the foregoing relate only to the realistic painting of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for example, to the painters' group, "World of Art"?<sup>21</sup> I appreciate the different schools of painting very much, but I must say that "art for art's sake" brings to mind paintings such as "Jack of Diamonds," "Ass's Tail," "The Blue Knight," and other works which are less influenced by the national traits which I have just discussed. This type of art is nevertheless associated with Russian "folk art" and with the art of needlework, even sign-painting, earthenware toys and toys in general, inasmuch as there is much that is playful, inventive and fantastic in this type of painting. Calling this type of art playful is actually praise because it is cheerful and mischievous throughout. Obviously this art had to be exhibited; it was so linked with noisy, sensational opening days. It was necessary to show it to a large audience; it must have startled and excited the senses. Russian culture of the beginning of the twentieth century was full of masquerade and theater in general, as was beautifully accentuated by Akhmatova<sup>22</sup> in "Poem without a Hero."

### Nature in Other Countries

I have long felt that it is time to respond to the question: Do other peoples not have this same feeling about nature; are they not in union with nature? Of course they are! I am not writing to prove the superiority of Russian nature over the nature of other peoples. Each people has its own union with nature.

In order to compare the different landscapes created by the combined efforts of people and nature, it seems to me to be necessary

---

21. World of Art, established in 1898, was both a group of painters led by Aleksandr Benoit, and an art journal--trans.

22. Anna Andreyevna (Gorenko) Akhmatova (last name a pseudonym) (1888-1966) was a Ukrainian poet, wife of Gumilev, and member of his Acmeist group of poets. Known for her lyrical poetry, she was basically silenced from 1921-1940, and then censured by Zhdanov until after Stalin's death when she could publish again--trans.

to visit the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as Spain, Italy, England, Scotland, Norway, Bulgaria, Turkey, Japan and Egypt. It is impossible to judge nature by means of photographs and landscape painting.

Of all the regions and countries I have listed, I can superficially judge only the Caucasus and England, Scotland and Bulgaria. In each of these "ethno-natures" the unique interrelationships of nature and people are always very touching, very moving, and attest to something very lofty in a person, or more correctly, in a people.

Just as in Russia, agricultural labor shaped nature in England. But this nature was created not so much by farming as by sheepherding. It is for this reason that there are so few bushes in England and such good grassland. Livestock "plucked out" the landscape and made it easily visible. Under the trees there were no bushes, and it was possible to see a great distance. The English plant trees along the roads and lanes and leave meadows and grass between them. It is no accident that cattle are an indispensable part of natural parks and English landscape painting. This was noted even in Russia. There were dairies and farms and grazing sheep and cattle even in the Russian tsars' natural landscape gardens, the taste for which was brought to Russia from England.

The English love parks almost entirely without bushes. They love the barren banks of rivers and lakes where the boundaries between the water and land are precise, smooth lines. They love solitary oaks or groups of old trees, copses standing in the grass like giant bouquets.

In the landscapes of Scotland, especially in the Highlands, which many (admittedly myself included) consider the most beautiful, the extreme succinctness of poetic feeling is startling. This is poetry stripped almost bare. It is no accident that some of the world's best poetry--the English "Lake School"--came from there. The mountains, having raised to their mighty slopes the meadows and sheep pastures, and the people following after them, inspire a special kind of trust. And people entrusted themselves and their livestock to the mountain fields and left the livestock without byre or shelter. In the mountains graze cows which have unusually thick, warm hair. They are accustomed to nighttime cold and mountain fog. There are sheep grazing there which give the best wool in the world and know how to spend the night huddled close together in their flocks. People wear

simple kilts there because these garments are easy to lay out and dry in front of a campfire, and plaids, which are just as convenient to dry by the fire and to wrap up in on damp nights. The fields are enclosed by *haecs*--fences made from stone. They were built by patient hands. The Scots did not want to build them from any other material than the native rocks. Therefore, the stone haecs are part of nature, just like our northern pole fences. Only their pattern is different.

In Bulgaria there is one quite surprising feature of the relationship between people and nature: the way people treat each other, their openness with each other. This feature was only somewhat noticeable in Pliska, the first capital of Bulgaria. The name Pliska comes from the same root as the name of one of the oldest cities in Russia--Pskov, which in ancient times was called Pleskov, a "brother" in name with Pliska. Both cities are located in a level place, which is also the source of their names (*ploskii* in Russian means flat; *plos'k* in Bulgarian). There are large stone blocks in the ruins of a magnificent palace in Pliska and in the ruins of the walls and of the roads and highways of Pliska. With their huge size and weight, these stone blocks are like an affirmation of the massive contours of the surrounding area. The Turkic Bulgars, when they founded Pliska, had just begun their transition from a nomadic to a settled way of life. In Pliska they "dropped anchor," consolidated their position on the plain and stopped wandering, yet they still loved the nomadic life that they wished to abandon, and they loved this plain. The plain provided pasture for the cattle and horses, and the people took cover behind the massive stone walls. Pliska ended the migration which had led them from the Volga and the northern Caucasus to the Balkans.

The second capital of Bulgaria, Preslav, was located in a completely different area, in a huge bowl surrounded by mountains. In the center of the bowl-shaped valley stood the famous Round Church. The surrounding mountains look down with favor on Preslav and its center, the Round Church, and Preslav in turn admires the massive protective wall of its surrounding forested mountains.

This relationship between people and nature is even stronger and more distinctive in the third capital of Bulgaria--Veliko-Turnovo. Veliko-Turnovo is located on high hills; of these, the two most important are Tsarevets with its unassailable fortress and Trapezitsa with its many churches and monasteries. Among the hills the Yantra

River winds in intricate loops, reflecting in its waters the delicate beauty of the city. And above this entire complex relationship of mountains, city and river rise still higher mountains. The Turnovians called one of them the Momina fortress (in Bulgarian, *moma* means maiden). A maiden fortress is a fortress which could be defended even by a girl. It was so inaccessible that she could defend it by herself. The mountain is like the city; the city is like the mountains. Mountains and cities are so united that they cannot be distinguished from each other, as if they live together. The mountains raised the Bulgarians to their lofty peaks. They not only accepted their inhabitants, they lifted them up and glorified them.

Even comparatively new, "resurrected" Bulgarian cities are in union with nature. One of them is Koprivshchitsa. Koprivshchitsa is the city of the "first cannon shot." It was here that the war of liberation began against the centuries-long Ottoman rule. This uprising was supported by nature itself, by the mountains and dark forests surrounding Koprivshchitsa. The city, forest and mountains live in unison here even up to the present day. In the center of the city among the two-story, typically Bulgarian homes, there are large, dark, unusually tall spruce trees. Here the forest has entered the city. From each house one can see mountain meadows with flocks of sheep. The countryside surrounding the city is visible from every old house. (Contemporary architects of course failed to see this.) The fact is that the Bulgarians have devised amazing homes. The levels in these houses are freely positioned in relation to each other. The second floor, the living area, always faces in such a way that its windows have a view of the street and of the nature surrounding the city: in the mountain districts--a view of the mountains; in the seaside districts--a view of the sea. In a highly artistic way, the homes, fences and gates repeat a smooth line--*kobylitsa* (its counterpart in Russian--*koromyslo* [yoke])--as if echoing the lines of the Bulgarian mountains.

Perhaps it is because Koliu Ficheto, the wonderful nineteenth century Bulgarian architect, did not study architecture professionally that he understood Bulgarian folk art so well. Architecture for him was a continuation of nature and the daily life of the people. The arches of his bridges not only describe perfect ellipses, ovals and circles, together with their reflection in the water, but, with surprising smoothness, flow into the arches of the bridges' piers; and the columns of the bridges'

other structures do not so much "bear" the arches over them as they simply and amicably complete them.

How much peace, quiet and calmness there is in most of the architecture in the world; how little there is in the national architecture of the now stylish "brutalism" and urban aggressiveness!

Let me next turn to the nature of our own Trans-Caucasus.

In Georgia a person seeks protection in the mighty mountains, sometimes tries to imitate them (for example, the Svanet Towers), and sometimes counters the mountain verticals with the horizontals of his dwellings. But most importantly, nature in Georgia is so huge that it is not in simple union with people; it powerfully protects them; it embraces them and inspires in them the soul of a hero.

Many people have written about Georgia. I will not list the great Russian poets of the nineteenth century, but I will remind you of the Soviet poets: Pavel Antokol'skii, Bella Akhmadulina, Andrei Voznesenskii, Evgenii Evtushenko, Nikolai Zabolotskii, Osip Mandel'shtam, Aleksandr Mezhirov, Yurii Morits, Boris Pasternak, Arsenii Tarkovskii and others. However, in order to picture the relationship between people and nature in Georgia, I will present one poem by Zabolotskii. I hope the reader will not lament too much my citing this poem in full. It is always a great pleasure to reread Zabolotskii's verses.

#### Nighttime in Pasanauri

The night shone, playing on a pandur<sup>23</sup>  
 The moon floated in a shelter of love,  
 And the nightingales sang to me again  
 In the gardens of Pasanauri on the two Aragva  
 Rivers

Descending the pass of the cross  
 Where in May there was snow and rocky ice,  
 I was so tired, I did not even want  
 Nightingales or songs or beauty

---

23. A Georgian stringed instrument with a wooden body and three strings, which has a one-octave range. It is plucked with the fingers--trans.

To the sounds of the nightingale's song  
 I picked up a lantern and undressed,  
 And the river like a passionate maiden  
 Embraced my large body.

I lay back, holding on to rocks  
 And the sparkling stream roared over me,  
 The stones moved in ecstasy  
 And muttered, bouncing on my legs.

I saw the pale light of a candle end  
 Which flickered in the distance  
 And from the bank a huge sheep dog  
 Majestically ran toward the river.

I went out on the bank like a soldier  
 Cold, clean, strong, yet down to earth,  
 And the proud dog, as serene as a god,  
 Recognized me and lay down before me

And this night in the gardens of Pasanauri  
 Having come to know the cold of the primordial  
     streams,  
 I took into my heart the first sound of the pandur  
 Like the first kiss of adolescence.

Nature in Georgia heartily welcomes a person and makes him strong, majestic and chivalrous.

Fresh impressions of nature in Armenia compel me to speak also about its landscapes in somewhat more detail. The ages-old Armenian culture even conquered the mountains. "The round dance of the ages," writes Andrei Belyi<sup>24</sup> in *The Wind from the Caucasus*. "Antiquities are soldered into the soil; the native rocks are more ancient than the sculpture; the cracked statues, having sunk into the earth, raise up bushes; one cannot understand what one sees: is it nature, or is it culture? By virtue of its coloring, the far off rosy, yellowish-white and faceted little ridge is lifted over Gegarkunik, which

---

24. Andrei Belyi, pseudonym for Boris Nikolaevich Bugayev (1880-1934), was a poet, novelist and literary theorist. He is known for his linguistic innovations--trans.

divides the Sevan; the soil there is crowded out by churches; the churches are pieces of whole rock."<sup>25</sup>

I cannot resist quoting another excerpt from this same book, in which Belyi describes his first impressions of Armenia, received early in the morning from a train window.

"Armenia!

"The dome of the sky tears into the half twilight; the expanse is formed by shades of somber blues, and the greyish, turquoise ravines under a pale star. The foliage fades in the mist; but the skyscape slashes under the sky with a curved blade, as though stabbing the earth, and the land, blue below, climbs in ridges like a comb, in wild explosions like stabs of knives, falling out of a whirlwind of rocks--into the center of the sky. The world notched over a dreadful assortment of dangling rocks where there are no lines without rage!"<sup>26</sup>

The fact that the brilliant Armenian painter Martiros Sar'ian<sup>27</sup> also responds to Belyi shows that this is not just Belyi's fleeting impression. Indeed, what can be more reliable than this kind of response from an artist. In his letter to Belyi, evoked by his impression of the essay "Armenia," Sar'ian writes that he treasures his recollection of the days when "they travelled together or walked through this scorched-bare mountainous country, admiring the stacked up blue-violet rocks, which rose up in the form of the highest peaks of Ararat and Aragats."<sup>28</sup>

I do not dare to correct Sar'ian, but nevertheless it sometimes seems to me that the landscape of eastern Armenia is more bleak than in Sar'ian's paintings. Treeless mountains, furrowed by rains, streams and rows of vineyards; mountains with rocks rolling down and deep,

25. Cited in article: N. A. Gonchar, "Travel prose of Andrei Belyi and his essay, 'Armenia'" (in the collection, Literaturnye svyazi [Literary Ties], Vol. 2. Russian-Armenian Literary Ties: Studies and Materials, Erevan, 1977, p. 156).

26. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

27. Martiros Sergeevich Sar'ian (1880-1972) was an Armenian painter who focused much of his work on the life and nature of Armenia--trans.

28. Cited in article: Gonchar, "Travel prose of Andrei Belyi and his essay, 'Armenia,'" p. 163.

solid colors. This is a landscape which has drunk the people's very blood. Above I wrote that the patterns of the plowed land, the pattern of a fence and of log walls are very characteristic of Russian nature, humanized by the peasant. There is also a pattern which is typical for the Armenian landscapes, but in Armenia the pattern is different. The painting, "Land" (1969), also by Sar'ian, leaves a strong impression. It consists entirely of rows, bright, wavy rows--completely different from the pattern created by people in Russia.

This same undulating rhythm is also captured in paintings by the excellent Armenian artist Minas Avetisian. In his painting, "Parents" (1962), a father and mother are depicted against a background of the Armenian countryside. It is striking that the rhythm of Armenian nature is somehow repeated in the spiritual rhythm of the people. Even the mountains in this painting ("Parents") became waves in the pattern of work.

The patterns of work in Armenia are surprisingly varied, just as varied as the work of its people. Sar'ian's painting, "Midday Quiet" (1924), depicts squares of tilled fields which look as if they are placed on the ground like multicolored carpets spread to dry. The patterns of the mountains and fields harmonize with each other and at the same time oppose each other.

In Akop Kozhdoian's "Ararat Valley" the pattern is completely free and easy. The mountains in it are waves; the rows of valleys are only an easy ocean swell.

That Armenia's natural environment is reflected in painting in surprisingly varied ways is a testament to its richness. One artist has seen it in many different ways. Yet, we always know that this is Armenia:

The land of the dry salters' fires  
and the dead potters' valleys...

Once these lines of Osip Mandel'shtam came to mind, it was impossible not to remember as well the verses of Valerii Briusov<sup>29</sup> concerning the Armenians:

---

29. Valerii Yakovlevich Briusov (1873-1924) was a Russian symbolist writer--trans.

You are placed on the border  
 Of two different, warring worlds,  
 And in the depth of native traditions  
 You hear the echoes of the ages.

All the storms, all the unrest in the world  
 In flying, touched you with a wing,  
 And the distant thunder of the campaigns of Kir  
 And the martial battle of Alexander...

How wonderful! The greatness of a people in contact with world events! The spirit of the Armenian people dwells in this suffering participation:

You are faceted like the hard surface of a  
 diamond,  
 Keeping all reflections in itself  
 The colors of the delicate roses of Shiraz  
 And the brilliance of Homer's fire.

Even the poor shepherd's crook at the foot of Ararat begins to resemble the tsar's scepter:

Below on the stony field  
 The graying shepherd leads his sheep,  
 the long crook, in the dim light  
 resembling an ancient scepter.

And Nikolai Tikhonov<sup>30</sup> speaks in the same vein of Armenian nature:

In the palms of the mountains, split  
 By the echoing crowbar of time  
 Like a golden apple  
 Armenia shows off her beauty...

A golden apple, that is, the symbol of the tsar's power--"the orb," and the scepter--all this is entrusted by the Russian poets to the long-suffering greatness of happy Armenia. Is this not truly a tsar's gift?

---

30. Nikolai Semenovitch Tikhonov (1852-1923) was a Russian poet, member of the "Scorpion Brothers" group and chairman of the Writers' Union from 1944 to 1946--trans.

After I sent the text of this book to the publisher, I read *From the Diary Notes of an Art Critic* by Mikhail Alpatov.<sup>31</sup> Surprisingly, what he wrote there about Greece continues, though in a different way, what I have written above about Scotland, Georgia and Armenia. With his permission I will present some of his notes.

The country does not have a clearly emphasized leitmotif. In this respect Greece decidedly differs from little Armenia, which from every direction is overshadowed by the snow-capped peak of Ararat, and differs from Sicily with its fire-breathing Etna. At the foot of Parnassus it can be considered very majestic and huge. But it is worth stepping back from it, and it immediately becomes only part of a chain of other mountains; other peaks begin to predominate, to overshadow it. Here a displacement of the axis is continuously occurring; one gives way to another; the large retreats and the small stands forth. The silhouettes of the mountains first form, then part, then form again. It is difficult to express in words how beautiful is this round dance of the mountain peaks as you move along the roads of Greece. The mountains rise over the sea. The sea in its turn forces its way into the mainland. Here you see with your own eyes what the geography textbook term "broken coastline" means. The mountains rise to the sky. The sea reflects the blue of the sky. The mountains separate one from the other. The sea connects them again. Not without reason the very word *pontos* [sea] in Greek meant road.

In the bright radiance of the day here, the rhythmical breath of the earth's crust can be clearly heard. Everyone turns to the mountains again and again as to something uplifted, clean and beautiful because of their aloofness from the monotony of everyday life.

The volcanos express the interior life of the archipelago. The map of the country with its rocky mountain ridges running from north to south permits one to detect its general rhythm. But even in what is perceptible to the eye of a traveller little versed in geography, its consistency and pattern clearly stand out. The mountains break up or settle, and then deep circular folds are formed on their surface. Sometimes sharp, brightly colored rocks protrude from under

---

31. See also *Dekorativnoe iskusstvo* [Decorative Art], 1982, No. 11, pp. 43-45. Mikhail Vladimirovich Alpatov (1902- ) is a Soviet art historian who studied the comparative history of art of different cultures.

scrawny bushes, like the bared dragon's teeth sown by Cadmus<sup>32</sup> which turned into soldiers.

The Greeks had the rare gift of expressing the fruits of their thoughts in a picturesque way. Pericles is given credit for a metaphoric expression the greatness of which you comprehend on the field of Marathon: "The whole earth serves as the peoples' tomb."

Greek nature helped people to create styles of community. The sea, bays, gulfs and mountains separated but also helped to develop the independence of each local community. But these barriers were not impenetrable; people sailed across the sea, walked across the mountains; each peasant lived, concealed behind the mountains, but during difficult days when enemies invaded, the peasants lured them into narrow canyons and destroyed them in spite of their superior numbers. In a country divided by the sea and broken up by mountain ranges, small nations arose, but in the face of deadly danger they were able to forget competing territorial claims and join forces to move together against an enemy. Here national ties, community of interests and a common language all had an effect, and not least among them was that people saw the whole country as covered by the same blue firmament. In Greece a person never feels crushed by the inexplicable mystery of the world.

A nation is not created by its natural environment, but lives where nature is the most harmonious with its personality. Alpatov cites Hegel's theory that the natural environment of Greece cannot possibly explain the flourishing of Greek culture. It is understandable that Greek culture did not change during the time of Turkish rule and later (of course it did change--the forests were replaced by shrubbery--D.S.L.), but it did not give rise to another Homer.

Nature does not engender Homers, but, in order that culture can flourish, nature and culture must be in union and mutual aid. . .

I regret that I have travelled little in the republics of our country and cannot write about every one of them. Each has its own beauty; one only needs to see it. But from the examples I have presented, it is clear that the landscape of a country is as much an element of national culture as any other. It is the expression of the soul of the people. Not to preserve one's native natural environment is the same as not preserving one's native culture or not loving one's parents.

---

32. Cadmus, in Greek mythology, was a man who was given a series of tasks by the oracle at Delphi, during which he slew a dragon and sowed its teeth which then grew immediately into soldiers--trans.

### Ensembles of Art Monuments

Every country is an ensemble of arts. The Soviet Union is also a huge ensemble of cultures or cultural monuments. Cities in the Soviet Union, however much they may differ, are not isolated from one another. Moscow and Leningrad do not simply not resemble each other, they contrast with each other, and consequently, they are complementary. It is no accident that they are connected by a railroad so direct that, having spent the night on the train with no turns and only one stop, you arrive at the station in Moscow or Leningrad and see almost the same station building which saw you off in the evening. The facades of the Moscow station in Leningrad and the Leningrad station in Moscow are identical. But the identical nature of the stations emphasizes the sharp dissimilarity of the cities; they are not simply dissimilar, they complement each other.

Even art objects in museums are not simply preserved, but constitute cultural ensembles which are associated with the history of the cities and of the country as a whole. A museum collection is by no means accidental although in the history of its collecting there were many separate coincidences. It is understandable, for example, that there are so many Dutch paintings in the Leningrad museums (collected by Peter I),<sup>33</sup> as well as French paintings (collected by the St. Petersburg nobility of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century).

Look at other cities. In Novgorod one must see the icons. In terms of size and value, this is the third most important center of ancient Russian painting.

In Kostroma, Gorky and Yaroslavl' one must see the Russian painting of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (these were the centers of Russian aristocratic culture), and in Yaroslavl' the "Volga" style of painting of the seventeenth century, which is represented here as nowhere else.

---

33. Peter I (Peter the Great) spent almost a year in The Netherlands in order to learn shipbuilding and to learn about western culture and bring it back to Russia--trans.

If you look at our whole country, you will be amazed at the variety and uniqueness of the cities and of the cultures preserved in them. The museums and private collections contain treasures, and even out on the streets, almost every old house is indeed a jewel. Some houses and even whole cities are treasured for their wooden carvings; others are treasured for their amazing layout or their embankments or boulevards (Kostroma, Yaroslavl'); still others because of their stone houses or intricate churches or a network of streets "carelessly" thrown across the hills.

But much unites them. One of the most typical features of Russian cities is their placement on steep riverbanks. Cities such as Velikii Ustiug, the Volga cities and cities on the Oka River, are visible from afar and in a way are drawn into the movement of the river. There are also such cities on rivers in the Ukraine, such as Kiev, Novgorod-Seversk, and Putivl'. These are the traditions of Ancient Rus', the Rus' from which came Russia, the Ukraine, Belorussia and later also Siberia with Tobol'sk and Krasnoyarsk. . .

A city on a steep riverbank is in constant movement. It "floats" beside the river. And this is also a characteristically Russian sense of being in touch with the native expanses.

A country is a union of people, nature and culture.

Preserving the variety of our cities and villages, their historical heritage and common national and historical uniqueness, is one of the most important tasks of our city planners. The whole country is a magnificent cultural ensemble. It must be preserved in its striking richness. There is great educational value in the historical heritage not only of a person's city or village, but also of his country in its entirety. Today people live not only in their own "spot," but in the whole country, and not just in their own century, but also in all the centuries of their history.

### **Gardens and Parks**

The interaction of people with nature and with their surroundings does not always last for centuries or millennia and is not always "natural" or "unintentional." A vestige remains in nature not only from a person's agricultural labor, and his labor is shaped not only

by nature. Sometimes a person consciously strives to transform the landscape around him by developing gardens and parks.

In their own way, gardens and parks create an "ideal" interaction of people and nature, "ideal" for each stage of human history and for each creator of a garden or park as a work of art.

Here I would like to say a few words about the artistry of gardens and parks, the principles of which have not always been fully understood by its interpreters and specialists--the philosophers and practitioners of horticulture.

Of all the arts, that of gardens and parks is the most fascinating and has the most profound effect on a person. Such an assertion seems strange at first. One is likely to disagree with it. Why indeed should the art of gardens and parks have more impact than poetry, literature, philosophy, theater, painting, etc.? But think objectively and recall your own impressions from visiting the historical parks which are so dear to us all, however neglected they may be.

You walk in a park in order to relax, to willingly give in to impressions, to breathe pure air with its aroma of spring or fall, of flowers and grass. The park surrounds you. You and the park face each other. The park shows you completely new sights--glades, copses, avenues and vistas, and as you walk along, you facilitate the park's showing itself to you. Silence surrounds you, and in the silence you hear with a special sharpness the sound of the spring leaves in the distance, the rustling of fallen autumn leaves underfoot, a bird's song, or the light crackling of nearby twigs; these sounds overtake you from a distance and create a special sensation of space and expanse. All your senses are exposed to receive impressions, and the alternation of these impressions creates a unique symphony--of colors, sizes, sounds and even sensations--brought to you by air, wind, fog and dew. . .

But what does a person have to do with this process, I am asked. These experiences are what nature brings you, what you can perceive, even more forcefully, in the forest, in the mountains, on the seashore, and not only in the park.

Gardens and parks serve as that important borderline at which people and nature are united. Gardens and parks are equally important, both in the city and outside its walls. It is for this reason that there are so many wonderful parks in our own Moscow area. And it is not surprising that so many landowners were completely ruined

(financially) after creating parks on their estates. There is nothing more captivating, alluring or moving than to bring something human to nature, and to solemnly introduce nature, to lead it "by the hand" into human society: look, admire and rejoice.

The wilder nature is, the more direct and profound its association with people. This is why a Crimean park constructed by Vorontsov in Alupka and the Vyborg park, *Mon repos*, in the typically Russian estate of the barons Nikolai, create such a strong impression. In Alupka, mountains tower over the park and "show off," and near the park the waves of the Black Sea crash against gigantic rocks. In *Mon repos* pine trees grow on bare red granite cliffs; there are endless views of skerries with their islands floating in the watery blueness. But in both parks, in all the Ossianic grandeur of nature, the judicious hand of mankind is visible everywhere, and the comfortable palaces of the masters beautifully adorn the surrounding primordial wildness of the landscape.

Nor is it surprising that Peter built canals and brought the sea to his countryside and park palaces in New Peterhof, Strel'na, and Oranienbaum. The canals connected the palaces and parks with the sea by water and also by air--revealing a view of the sea--and brought sea water to the surrounding trees, as well as Peter's favorite fragrant flowers.

There is one more gift which a park, more than anything else, can give to a person, or which perhaps only a park can give him. This is the realm of historical time, the realm of recollections and poetic associations.

Historical reminiscences and poetic associations, more than anything else, humanize nature in parks and gardens and constitute their nature and essence. Parks are valuable not only because of what is in them, but also because of what was in them. The temporal view which they offer is no less important than the visual view. "Vospominaniia v Tsarskom Sele" [Recollections in Tsarskoe Selo] is the title Pushkin gave to the best of his early poems.

There are two types of attitudes toward the past--as some kind of spectacle, theater, production or decoration, or as a document. The first strives to reproduce the past, to recreate its visual image. The second strives to preserve the past if only in partial remnants. From the point of view of the first attitude, in garden and park art, it is

important to recreate the external, visual image of the park or garden in the way it was seen at one time or another during the course of its existence. From the point of view of the second it is important to become aware of the evidence of time; documentation is important. The first says, this is the way it looked. The second says, this is the thing itself, perhaps, not exactly like this, but this is really it, with these lime trees, these garden buildings, these very sculptures. The second attitude is more tolerant of the first than the first is of the second. The first attitude toward the past requires that the old trees on the avenue be cut down and new ones be planted: "this is how the avenue looked."

The second attitude is more complex: to preserve all the old trees, to prolong their life and to plant young ones near them in place of the ones which have died. Two or three old hollow lime trees among hundreds of young ones will be evidence that this is that same avenue; here are the old inhabitants. But it is not necessary to take care of the young trees; they grow quickly, and soon the avenue will acquire its old appearance.

But there is also a more essential distinction between the two attitudes toward the past. The first will insist that only one era may be maintained--the era when the park was created, or was in its prime, or some other significant point in time. The second will say, let all eras live; each was significant in one way or another. All life in the park is valuable as a whole; all recollections about different eras and about different poets who have sung about these places are valuable. Restoration requires not renewal but preservation. Aleksandr Benoit introduced the first type of attitude toward the treatment of parks and gardens in Russia with his aesthetic cult at the time of Empress Elizabeth Petrovna and her Catherine Park in Tsarskoe Selo. Akhmatova disputed him poetically, for in Tsarskoe not Elizabeth but Pushkin was important to her: "Here lay his cocked hat and tattered volume of Parny."

Yes, you understood me correctly. I am on the side of the second attitude toward monuments of the past. And not only because the second attitude is more broad-minded, more tolerant and more careful. It is less self-assured and leaves more to nature, compelling an attentive person to take a respectful step back. But it is also because it demands more imagination from a person, more creative activity. Our perception of an art monument is of full value only when, together with

its creator, we can reconstruct and create in our minds what is carried out by historical associations.

The first attitude toward the past creates a kind of textbook aid or textbook models--look and learn. The second attitude toward the past requires truth and analytical ability. It is necessary to separate age from object; it is necessary to imagine how it was here; it is necessary to some extent to do research. This second attitude requires greater intellectual discipline, more knowledge from the spectator himself--look and imagine. And this intellectual attitude toward monuments of the past sooner or later always resurfaces. It is impossible to kill the genuine past and to replace it with a theatricalized one, even if the theatricalized reconstruction destroyed all documents, but the place remained. Here in this place, on this soil, at this geographical point, there was--it was, it, something memorable, occurred.

I have one more incidental remark about gardens. It is impossible to try to restore a garden to its original appearance for yet another reason: a garden is inseparably connected with its daily life and the social structure of society. Four hundred gardeners worked in Tsarskoe Selo; the rarest flowers were planted in the numerous hothouses; the trunks of trees were washed with soap; the courtiers, when walking in the Peterhof garden, were obliged to wear so-called Peterhof dresses in a dark shade of green and stitched with silver thread. Dark green was required in order to harmonize with the trees, and silver in order to harmonize with the white spray of the fountains. It is absolutely impossible to imitate the original courtly appearance of the gardens now that the court and the palace receptions in the gardens no longer exist. The garden and the daily life of the garden were too closely linked with the class structure of society.

The theatricalization of antiquity carries over into memorial apartment museums (the homes of famous people). The original homes are filled with furniture and household articles in the style of the era, and among them the authentic articles are lost and hidden. Not only do visitors not recognize the additions, but these articles often get confused with objects from the same period, be it an inkwell or a cupboard. The visitors bought a bookcase precisely like the original; they bought for an ensemble, but after a while they confused the original with the purchased item and do not know which of the two belonged to the original owner of the memorial apartment. This

incident is not fabricated. Moreover, in choosing articles of "that era" for the memorial apartment, do we not err in the very principle of such a choice? Was it really obligatory for the writer or the political figure to live among things only of his own time? Could there not be in his home, in his apartment, childhood toys or simply old things? Who can certify that the era was restored correctly? Who can certify that the particular way the articles and the household were arranged, determined by a multitude of factors, was restored correctly?

Theatricality also permeates even the restoration of architectural monuments. Authenticity may be lost in what is presumably being restored. Restorers trust random evidence if this evidence allows them to restore a certain architectural monument in a particularly interesting way. The bell tower of St. Euphemia in Novgorod was restored in this way. The result was a small church with pillars, something completely foreign to Novgorod and to the fifteenth century.

How many monuments were ruined by restorers in the nineteenth century when elements of modern aesthetics were introduced? The restorers achieved symmetry in places where it was foreign to the very spirit of the style, as it is to Roman or Gothic--they attempted to replace a living line with a geometrically correct, mathematically calculated one. Thus they crushed the spirit of the Cologne Cathedral, of Notre Dame in Paris, and of the Abbey Saint Denis. Whole cities in Germany were dried and preserved, especially during the period when the German past was idealized.

Our attitude toward the past forms our own national mindset. Each person is a bearer of the past and a bearer of national character. A person is part of society and part of its history. If he does not preserve in himself a memory of the past, he kills part of his own personality. By cutting himself off from his national, family and personal roots, he dooms himself to waste away before his time. And if whole layers of society fall ill with forgetfulness, the results can inevitably be seen in ethical concerns, i.e., in people's attitudes toward family, children, parents and even toward work, especially toward work and work traditions.

No one principle can be applied unthinkingly and mechanically. In the Pushkin memorials in the Pskov oblast--in the villages of Mikhailovskoe, Trigorsk and Petrovsk--partial theatricalization is

necessary. Vanished homes and peasant huts were organic elements of the landscape there. Without the home of Osipov-Wolf in Trigorsk, there is no Trigorsk. The restoration of this home, like the homes in Mikhailovskoe and Petrovsk, does not destroy its authenticity. Only bushes and young trees had to be chopped down, not the old trees. This is the main difference between the restoration of the old homes in parts of Mikhailovskoe and the rejuvenation some years ago of the parks in the city of Pushkin. The Pushkin memorials (in Mikhailovskoe) were restored; in the city of Pushkin much was destroyed. . .

It is quite possible to theatrically adapt one or another feature in oneself. One can wear a beard and a coat "*a la russe*," cut one's hair in a little circle, make a spectacle of oneself. But a different attitude towards one's nationality is also possible: to value one's authentic connection with one's own village, city and country; to preserve and to develop one's good nature, the good national traits of one's own people; to develop profound intelligence, a flair for language, a knowledge of history, of native art and other things--the whole historical life of one's country. At higher levels of personal development, the whole world must be brought into a person's spiritual vision.

Now what does all this have to do with a garden and a park, the point where I began this note? Only that the culture of the past and of the present is also a garden and a park. Not without reason is the "golden age," the "golden childhood" of mankind--the medieval paradise--always associated with a garden. A garden is the cultural ideal--a culture in which ennobled nature is ideally combined with a person who treats it kindly.

Dostoevsky dreamed of turning the most vice-ridden areas of Petersburg into a garden by joining the Iusupovsk garden on Garden Street with the Mikhailovskii garden at Mikhailovskii Castle where he studied, planting the Field of Mars and joining it with the Summer Garden. He dreamed of extending the row of gardens through the busiest trade center to where the old woman money lender and Rodion Raskol'nikov lived, and creating his own kind of paradise on earth. For Dostoevsky there were two opposite poles on earth: the Petersburg of

Sennaia Square and nature in the spirit of Claude Lorrain's<sup>34</sup> landscapes, which depicted the golden age. He loved Lorrain very much for the heavenly perfection of the life depicted in the artist's paintings.

Have you noticed that the most wonderful episode of Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*--the rendezvous of Prince Myshkin and Aglaia--happens in Pavlovsk Park in the morning? This meeting could not have occurred in any other place. Dostoevsky needed Pavlovsk itself for this rendezvous. It was as if this whole scene were intertwined in Pavlovsk's friendly landscape.

The happiest moment in Oblomov's<sup>35</sup> life--his declaration of love--also occurs in a garden.

In Pushkin's *The Captain's Daughter*, the joyful conclusion of Masha Mironova's troubles also takes place in a very "Lorrainesque" part of Catherine Park. It is only and precisely there, and not in a palace locale, that it could have taken place.

### Pushkin and the Nature of Russia

Claude Lorrain? But what does he have to do, you ask, with the Russian personality and Russian nature? Just have a little patience, dear reader, and the different strands will be brought back together.

We have a rather simplistic conception of the history of artistic gardens and parks: first, the formal park, and then the natural park. The second type of park architectural style abruptly replaced the first in the 1770s as a result of Rousseau's ideas, but before Peter's time there were supposedly only working gardens. Fruits, vegetables and berries were grown in them. And that's all! Actually, the history of garden and park art is much more complex.

---

34. Claude Lorrain (1600-1682) was the originator of the Romantic tradition in French landscape painting--trans.

35. The novel Oblomov was the masterpiece of Ivan Goncharov, a nineteenth century Russian novelist--trans.

In *The Tale of the Ruin of the Russian Land*, written in the thirteenth century, monastery gardens were mentioned as being among the most notable beauties that wonderfully adorned Rus'. The monastery gardens in Rus' were much the same as in the West. They were located within the monastery walls and represented the earthly paradise, Eden, while the walls represented the heavenly gates. In the Garden of Eden there had to be heavenly trees, apple trees or grapevines (in another era the species of "heavenly tree of the knowledge of good and evil" was understood differently). Everything about these gardens had to be beautiful to see and to hear (the singing of birds, the babbling of brooks, the echo), to smell (the aroma of the flowers and the fragrant grass), and to taste (the exotic fruits). In those gardens there had to be great abundance and diversity, symbolizing the diversity and richness of the world. The gardens had their own meaning and significance. Outside the monasteries stood sacred groves, part of which still remained from the pagan era, but these groves were sanctified and "christianized" by their association with icons or some religious miracle.

We have very little information about Russian gardens before the seventeenth century, but it is certain that there were "Gardens of Eden" not only at monasteries, but also in the princes' country villages. The kremlins<sup>36</sup> and city dwellers' homes had gardens despite all the clutter of the city.

Under Dutch influence, baroque-style gardens appeared in Russia in the seventeenth century.

The fact is that gardens can in no way be simply categorized as either formal or natural in style. This is an old myth, perpetrated by art critics, which has now been generally dispelled by many studies in art history. Garden and park art has developed along with other art forms, especially in connection with the development of poetry. There are renaissance gardens, baroque gardens, rococo gardens, and gardens in classic and romantic styles. Within each great style there are particular national qualities, and within each national style there is the "signature" of individual gardeners. (John Evelyn wrote at the end of the

---

36. Kremlin is a term for the inner fortress in old cities which included government buildings and the cathedral--trans.

seventeenth century that "the garden reflects the style of the gardener.") For example, there are gardens of French classicism--the Garden of Versailles, created by Lenotre--and there are Dutch baroque gardens.

The many works about Russian seventeenth-century gardens, which historian Ivan Zabelin published in the nineteenth century but did not artistically interpret, clearly attest that the Dutch baroque style had influenced garden architecture here in Moscow since the middle of the seventeenth century.

The gardens in the Moscow Kremlin were terraced as Dutch taste required, and were separated by walls and decorated with arbors and towers. Ponds were also built at various levels in gigantic lead basins. Toy flotillas sailed in the ponds. Rare plants were raised in containers (in particular the Astrakhan grapevine); nightingales and quails sang in gigantic silk cages (the quail's song being considered as beautiful as the nightingale's). Fragrant grasses and flowers grew in the gardens, particularly the prized Dutch tulips (the price of their bulbs increased dramatically in the middle of the seventeenth century). Attempts were made to keep parrots and other exotic pets there.

The baroque gardens of Moscow differed from the renaissance ones in their ironic nature. As in the Dutch gardens, the designers sought to surround them with painted pictures containing deceptive perspective views (*trompe l'oeil*) and places for solitude and other pursuits.

Peter later began to build similar gardens and parks in Petersburg as well. But Peter added sculptures to his gardens, something which was feared in Moscow because of "ideological" considerations; they were considered idolatrous. Hermitages were also added, of various types but not for religious solitude.

The same type of ironic gardens with an inclination toward the rococo style began to be built in Tsarskoe Selo. A Dutch garden was laid out in front of the garden facade at the Catherine palace, and its definition as a Dutch garden was still preserved at the beginning of the twentieth century (many a rendezvous was arranged in the Dutch Garden). Dutch was not only the name of the garden, but also the description of its type. It was a garden of solitude and variety, a garden of Dutch baroque, but it was also a rococo garden with its merry jokes and seclusion, which was not for philosophy but for lovers. Soon after

that the Dutch rococo garden was surrounded by a spacious pre-Romantic park in which "garden ideology" again took on a serious tone. A substantial share of that ideology was already associated with memories--heroic, historical or purely personal--where sensibility (sensibility of gardens<sup>37</sup>) received its right to exist, and serious meditateness, banished from the baroque gardens or parodied in them, was restored.

If we turn from this briefest of excursions into the area of Russian garden and park art toward Pushkin's lycee lyrical poetry,<sup>38</sup> we find in this poetry the whole meaning of the rococo gardens and the pre-Romantic period. Pushkin in his lycee verses cultivated the theme of his own "ironic monasticism" ("Know, Natalie!--I. . . am a monk!") and of garden privacy for lovers and friends. The lycee for Pushkin was a kind of monastery, and his room a cell. This is both a bit serious and a bit ironic. Pushkin himself in his lycee verses emerges as a violator of the monastic rule (binges and love affairs). These themes are a tribute to the rococo style, but also a tribute to pre-Romantic parks. His famous verses, "Recollections in Tsarskoe Selo," are memorials to Russian victories, and in them we find Ossianic motifs--crags, algae and "sea foam," which did not actually exist on the Great Lake in Tsarskoe.

Pushkin discovered Russian nature in Mikhailovskoe. Mikhailovskoe and Trigorsk are the places where Pushkin, the Columbus of Russian poetry, discovered the simple Russian landscape. It was right here that Pushkin's "poetic caravels" arrived.<sup>39</sup> This is why Mikhailovskoe and Trigorsk are as sacred for every Russian as that place on the shore where Columbus and his Spanish crew first set foot

---

37. This phrase--"sensibility of gardens"--was inserted in the Russian text in parentheses, in English, by the author--trans.

38. Pushkin wrote some beautiful lyric poetry while still in secondary school--trans.

39. Incidentally, caravels are the type of two of the three ships on which Columbus made his discovery of America (Columbus's third and main ship, the "Santa Maria," was the carrack type), but in the eighteenth and more so in the nineteenth century the caravel no longer existed. Meanwhile this word has now come into fashion, and in Leningrad the ship of the Admiralty tower and the little restaurants are called caravels. There they serve meals of the "Petrovian era," etc. There could not have been caravels either at the time of Peter or after Peter.

was for the first immigrants to America. We must very carefully preserve nature in Mikhailovskoe and Trigorsk with all its trees, forests, lakes and the River Sorot', for here, I repeat, the poetic discovery of Russian nature was made.

Pushkin's poetic attitude toward nature took him from the Dutch garden in the rococo style and Catherine Park in the pre-Romantic style, to the purely Russian landscape of Mikhailovskoe and Trigorsk. This landscape was not surrounded by any garden walls and had been made habitable, tended and "treated with affection" in the Russian way by the people of Pskov since the times of Princess Ol'ga, and even earlier--for a whole thousand years. And it is not coincidental that it was precisely in this setting of Russian "historical" nature (history, as you are already aware from my notes, is the main component of Russian nature) that the genuinely historical works of Pushkin were created--above all, *Boris Godunov*.<sup>40</sup>

I wish to note one great and historically broad analogy. Near a palace there were always more or less extensive formal gardens. The buildings were associated with nature through the architectural part of the garden. It was thus also during the period when the fashion turned to Romantic natural gardens. And it was this way during Paul's reign as well as in the estates of the nobility in the nineteenth century, particularly at the famous estates near Moscow. The further from the palace, the more natural the landscape. Even during the Renaissance in Italy the natural part of an owner's property for taking walks was outside the walls of Renaissance architectural gardens--in the Roman countryside. The longer a person's walking route became, and the further he went from his home, the more his country's nature was revealed to him and the larger and closer to home was the natural part of his parks. Pushkin discovered nature first in the Tsarskoe Selo parks near the palace and the lycee, but later he stepped beyond the boundaries of this "cultivated nature." From the formal lycee garden he crossed into its park portion and then into the Russian countryside. Such was also the route of Pushkin's poetry, from the garden to the park and from the park to nature in the Russian countryside. Both his

---

40. Boris Godunov was a play Pushkin wrote about the man who was ruler of Russia from 1598-1605--trans.

national and social vision of nature grew accordingly; we recall his poem "Village" with its denunciation of "the slavery of the poor."

It is impossible to change anything in Mikhailovskoe and Trigorsk or in any of the Pushkin memorials in the former province of Pskov (the new word *Pskovshchina* does not quite fit these places) as it would be in any memorial site so dear to our hearts. A bejewelled setting is not appropriate here since Pushkin's places are only the heart of that vast part of Russian nature which we call Russia.

### **The National Ideal and National Reality**

What can we say about Dostoevsky's concept of the Russian person with his impetuosity, his tendency to fly from one extreme to the other, with his "intellectual hysterics" and inability to compromise, all of which, along with other traits attributed to him, made it difficult for himself and for others.

Here I will answer a question with another question. Whence comes the opinion that this is Dostoevsky's concept of the Russian person? How do the individual characters in Dostoevsky's works assess the Russian person? Can one actually judge the author's views by his characters and by their utterances? We would only repeat the mistake made by many philosophers who have written about Dostoevsky's world view and identified the heroes' words with the author's own views.

Russian people like Dmitrii Karamazov did of course exist in Russian reality, but for Dostoevsky the ideal of the Russian person was Pushkin. He declared this firmly and clearly in his famous speech about Pushkin. For Dostoevsky the Russian person was above all "pan-European"--a person for whom all of European culture was near and dear. Consequently, in Dostoevsky's opinion, a Russian was a person of high intellect and strong interest in spiritual matters, one who welcomed all European cultures and the whole history of Europe, one who was not at all torn by internal conflicts and not really so mysterious.

If for Dostoevsky the ideal Russian was a genius, and for that matter a genius like Pushkin, then this is certainly understandable, for

the most valuable part of a nation lies with its best and brightest people.

Much can still be said; much still needs to be thought over, to be discovered. There could hardly be one single ideal that was the same for everyone. For those who have thought less about the fate and characteristics of a great people, the typical model of all that is Russian is the dashing merchant Nikitin. For others it is Stenka Razin<sup>41</sup> (not the real Stenka Razin, but the Stenka Razin of Sadovnikov's famous song, "From the Island into the Stream"). For still others it is Radishchev's fine young man from the chapter "Sofia" of his *Journey from Petersburg to Moscow*. But I say that we must not forget about nature in Russia and about people in nature: the peasants of Venetsianov and the Russian landscapes of Martynov, Vasil'ev, Levitan and Nesterov, the grandmother from *Obryv* [The Precipice], the angry though kind Avvakum, the kind, intelligent and lucky Ivanushka the fool, and somewhere in the background of Nesterov's paintings his fine white birch tree trunks twinkling in the distance. . . . Everyone together, everything together--nature and people.

It seems to me that we must distinguish between the national ideal and the national character. The ideal does not always coincide with reality; as a matter of fact, it never coincides. But the national ideal is nonetheless very important. A nation that creates a lofty national ideal also creates geniuses who approach that ideal. We must measure a culture and its greatness by its highest achievements, for only the peaks of the mountains rise above the centuries and create the mountain range of culture.

Avvakum, Peter I, Radishchev, Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Nekrasov, Stasov, Herzen, Gorky and many, many others strove to find Russian national traits in Russian people and to embody these traits in their works. Incidentally, they all found different traits. This did not diminish the significance of their searches because all these writers, artists and journalists led people to follow them and influenced their behavior. Sometimes they led them in different directions, but they always led away from one set of common traits--away from narrowness

---

41. Stepan "Stenka" Razin was a Don Cossack who led a peasant revolt in 1670 that was initially successful in taking a large bloc of territory. He was finally defeated and executed, and has since become a folk hero--trans.

of spirit and lack of breadth, from pettiness and uncompromising immersion in everyday cares, from emotional stinginess and material greediness, from petty malice and personal vindictiveness, from national and nationalistic narrow-mindedness in all its manifestations (more about that later).

If our national ideal was always broad and varied, then the national anti-ideal which the writers and artists reacted against was always to some degree stable.

Nevertheless, I will speak of the national ideal although it is somewhat less well-defined than the anti-ideal. This is more important for me, more important also because I may suddenly find like-minded people, and this is the most important! Even if only two or three people agree with me.

Above all I want to speak of the ideal by which ancient Rus' lived.

The closer we come to ancient Rus' and the more intently we begin to look at it (not through the window which Peter the Great opened to Europe; now that we perceive Europe as our own, it has become for us a kind of "window on ancient Rus'" which we view as a foreign country), the clearer it is that in ancient Rus' a great and unique culture existed--the culture of the deep lake, *Svetlyi Iar*, invisible, poorly understood and poorly studied, not amenable to measurement by our European standards of the greatness of a culture, and not subject to our stereotypical image of what a real culture should be.

In the past we were accustomed to thinking about the culture of ancient Rus' as backward and isolated, like China. There is a joke: we had to open a window to Europe in order, little by little, to give Russian culture a "decent" appearance, to rescue the Russian people from their "backwardness," "dullness" and "ignorance."

If we start from current ideas about the level of culture, there were truly signs of backwardness in ancient Rus', but as we have unexpectedly observed in the twentieth century, they were combined with values of the very highest order--in architecture, icon painting and frescoes, in the decorative arts, in sewing and now--it has become even clearer--in ancient Russian choral music and in ancient Russian literature. And what about the hard-working traditions of the Russian peasantry, especially in the north and in Siberia where serf-like

attachment to the soil was unknown? What about folk art--especially the extremely rich oral tradition of epic poetry and heartfelt lyric poetry?

Is it not more likely that the areas where this backwardness is noticed are simply less characteristic of the culture of ancient Rus' and that its culture should not be judged by those areas?

In order for us to gain a clearer picture of the ethical ideals of ancient Rus', it may be very helpful to look at the *Izmaragd*, one of the best loved and most authoritative documents in ancient Rus', and subsequently of the Old Believers.<sup>42</sup> The *Izmaragd* was undoubtedly more widely disseminated than the *Domostroi*. Thirty years ago Professor Adrianova-Peretz studied the ethical ideals of ancient Rus' with the aid of the *Izmaragd*. For some reason she was not able to publish this study.

I have no intention of repeating the conclusions of this research or of bothering you with my own. In general I think that research into the ethical ideals of ancient Rus' should be based on a wider range of materials than only the text of the *Izmaragd*. This project is not for a single generation of scholars. Anticipating the conclusions of future studies, I will note only that a huge role in creating these ideals belongs to the literature of the Hesychasts<sup>43</sup> and to the ideas of withdrawal from the world, self-denial and detachment from worldly cares. These ideas have helped the Russian people to endure hardship and to look upon the world and act with love and kindness toward people and to turn away from violence. It is precisely these ideas in a strongly altered form which compelled Avvakum to resist violence only with his word and conviction, not with armed force, and to go through unspeakable martyrdom, simultaneously displaying both surprising strength and forgiveness. Not only are the moral steadfastness of Avvakum and his writings surprising, but also his capacity to rise above himself and to look with a kind and all-forgiving smile on his tormentors. These he

---

42. Old Believers are a religious offshoot of Russian Orthodoxy; its founders did not accept the changes in church liturgy and ritual mandated by Patriarch Nikon in the seventeenth century--trans.

43. The Hesychasts were adherents of a Byzantine religious movement associated with the mystical tradition--trans.

was prepared even to pity, as he disengaged himself from their hateful looks and actions toward him. He calls them "unfortunates," "poor ones" and "fools." Sometimes Avvakum is depicted as a gloomy fanatic. This is simply not true. He knew how to laugh and to look with a smile on the vain efforts of his tormentors. He was soft and at the same time surprisingly strong spiritually.

Under these conditions, that is, the conditions of such ideals, the people of ancient Rus' had amazing love for the world even while they acknowledged the world's sinfulness, vanity, ephemeral nature, and evil.

Every culture has its ideal and its realization. Reality, while engendering some ideals, is at the same time an attempt to realize those ideals. Very often the attempt ends up distorting and diminishing them. To characterize and evaluate any culture, we must evaluate the various aspects separately. This is necessary because the realization of ideals can in fact turn out to be sharply at variance with the ideals themselves. This divergence can be at the level of their realization or even in precisely how they are realized. Because of this, the ideal and reality can turn out to be typologically different, ethically different and aesthetically different. Finally, within one nation, the ideal and the reality can originate from different geographical regions of the world--from East and West, from Asia and Europe.

The "double life" of a culture is as common as the duality of human personality, for a national culture is also a personality.

An ideal is a powerful regulator of life,<sup>44</sup> but for all its strength it is far from being all-powerful. Sometimes it guides cultures in a different way than would the historical process with its economic foundations. The forces of an ideal, fighting for its realization, meet the resistance of "cultural substance," which can force the great sailing ship of culture to lie "dead in the water."

It is precisely this situation that we find in the culture of ancient Rus'. As it turned out, a huge gap separated the ideal of the culture and the reality. This was true not only because from the very beginning the ideal was very high and then rose even higher since it was not

---

44. For more on this, see Iu. M. Lotman, "Articles on the Typology of Culture," Tartu, 1970, p. 40 (concerning the relationships between culture and its automodel).

closely tied to real life, but also because reality was at times too low and too cruel. There was an amazing lack of practical application of the ancient Russian ideal. This does not mean that nothing was put into practice. High ideals of both holiness and moral purity were realized.

We must judge a people chiefly for their best efforts, and we must recognize that they did put these ideals into practice or at least tried to put them into practice. This is the most fruitful position to take, the most peaceable and most humanistic. A good person notices above all the good in others, an evil person--the evil. A geologist seeks a valuable vein. . .

But what about the Brothers Karamazov then? Pushkin was only one man, and after all, they were three, and they stand before us in serried rank. The ideal must be singular, but the Karamazov brothers are distinct individuals. Is this typical of Russian people? Yes, it is. These are the "legitimate" brothers, but they also have a fourth brother, an "illegitimate" one--Smerdiakov.

Various traits are combined in the "legitimate" Karamazovs, both good traits and bad. But Smerdiakov has no good qualities. He has only one quality--that of the devil. Smerdiakov is intertwined with the devil. They alternate in Ivan's nightmares. For each culture the devil is not what is characteristic or typical for that culture, but precisely what the people reject, disown, will not acknowledge. Smerdiakov is not a Russian type, but its antipode.

There are many Karamazovs in Russian life; nevertheless it is not they who direct the ship's course. The sailors are important, but still more important to the captain of the vessel are the tiller and the star to which the ideal is oriented.

The Russian people had not only good in them, but also much that was evil, and this evil was greater because the nation was a great nation. The people themselves were not always to blame for this evil; it was often Smerdiakovs, taking the form of government figures--first Arakcheev, then Pobedonostsev, then others. . . . It was not by chance that so many Russians moved to the north--to the forests, to the south--to become Cossacks, and to the east--to far Siberia. They sought the happy kingdom of Belovodskii; they sought a land without village constables and police overseers, without generals who sent them to take away foreign lands from peasants like themselves. But all those

Tushins, Konovnitsyns and Platon Karataevs stayed in the army nevertheless. This was the time when the wars were defensive or had to be fought in order to liberate "the dear brothers"--the Bulgarians and Serbs.

"The dear brothers" (*bratushki*--diminutive for the word *brat* [brother]--trans.)--the people invented this word and invented well. Consequently, there was less national egoism in the Russian people than national broadmindedness and openness.

On a sunny day every object casts a shadow, and every good quality of the people has its evil aspect standing opposite. Nothing can be done about that.

### **Patriotism Versus Nationalism**

Some people have the completely incorrect impression that emphasizing national qualities in an attempt to define national character contributes to division among peoples and indulges their chauvinistic instincts.

In the beginning of the seventh volume of his *History of Russia since Ancient Times*, the great Russian historian Sergei Solov'ev wrote: "Russians cannot be enticed. . . by unpleasant boasting about their own nationality." This is absolutely true. Russians have never really "fallen for" boasting about themselves. On the contrary, especially in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, Russians very often tended to denigrate themselves and exaggerate the backwardness of their own culture.

For the most part, although not always, Russians lived in peace with neighboring peoples. We can see this even in the earliest centuries of Rus' existence. The peaceful friendliness of Russian and Karelian villages in the north over thousands of years is very indicative of this. The relationship among the Russians and the Merians, the Vesi, the Izhorians and others was unstained by bloodshed. In Kiev there was the Chud court of a distinguished representative of the Chuds (the later Estonians). In Novgorod there was a Chudintseva Street. In the same city an example of the ancient Finnish language was recently found--a Finnish document on birch bark, lying beside documents written in Russian. Despite all the wars with the peoples of

the steppe and other wars which contained no element of nationalism but were completely feudal in nature, Russian princes married noble Polovtsian women. This indicates that there was no racial alienation. Indeed, the entire history of Russian culture shows its essentially open nature, its receptiveness and on the whole its lack of national arrogance. Dostoevsky wrote about this in his article "Two Camps of Theoreticians."

Narrow nationalism is not in the Russian spirit. Our people display their deficiencies with relentless force and are ready to talk about their defects before the whole world and to complain endlessly about themselves. Sometimes they are even unfair to themselves in the name of fierce love for justice and truth. . . . For example, see how powerfully this capacity for condemnation and self-criticism was displayed in Gogol, Shchedrin and all the negative literature, which is much more vital and more vibrant than the positive literature of the times of Ochakov and the conquest of Crimea.

Is not a person's consciousness of his illness already a pledge of his recovery, his capacity to recover from the illness. . . ? The strength of self-condemnation is above all a strength. It shows that a society still has strength. Behind condemnation of evil must lie a love for the good. Indignation over social flaws and ailments presupposes a passionate yearning for health.<sup>45</sup>

Of course, not only Gogol and Shchedrin display this tendency of Russian literature to find some evil aspect in the contemporary daily life of the nation, some burning issue that may be true only for today and perhaps overcome in the future. Above all it is characteristic of Dostoevsky himself and also of a long line of writers/revolutionaries such as Radishchev, the poets/Decembrists, revolutionary democrats, and so on and so forth. But this quality goes along with the ability to see the best in other peoples. Of course, it is also a very valuable feature only as long as it does not turn into self-deprecation or to delight in others' misfortunes and resentment of one's own deficiencies.

*The History of the Capture of Kazan* was compiled immediately after that city was occupied in the middle of the sixteenth century. This work recounts the bravery of the Tatar defenders of Kazan and sympathetically portrays Tatar princess Siuiumbek weeping over her

---

45. F. M. Dostoevsky, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* [Complete Collected Works], Vol. 20, Leningrad, 1980, p. 22.

city's loss of independence. This is a startling work. Am I indulging here, as if from the opposite extreme, in praise of my own nationality? No, the same features of openness and peacefulness were characteristic of the Finnish tribes who lived next to the Russians. This openness is a pre-national feature of many peoples. However, in Rus' this characteristic survived all temporal limits; it became an ideological fixture, a consciously defined principle of the better part of Russian literature and historical thought. The eastern Slavic peoples inherited these principles from the Bulgarians. In Venice Cyril<sup>46</sup> (or Methodius) said in his argument with the three-language proponents (of having liturgical practice only in three languages--Greek, Hebrew and Latin): "Does the rain not fall equally on all? Does the sun not shine equally for all? Do we all not breathe the same air?"

The Russian Metropolitan Hilarion<sup>47</sup> repeated these thoughts in the middle of the eleventh century in his remarkable *Word about Law and Grace* in which he says that all peoples have equal rights, and all make a common cause for mankind.

National qualities are an actual fact. There are no unique traits which only one certain people, one nation or one country can claim as theirs alone. The whole essence lies in the totality of these characteristics and in the inimitable crystalline structure of these national and universal traits. Denying the presence of national character or national individuality would make the world of nations very boring and gray.

Just imagine that you are travelling on a train and you see from the window one and the same landscape throughout your journey. How boring! All interest in the trip is lost, and love for the country through which you are travelling vanishes. Children will not love a doll if they know that all dolls are exactly alike and that there are many of them. They need to find individual characteristics in their own doll that

---

46. Cyril and Methodius were Christian monks who came as missionaries and devised a written alphabet for Russia in the ninth century. This language was Old Church Slavonic, based on Old Bulgarian, and is still used in the Russian Orthodox Church liturgy today--trans.

47. Hilarion was the first metropolitan to be appointed (in 1051) without orders from Constantinople. St. Sophia in Kiev was built during his reign--trans.

distinguish it from other dolls, and they need to call it by its own name. A name is a sign of individuality and uniqueness and plays a huge role in our attachment to anything and anyone. If there were no individual characteristics to distinguish one place from another, one village from another, one city from another or your own home from the neighbors', the whole country would turn into a desert, boring and uninteresting, and the people in it turn into people devoid of love for their native land.

It is the individual characteristics of different nations which bind them together and compel us to love a people to whom we do not even belong but with whom fate confronts us. Consequently, discovering national qualities of character, learning about them and reflecting on the historical circumstances which contributed to their origin, help us to understand other peoples. Reflection on these national characteristics has social significance. It is very important.

Since the time when Dostoevsky lived and worked, much water has flowed--not the water which will give life and promote growth, but that "stagnant water" which often takes the form of idle talk and does not allow thoughts to breathe. However, this stagnant water of idle talk did not touch the many thoughts of Dostoevsky. They have remained contemporary to the highest degree.

See, for example, what Dostoevsky wrote in his article "Two Camps of Theoreticians (concerning the magazine *Day* and something else)":

When we speak, however, about nationality, we do not understand by this term that national exclusivity which very often contradicts the interests of all humanity. No, we understand here true nationality which always acts in the interests of all peoples. Fate has allocated tasks among them, i.e., to develop one or another aspect of an aggregate person. . . only then will humanity complete the whole cycle of its development when each nation, in conformity with the conditions of its material state, fulfills its own task. There are no sharp differences in nations' missions because at the basis of each nationality lies one common human ideal only shaded by local colors. Therefore, there could never be antagonism between national groups if each of them understands its own true interests. The problem is that this kind of understanding is extremely rare, and nations seek their glory only in empty competition for first place among their neighbors. Different nations, working on problems common to all humanity, can be compared with scholars. Each of them is

particularly occupied with his own subject, for which he feels a special inclination in preference to others. But we see that they all are focused on one common subject of study. And how, if not from specialization of its subjects or from their further development by different individuals, would knowledge further expand and gain in depth?<sup>48</sup>

A conscious love for one's own nation cannot be combined with hatred for others. If a person loves his own people and his own family, he will more likely love other nations and other families and people. Each person has a general tendency toward hatred or toward love, toward separating himself from others or toward accepting what is different--not just anything different, of course, but the best of what is different. This attitude of acceptance is inseparable from the ability to recognize what is best. Therefore, hatred of other nations (chauvinism) sooner or later is passed on to some people in one's own nation, even if only to those who do not acknowledge their nationalism. If a general tendency toward acceptance of foreign cultures dominates in a person, this attitude inevitably brings him to a clear realization of the value of what is his own. Therefore, in its most highly realized forms, nationality is always peace-loving, actively peace-loving, and not simply indifferent to other nationalities.

Nationalism is a manifestation of the weakness of a nation and not of its strength. For the most part, it is weak nations that are infected by nationalism. They are trying to maintain themselves with the aid of nationalistic feelings and ideology. But a great nation, a nation with its own great culture, with its own national traditions, is *obliged* to be good, especially if the fate of a smaller nation is linked with it. A great nation *must* help a smaller one to maintain itself, its language and its culture.

It is not necessarily true that a strong nation has a large population or a weak one a small population. At issue is not the number of people belonging to a given nation but the strength and stability of its national traditions.

About fifteen years ago, even before the Society for Preservation of Cultural and Historical Monuments was formed, I met

---

48. Dostoevsky, *Polnoc sobranie sochinenii*, pp. 19-20.

with three kind and thoughtful young people who, like myself, were disturbed by the neglected condition of cultural monuments, especially at that time. Together we enumerated what we were losing and what we may yet lose. Together we worried and shared our alarm about the future. I began to discuss the fact that we did not take good enough care of the historical landmarks of the smaller nationalities. The Izhorians apparently are disappearing without a trace. And suddenly my young friends frowned. "No, we will only take care of Russian landmarks." "Why?" "We are Russians." "But is it not Russia's duty to help those peoples who have historically linked their fate with Russia's?"

My young friends quickly agreed with me. "You will understand," I said, "to do good is far more pleasing than to do evil. It is pleasant to make gifts. By protecting others and maintaining a good attitude toward them you gain a sense of strength; you have confidence in yourself and real power." Their faces lit up. At that moment a burden was lifted from their shoulders.

Incidentally, I have also spoken about how much of value the peoples who live along the Volga have given to world culture. You must understand, *Povol'zh'ia* [is a special word which] refers to the peoples who live alongside this great *Russian* river--the Volga. But is not the Volga also the river of other peoples--the Tatars, the Mordvinians, the Mari and others? Is it far from the river to the Komi people or the Bashkirs? How many cultural treasures we Russians have received from other peoples precisely because we ourselves have given them so much! Culture is like a non-exchangeable ruble. You pay with this ruble, but it is still in your pocket, and as you watch, the money even increases.

What great Russian scholars have studied the languages of Central Asia, Siberia or the Caucasus! How many prominent oriental specialists we have and how Russian philology itself has grown thanks to the study of the cultures of the oriental peoples. What authority Russian philology has gained all over the world. . .

And art criticism, history, the study of folklore, literary criticism, and many other fields? Russian science was not diminished because Russian scientists took part in organizing scientific centers in other republics of our country and higher educational institutions in those republics. It was augmented and continues to be augmented by the

study of ideas which return to us in Russia enriched from Erevan, Tartu, Tashkent, Alma-Ata, Tbilisi, Baku, Kiev, Minsk, Petrozavodsk, Vilnius and Riga. . .

In this disorderly enumeration of scientific centers I was hardly able to mention everyone and everything. The important issue is not the completeness of the enumeration, but the complete awareness of the role that is played by the exchange of scientific experience among peoples of different nationalities.

True patriotism enriches others while enriching a person spiritually. Nationalism, however, barricades a person from other cultures, while causing his own culture to wither and die.

Culture *must* be open.

Despite all the lessons of the twentieth century, we have not really learned to differentiate between patriotism and nationalism. Evil masquerades as good.

Patriotism is the noblest of feelings. It is not even a feeling; it is the most important aspect of both a personal and social culture of the spirit when a person and a whole nation can somehow rise above themselves and set goals that are beyond personal aims.

Nationalism, however, is the gravest of human misfortunes. Just like any evil it hides, lives in the shadows, and only pretends to be based on love for one's country. But in fact it is spawned by malice and hatred for other nations and for those people in one's own nation who do not share these nationalistic views.

Nationalism produces a lack of confidence in oneself and weakness, and nationalism itself in its turn is also the outcome of these effects.

Those layers of Russian society which have always been associated with Russian national culture--the peasantry, the intelligentsia and generations of workers--harbor less nationalism than any other groups. (I emphasize that it is precisely the workers' traditions which make people genuinely intellectual, and the intelligentsia should not be confused with its direct opposite--the quasi-intelligentsia.)

Readers have sent me the following: "The details of the relatively recent history of the seventeenth century are well known. This was when the Russian explorer, E. P. Khabarov, when he was based near the place where the Kirenga River flows into the Lena,

organized drilling into the salt and taught the local people how to use salt, which saved them from painful operations necessitated by the lack of salt, which entailed subjecting themselves periodically to ant bites."<sup>49</sup>

"Baranov's mission to Alaska (at the beginning of the nineteenth century) also was friendly. The Russians established very good relationships with the native Alaskans. When the Russians left, much had changed."

The authors of the letter disagreed with me, however, about the "pacifism of Russian character." In the first place, I did not in any way assert that the Russian character is pacifist. I did not use this particular word at all. The examples the readers gave do not address the issue at all. For instance, "the wars of the Don Cossacks in the seventeenth century," "the wars of Peter I for the lower reaches of the Neva," or "Skobelev's Central Asian campaign." We cannot make people responsible for the actions of their leaders--the Spaniards for the Inquisition and the cruel seizure of Peru and Mexico, the French for St. Bartholomew's night, the Russian people for the cruelty of Ivan the Terrible and the suppression of the Pugachev uprising by Suvorov. . . And the examples the authors of the letter presented are not entirely true. The Don Cossacks defended Azov from the Turks and asked the Moscow government for support in this venture. The lower reaches of the Neva belonged to Rus' from the tenth century through the time of the Stolbovskii peace treaty at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Skobelev and his troops fulfilled their military duty not against the Central Asian peoples but in competition with Great Britain for this region. This competition was at that time very dangerous for Russia. Of course, more examples of the cruel attitude of the tsarist regimes toward other peoples could be brought up, but did not the Russian people themselves suffer, and was it not the Russians themselves who suffered first from the cruelty of their own government?

---

49. Contemporary research has shown that some tribes of South America even now save themselves from salt deficiency in this same way. It turns out that there are types of ants which when they bite deposit a small amount of salt into the human body. (From a letter by I. S. Zavalishin and E. M. Sokolova to the editor of *Novyi mir* concerning my article "Zametki o russkom" in No. 8, 1980).

Past Russian history is a history of endless ordeals despite which the people preserved both their dignity and kindness.

Let us love our people, our city, our nature, our village and our family.

If a family is happy, then in daily life other families will reach out to this family. They will visit them and participate in family holidays. Happy families live socially, they welcome guests, they are cordial and they live together. These are strong families, sound families.

This is also true in the daily life of nations. Nations in which patriotism is not replaced by national "acquisitiveness," by greed and by the misanthropy of nationalism, live in friendship and peace with all other nations.

A person can only rejoice when he lives in a country where the most varied peoples meet and get along--peoples with different customs, cultural traditions, and national character.

As a scholar I study ancient Russian literature, that is, that precise period of Russian literature in which its Russianness was expressed with the highest degree of clarity. But here is what merits attention: in our ancient literature alongside Russian writers stand Bulgarians (Ciprian, Grigorii Tsamblak), Serbs (Pakhomii Logofet, Anikita Lev Filolog), Greeks (Maksim the Greek and many others), Croatians (Iurii Krizhanich), Poles (Andrei Bielobocki), Mordvinians ("Archpriest Bogatyr" Avvakum and his underestimated opponent--Patriarch Nikon), Belorussians and Ukrainians (countless numbers of them in the seventeenth century). . . . All these were part of the creative process of the development of Russian literature.

We are all citizens of our national groups, citizens of our great Union and citizens of the whole world. I do not mean to sound pompous. I say this wholeheartedly, and what is said from the heart cannot be an empty phrase.

I would like to speak with the words of a Georgian song about nationalism based on hatred for other peoples and about patriotism based on love for one's own:

What hatred destroys  
Love will restore. . .

### The Greatness of Kiev<sup>50</sup>

When Prince Oleg, nicknamed the Prophetic, sat on the throne in Kiev, he said, according to the chronicler, "This will be the mother of the cities of Rus'." In this way he asserted the importance of Kiev as capital of the entire Russian land--from Ladoga and Novgorod in the north and Polotsk in the northeast to Tmutarakan on the Black Sea, and from the Carpathians in the west to the Volga in the east.

"The mother of cities" is the very capital of the empire. But "mother of the cities of Rus'" also has another meaning which is specific to ancient Russian.<sup>51</sup> Kiev "gave birth" to many other cities that were founded by the Kievan princes, and some of them were named in honor of these princes: Vladimir on the Kliaz'ma, named for Vladimir Sviatoslavich, Vladimir Volynskii in his honor, and Yaroslavl' on the Volga in honor of Yaroslav the Wise. There were also Iziaslavl', Vsevolozh, Glebl', Ksniatin, Vasilev, the two Iur'evs (one on Chudskii Lake and the other in the territory of Vladimir), and so on and so forth.

One of the concerns of the princes was the founding of cities as fortified areas and administrative centers. Vladimir Sviatoslavich built a fortified zone of cities to protect against invasion from the steppe to the south of Kiev. He and his successors also built cities in the northeast and in the southwest of the Russian land. The rapidity and intensity of the construction of these cities can be deduced by the following figures, provided by Academician Tikhomirov: during the ninth and tenth centuries the Chronicles mention twenty-four Russian cities; in the eleventh century there were already eighty-eight cities; in the twelfth century the Chronicles name 119 more new cities; and

---

50. A speech in Kiev on December 3, 1981, given at the plenary session of the conference "Historical Traditions of the Spiritual Culture of the Peoples of the USSR and the Contemporary Ideological Struggle" in connection with the 1500th anniversary of Kiev.

51. By the phrase "ancient Russian" hereinafter we mean belonging to or pertaining to Rus', the whole eastern Slavic national group which existed up to about the thirteenth century. The word Rus' was what the eastern Slavs called themselves and the land they occupied.

during the first third of the thirteenth century, that is, before Batu's invasion, there were thirty-two more new cities.

Despite continual attempts to politically isolate the separate principalities from the eleventh century on, despite everything, the huge territory of Rus' never fully lost its unity until Batu's invasion and the imposition of the Tatar yoke.

The unity of the *Rus'ian*<sup>52</sup> land was strengthened in various ways. The Rus'ian land was ruled by a single princely dynasty. Although the princes were enemies, they did not sit on only one princely throne. They moved from principality to principality, striving to occupy an ever higher position in order to at last attain the gold Kievan throne. Consequently, from their point of view, the Rus'ian land was a single unit. It was also unified from the point of view of the Rus'ian church with Kiev at the head. The Kiev Caves cloister was the same kind of "mother" to Rus'ian monasteries as Kiev was to the Rus'ian cities. Monks from the Kiev Caves Monastery became bishops in the ancient Russian dioceses. In Novgorod, Vladimir, Galich and Pereiaslavl' they founded monasteries and established churches.

Other important and effective forces which maintained the unity of the vast Rus'ian land were the language and folklore. There were only relatively insignificant differences in the spoken language in different regions. The language everywhere was essentially the same, and the same must be said for the folklore, especially the epic poem. It is not surprising that the *byliny* about Kievan bogatyrs were the best preserved in northern Russia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that is, after more than half a millennium. The *byliny* had reached the north very early and continued to be developed there. They were a remembrance of the unity of the eastern Slavs long ago. And in each of them Kiev kept the name and significance of *stol'nyi gorod* ["throne city"] or *stolitsa* [the capital] of Rus'.<sup>53</sup> In the peoples' folklore and consciousness, Kiev was the capital of all of ancient Rus'--its entire expanse, not only of the Ukraine. This is testimony to the

---

52. Rus'ian is an English approximation of *rus'skii*, the adjective which the author uses to refer specifically to the ancient land of Rus', as distinct from the word *ruskii* [Russian], used to refer to contemporary Russia--trans.

53. The Russian word for capital--*stolitsa*--comes from the root word *stol*, meaning throne, in old Russian official uses--trans.

greatness of Kiev and its immense cultural, historical, and political worth.

Linguistic unity also was exceptionally important in the formation of the ancient Russian (eastern Slavic) nationality. Various factors are involved in the formation of a nationality, but certain ones among them play a greater or a lesser role at different times. Language played the primary role for the ancient Russian nationality. It is no coincidence that in the ancient Russian language one of the meanings of the word *iazyk* [language] was "people" (in the sense of nationality--trans.).

A comparison with Byzantium may illustrate my thought. Byzantium was a multi-lingual state, and when it was attacked by the Turks, and the government fell, Byzantium could not recover. It was otherwise in Ancient Rus'. Batu's invasion could not destroy the national unity and self-awareness of Ancient Rus'. Ancient Rus' recovered, but the linguistic differences which had by then arisen became the dividing line for the formation of two nations (Russia and the Ukraine--trans.) and later of three (and Belorussia--D.S.L.). At the same time, the fact that the languages remained similar united all three nations and has continued to unite them up to the present day.

Literature was another force which contributed to the cultural unity of all the principalities and regions of Rus'. The literary language was unified to an even greater degree than the spoken language. It originated from the ancient Bulgarian language, which had continually absorbed elements of the Russian language, and which did not sharply differ from it. The literary language did not vary at all regionally because literary works, no matter where in the Rus'ian land they were produced, were continually being carried from city to city, monastery to monastery and principality to principality. Literature was unified not only because literary works were widely disseminated throughout all of Rus', but also because very often they were not created in the customary modern way. Thus, for example, a wonderful monument of twelfth century literature--the Kiev Caves *Lives of the Fathers*--originated from the correspondence of two monks. One lived in Kiev in the Kiev Caves monastery, and the other in the northeast in Vladimir on the Kliaz'ma. Typically the chronicle collections were produced by combining into one work documents which had been written in different and often distant Rus'ian cities and monasteries.

Thus, the chronicles written in Novgorod in the north were combined with the writings compiled in Kiev. Kievan writings and entire large historical works were included in the Chronicles in Vladimir on the Kliaz'ma. As early as the eleventh century, works about events in Tmutarakan on the Black Sea were included in the Kievan Chronicle collections. They were undoubtedly written right in Tmutarakan and contained precise indications of the dates of the events recorded. We can produce a multitude of examples of how Rus' lived for intensive literary exchange and the great importance Kiev attached to the exchange of messages, letters, Chronicle compositions, and sermons between the most distant geographical points in Rus'. Literature overcame the dimensions of the vastest plain in the world. It was as if there were no journeys of many days and weeks, no difficulties with communication, no frequent and prolonged bad weather in spring and autumn which completely stopped communication between separate principalities and cut off the cities, settlements and monasteries from Kiev. Throughout the entire time, Kiev remained the focal point of this literary exchange. It was the capital of ancient Russian literature.

However, the most remarkable quality of this literature is the awareness of national, political, and cultural unity which was characteristic of all the works of Kievan Rus' without exception. The most famous works in this respect are *The Tale of Bygone Years*, the *Sermons* of Vladimir Monomakh, the *Kiev Caves Lives of the Fathers* and *The Lay of the Host of Igor*. Along with these works there were dozens of others in which the awareness of historical unity and of the need for political and defensive unity is extremely pronounced, for example, in another work of the same century (the twelfth) as *The Lay of the Host of Igor--The Tale of Princes*. There is not a single literary work which preaches fragmentation or isolation of the principalities. If one prince spoke out against another, it was justified as a struggle for unity. A fight to break up Rus' could not have been popular.

In emphasizing the unity of the largest country in Europe from the eleventh to the beginning of the thirteenth century, we must especially take note of the unity in its art. Art was one of the most important aspects of ancient Russian culture. Kiev, as in everything else, was the capital in this field--the center, the legislator, and the huge university. Its role was not as powerful or comprehensive, but still very similar to the role of Constantinople in the art of the Byzantine

Empire. The distinction between Kiev and Constantinople was that by the twelfth century, Kiev was no longer the most powerful military center in Rus'. In the second half of the twelfth century, the military power of Kiev fell very low. However, its spiritual and cultural authority over the country remained, as before, extraordinarily strong. It is understandable that wherever he reigned, each of the Russian princes dreamed of attaining in due course the golden throne of Kiev. The princes of Chernigov, Smolensk, Vladimir on the Kliaz'ma and Galicia-Volhynia all aspired to Kiev. Many came to Kiev and, however paradoxical it may seem, sometimes subjected Kiev to terrible destruction since they were jealous of Kiev's glory and its spiritual dominion over Rus'. These princes tried to take some part of this glory to their own city and took with them sacred objects and works of art. In the year 1200 Riurik Rostislavich subjected Kiev to especially fierce ravages. But Kiev remained Kiev up until its seizure by the hordes of Batu. It recovered again and again from all the destruction and never lost its glory as the center of Rus'.

Of course, in art the distinctive characteristics of a locality were considerably more important than in literature or in other aspects of culture. This is because builders depend on local materials and local craftsmen. Artists did not just use imported materials, but also depend greatly on local sources for paints, especially when huge church walls had to be painted. Some projects were impossible to do at certain locations. Therefore, for example, there were mosaics only in Kiev and none in the churches in Novgorod or Pskov or in Vladimir. However, members of *artels*<sup>54</sup> of builders, artists and various artisans went from principality to principality; and the nomadic nature of the craftsmen's *artels*, just like the nomadic nature of much of the medieval intelligentsia, strengthened the unity of the culture of Kievan Rus'.

Finally, let me say a few words about the most powerful unifying force, both ideologically and emotionally, of Russian culture from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries in all its different areas and aspects. All of Rus'ian culture of this period was dominated by a single style--dynamic monumentalism. We can call this phenomenon a

---

54. Cooperative associations of workmen or peasants--trans.

distinctive "stylistic formation,"<sup>55</sup> to which all art, all literature, all political, theological and philosophical thought and the whole "style of life" were subordinated. This important stylistic formation originated in Byzantium and Bulgaria, the two countries from which Kievan Rus' received its spiritual culture. The people of Kievan Rus' successfully developed this culture while infusing it with their own distinctive features.

The main feature of the aesthetic formation of dynamic monumentalism consisted in the inclination to think on a massive scale: e.g., attempts to solve the existential problems of everyday life, to comprehend the historical rationale of the Rus'ian state, to overcome great distances, or to move large masses of people. This massive scale is also exemplified by the beauty of a burden and the beauty of overcoming that burden, the significance and "eternity" of images in what might be called "landscape vision" in literature or a glimpse as if "from eternity" in paintings, and what maintained churches as distinctive beacons, shining in the vast expanses and illuminating these areas with their massive forms.

Dynamic monumentalism was also reflected in the most important of the "tales" of the eleventh century--*A Word (tale) about Law and Grace*--in which a serious attempt was made to comprehend the historical rationale for the existence of Rus'. It was also reflected in the magnificent historical work written at the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries--*The Tale of Bygone Years*, in which Russian history is placed in the context of world history, and the question of how and from where the Russian land originated is answered. In the twelfth century dynamic monumentalism is displayed in *The Lay of the Host of Igor*, in which the action takes place throughout all of Rus'--from Novgorod to the Black Sea, from Galicia and Polotsk to the Volga. The same dynamic monumentalism is clearly evident in the compositions of Kievan Prince Vladimir Monomakh, in the sermons of Kirill of Turov, Serapion of Vladimir, in numerous Chronicles, and many others.

---

55. The term "stylistic formation" was proposed at one time by the Zagreb scholar, Professor Aleksandr Flaker.

In art dynamic monumentalism is especially visible, of course, in the ideological center of Rus'--in Kiev. It also appears in the monumental forms of its churches, the shapes of cities founded by Kievan princes. These cities were always located on steep riverbanks overlooking flood plains on the opposite bank with rows of churches visible from afar to all who approached on the river. The whole country was enveloped in monumentality. The cities were built like the distinctive outposts surrounding Kiev. The cities mimicked Kiev in their outer appearance and in the dedications of their churches to the Assumption, using the model of the most holy place of the Kiev Caves Monastery. Assumption churches spread throughout Rus'--to Vladimir, Rostov, Suzdal, Smolensk, and elsewhere. These cities also recalled Kiev in the names of their gates, for example, in Vladimir where, just as in Kiev, they built Gold and Copper Gates.

It is important to note that separate lines of princely families tried to have "their own" churches in Kiev. Thus, for example, Kirillovskii Church of the twelfth century in the Kievan *Podol* [lower town] was the family church of the Ol'goviches.

The broad vision characteristic of the art of the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, and of Kievan Rus' as a whole, united ancient Rus' around Kiev and made art and literature an important factor in maintaining the unity of Rus'.

The people of Kievan Rus' thought on a broad scale. They viewed the problems of their own existence and the existence of their own country in global terms. They considered themselves parts of a vast universe and thus oriented their churches and residences to the four directions, and arose "before the dawn" in order not to miss the rising of the sun (as was called for by Vladimir Monomakh in his *Testament*). They reproduced the whole universe and the whole world's history as it was then understood, in the interior arrangement of their churches.

The famous Kievan preacher Theodosius of the Caves spoke in one of his sermons about his own opinion of works of art. He maintained that they were created not so much *by* a person, by an artist or an architect, as *for* a person, in the name of people, for the glory of people.

Theodosius of the Caves says that upon entering a church and bowing three times to the ground, we should stand "by the wall,"

speechless with awe while "voices are raised, singing to the Most High." The walls and the columns of a church are unsupported and "are created in *our* honor."

For peoples' honor, of course, are created not only the walls of the churches, but also everything drawn on them and everything decorating them, such as icons and chandeliers, the utensils of the church and its splendid mosaic floors. From them we gain a lofty impression of people and of their worth, their fruitful minds, their great wisdom and generous kindness. These impressions are embodied in the forms of people in the mosaics, frescoes, and icons. These impressions are visible in their faces, which seem to be illumined by the inner light "of a lofty mind" or of *likovaniia* [exultation], signifying in ancient Rus' not only the portrayal of countenances [*likov*], but also celebration and rejoicing as well as choral singing. Why specifically "choral"? Because, obviously, the most important element in the essence of these countenances was their togetherness, the fact that they are "gathered" together in one community, their connectedness to a single peace-making whole.

The face of a person, according to Vladimir Monomakh's *Sermon*, is the greatest marvel in the whole universe, since there are no two identical faces in the whole world. "We are astonished by this marvel," writes Kievan Prince Vladimir Monomakh, "how people created from the dust have such varied faces. If you gather all people, not all of them have the same face, but each has his own appearance by the wisdom of God."

Wonder at the human face--the countenance<sup>56</sup>--permeates all the art of Kievan Rus'. A person is a microcosm, and a church is a kind of person. It is no surprise, therefore, that the main parts of a church are named like the parts of a person: windows are the eyes of a person (the root of the word *okna* meaning windows is *oko*, meaning eye), the dome is the head. This head of the church is placed on the neck; the foundation of the church is its feet. And the projections on city walls are the bosom. The ledges which protect from rain over the window-

---

56. The author uses the modern word for face--*litso* alternatively with the archaic, poetic word *lik* which, besides also meaning face, refers to the image on an icon. I have used the word "countenance" where the author uses *lik*--trans.

eyes are the eyebrows. The doors of the houses and fortresses are their mouths.

The universe has the same face-like and person-like appearance. The sun is depicted on miniatures with a countenance--a face. The stars as a whole make up a countenance--a single face and a whole chorus. The sky crowns a starry countenance. A countenance is at once both multiple and single. It is both the inimitable appearance of a human face and all the totality of faces--a monk's countenance, a countenance of saints, a countenance of singers in church, a countenance both of separate images and of all the totality depicted on the church walls in mosaic and frescoes, and the icons and the people standing in front of them. The sum total of the cities of Rus' with Kiev as their spiritual capital was also a countenance, a unique chorus.

This is why the art of Kievan Rus' is at once profoundly personal and public. Each artist felt as if he were fulfilling some other's higher will, and therefore the names of the artists have mostly been lost although the names of church clients, benefactors and churchwardens have been preserved until now. Although not considering himself an initiator or creator, each artist tried nevertheless to embody in his works something inimitable and individual and to show observers the first wonder of the wondrous, amazing universe--the variety and beauty of human faces.

We said "beauty," but what did this beauty consist of? Whatever social level in Ancient Rus' or preceding centuries of world history the depicted person belonged to, the basic ideal of Ancient Rus' was a military ideal. This seems surprising, for mainly religious images have come down to us, and the images depicted on frescoes, mosaics, and icons belong mainly to the members of the church--monks or the church hierarchs. But with whom are church leaders compared in compositions of that time? Above all with soldiers. Christian zealots are the "soldiers of Christ," and therefore their faces most brightly reflect courage and a sense of honor, military honor, and of military wisdom and prudence. Every righteous person is a soldier who accomplishes heroic deeds. Books for him are the same as weapons for the soldier. "As beauty for the soldier is his weapon and for the

ship its sail, so for the righteous person is the reading of books."<sup>57</sup> This is why righteous people are also depicted, if they are not soldiers with weapons in their hands, usually standing with books or scrolls, as with swords and shields, their faces filled with wisdom and courageous calm.

To explain the ideal of a righteous person, an ancient Russian scribe wrote: "The prince loves a soldier who stands and fights with enemies, sometimes receiving wounds, sometimes inflicting wounds on his opponent, more than he loves one who runs away, abandoning his weapon. So God also sympathizes with someone who 'suffers' (i.e., labors--D.S.L.) for truth, does not weaken, and fights with enemies while not caring about himself."<sup>58</sup>

The military ideal did not signify any particular aggressiveness on the part of the people of ancient Rus'. They were attracted by a soldier's readiness for self-sacrifice, his sense of honor, and feeling of his own worth. This is why the most ancient law of Rus', the *Russkaia Pravda* [Russian Law], stipulated greater punishment for a blow with the flat of the sword in a fight than for a blow with the point. A blow with the flat of the sword was more insulting because it as much as signified that the opponent was not considered equal.

Although the ideal of the saint was also to some degree that of a soldier, this does not mean that the faces of those depicted on the icons, frescoes and mosaics were monotonous. The "variety of human faces" noted by Vladimir Monomakh in his *Sermon* remains the most remarkable phenomenon of the surrounding world for any ancient Russian artist. And although artists try to portray people as if they are acquainted with the mystery of the world and therefore wise, their wisdom is extraordinarily varied. Among the countenances of ancient Rus' there are faces wise with suffering, wise with knowledge and the wisdom of books, wise with courage and with strength, wise with life experience and with the daring of youth, wise with humility and wise with understanding of other people, wise with foreknowledge of the future, wise with kindness and simply with wisdom. There are not only no two identical faces, but there are also no identical human personalities. The impressions of historians who imagined the Middle

---

57. *Izbornik Sviatoslava 1076* [Anthology of Sviatoslav of 1076], Moscow, 1965, p. 154.

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 581-582.

Ages to be a time of repression of the individual are no more than a myth that developed against the background of the self-confidence of the people of modern times.

In the history of culture each stylistic formation is not simply an aesthetic phenomenon, the result of forming new tastes, or simply of aesthetic impressions and moods. Aesthetic formation answered the needs of society, the needs of the people and the nation, and answered historical demands.

The aesthetic formation which was characteristic of the Kievan era completely and accurately fulfilled the needs of preserving the unity of the people who were scattered across an immense territory. It served the goals of unification and fostered the ability to see the larger picture in the small, and the unified whole in the larger picture. This aesthetic formation of dynamic monumentalism created the ideal of the people and of the human activity which best corresponded to the demands of the vast country. It is one of the most amazing phenomena in the history of culture in general.

Aesthetic monumentalism was created by the ideal of a people who valued and loved rapid, long marches, military successes in defense of a huge territory, the ability to be carried by thought from one place in Rus' to another and the dream of migration, as in *The Lay of the Host of Igor*. This was also the ideal of people who sensed their linguistic and cultural unity, who considered themselves part of European culture, and who absorbed all the best of what was in other countries such as the Balkans and Kiev's neighbors to the west and to the east.<sup>59</sup> The stylistic formation of dynamic monumentalism contributed not only to the consolidation of national forces and to the self-awareness of the eastern Slavic peoples, but also to the realization of their community with all of humanity and to the expansion of the bases for the future internationalism of the eastern Slavic peoples.

\* \* \*

---

59. Literature concerning the cultural ties of Rus' with the East, and in particular with the Polovtsians, is extensive. This has been discussed by B. Melioranskii, P. Zaionchkovskii, V. Parkhomenko, M. Priselkov, and more recently by V. Gordlevskii and A. Robinson.

Kievan Rus', its ideals and its stylistic formation, which permitted the realization of all of the Russian lands as one vast and unified entity, played a leading role in the entire subsequent history of Rus'. In the fourteenth century, before the battle of Kulikovo field, which began the process of liberating Rus' from the Mongol-Tatar yoke, it was of key significance that people turned to the traditions of the era of independence, i.e., to the traditions of Kievan Rus'--in politics, literature, painting, architecture, folklore, church life, and so forth. In literature this return to the period of independence of Kievan Rus' is evident in many works--in the compilation of the Moscow Chronicle, in the *Zadonshchina*, in the "Tale of the Bloody Battle with Mamai," in "The Word of the Monk Foma to the Tver' Prince Boris Aleksandrovich," in later editions of "The Tale of the Destruction of Riazan' by Batu," in "The Word to Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich Donskoi," and elsewhere. In art this same phenomenon is displayed in restorations of churches built before the Tatar invasion in Vladimir, Tver' and Novgorod and restored frescoes from the same period in Vladimir, done partly in the style of the painting of Andrei Rublev, as if continuing the style of painting of the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries. The politics of this phenomenon is apparent in the claims of the Moscow princes to the inheritance of the Kievan princes, in the preservation by the Moscow Metropolitan of the title "of Kiev and all Rus'" and so forth.<sup>60</sup>

The return to Kievan Rus' in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries played an active role in the cultural and political rebirth of Muscovite Rus' and in the seventeenth century led finally to the unification of three related peoples--the Great Russians, the Ukrainians and the Belorussians--into a single state. This same process led to a cultural unification in which the later Ukrainian-Belorussian baroque art took its rightful place.

\* \* \*

Dissected by blows of Tatar swords and by a clever policy of partition, Rus' remained united even after its split into the Ukraine and

---

60. See in more detail: D. S. Likhachev, The Culture of Rus' of the Era of Andrei Rublev and Epifanius Premudryi, Moscow-Leningrad, 1962.

Great Russia, just as the celestial bodies remain united as they revolve around an invisible center and around each other.

The culture of northern Rus' was always drawn to the culture of southern Rus', not only to the ancient, common one, but also to the contemporary one. Ukrainian baroque penetrated northern Rus' from the south--in architecture, poetry and music. Ukrainian cultural figures visited northern Rus', and Ukrainians occupied important posts in the Russian government and church.

The Ukrainian language and ukrainianisms in the lexicon and in pronunciation have had an ongoing influence on the Russian literary language. Influence in the opposite direction is well known, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Literary and art historians very often do not take into account the creative sharing and communication in the historical and literary processes of the two great cultures. We did not merely walk together; we kept pace with each other, measuring our steps with their pace and direction.

Over the course of the centuries following their division into two entities, Russia and the Ukraine have formed not only a political, but also a culturally dualistic unity. Russian culture is meaningless without Ukrainian, as Ukrainian is without Russian.

Artists Dmitrii Levitskii,<sup>61</sup> Vladimir Borovikovskii,<sup>62</sup> Anton Losenko<sup>63</sup> and Arkhip Kuindzhi<sup>64</sup> came from the Ukraine, but is the history of Russian painting conceivable without them? Ukrainian blood flowed in the veins of both Petr Il'ich Tchaikovsky<sup>65</sup> and Mayakovsky. Perhaps it also flowed in Dostoevsky's. Anton Chekhov, Anna Akhmatova and Konstantin Paustovskii came from the Ukraine.

61. Dmitrii Levitskii was a Russian artist and portraitist (c. 1735-1822)--trans.

62. Vladimir Lukich Borovikovskii (1757-1825) was a Ukrainian artist and portraitist--trans.

63. Anton Pavlovich Losenko (1737-1773) was a Russian historical painter, portraitist and graphic artist--trans.

64. Arkhip Ivanovich Kuindzhi (1841-1910) was a landscape painter--trans.

65. Petr Il'ich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) was a famous Russian composer--trans.

Composers Dmitrii Bortnianskii<sup>66</sup> and Sergei Prokofiev<sup>67</sup> were also from the Ukraine. The Ukraine and the Ukrainian language and folklore were extremely important to Lermontov,<sup>68</sup> Nekrasov<sup>69</sup> and Leskov<sup>70</sup> (the latter especially sensed the beauty of the Ukrainian language and of the Ukrainian character, the beauty of its nature and of course of Kiev itself!). Pushkin wrote in the Ukraine, and Ivan Aivazovskii,<sup>71</sup> Ivan Vishniakov,<sup>72</sup> V. Antropov, Viktor Vasnetsov<sup>73</sup> and Mikhail Vrubel<sup>74</sup> all worked in the Ukraine.

Russian culture of the seventeenth century would have been impossible without the Ukraine, without Kiev, without the Kiev Caves Monastery and the Kiev-Mogilianskii Academy, without Ukrainian baroque, without Ivan Zarudnyi in architecture and applied art, and the Ukrainian baroque school in literature and the theater.

---

66. Dmitrii Stepanovich Bortnianskii (1751-1825) was a composer from the Ukraine, known for his choral religious compositions--trans.

67. Sergei Sergeevich Prokofiev (1891-1953) was a prolific Soviet composer, brilliant pianist and conductor, known worldwide for his operas, ballets, symphonies, concertos, etc--trans.

68. Mikhail Iur'evich Lermontov (1814-1841) was a famous Russian poet and contemporary of Pushkin--trans.

69. Nikolai Alekseevich Nekrasov (1821-1877) was a Russian poet and literary figure who focused attention on the misery of the lower classes--trans.

70. Nikolai Semenovich Leskov (1831-1895) was a Russian writer whose stories and novels were mainly about the church and the clergy--trans.

71. Ivan Konstantinovich Aivazovskii (1817-1900) was a Russian painter and master of sea landscapes--trans.

72. Ivan Iakovlevich Vishniakov (1699-1761) was a Russian painter who led a group of artists in painting the palaces and churches of Petersburg--trans.

73. Viktor Mikhailovich Vasnetsov (1848-1926) was a Russian painter, a representative of the Slavic revival--trans.

74. Mikhail Aleksandrovich Vrubel' (1856-1910) was a Russian painter who explored people's daily lives, the question of good and evil, and the place of man in the world. He exhibited with the World of Art--trans.

Could anyone have written the history of Russian poetry of the nineteenth century without taking into account Shevchenko? Would Gogol's works have been possible without the Ukraine, without the extensive and positive influence of Ukrainian humor, Ukrainian folklore or the rich and varied speech of the Ukraine?

But it is also true that there is no Ukraine without Russia! Did not Russian architects build in Kiev? Is not one of the greatest beauties of Kiev the Andreevskii Church, built by Petersburg sculptor Bartolomeo Rastrelli's son, who was raised in Russian architectural traditions? Do not many Ukrainian cities, and most of all Kiev, show signs of Russian town-planning traditions? Could Ukrainian poetry (of Lesia Ukrainka, Maksim Ryl'skii and others) possibly exist without Pushkin, Lermontov and Nekrasov?

Was not Shevchenko the artist trained in the Petersburg Academy of Arts?

The Ukraine--flourishing, singing, carefree--has always won the hearts of Great Russians as well as other Russian peoples. The Ukrainian steppes draw people, as do the white Ukrainian cottages, the embroidered Ukrainaian *rushniki* [folk art towels], Ukrainian gardens, the gentle Ukrainian speech, Ukrainian humor and the generous nature of the Ukrainian national character.

Kiev has always evoked a feeling of nostalgia in Russians, as the ancient capital of Russia, as the "mother of the cities of Rus'," and as the center of the most important Russian holy places, which were never considered separate from Ukrainian ones.

Thousands of simple Russian people from all parts of Russia, even from the extreme northern regions, in all eras, have come on foot, walking for months to pay their respects to Kiev. Storytellers such as Krivopolenova searched in Kiev for the locations of events which were described in the *byliny*. People came not only to the Kiev Monastery of the Caves, but also to the capital city of Rus', the city where the Russian heroes assembled with Prince Vladimir, where Il'ia, Dobrynia and Alesha defended him from his enemies.

Kiev, with all its national uniqueness, also shares common city planning principles with other Ukrainian and Russian cities. There are individual buildings designed by the same geniuses who created Moscow and Petersburg. I wonder how much that is truly Kievan in Moscow goes unrealized and unnoticed. Even in Petersburg there was

a little corner of Kiev, the famous Church of the Protection of the Virgin on Sennaia Square, built in the spirit of Ukrainian baroque.

Nevskii Prospekt was seen and described by the Ukrainian writer Gogol, and the Kiev of 1918 by the Great Russian Mikhail Bulgakov.

There is a very widespread though mistaken opinion that national qualities and values develop and grow strong in isolation, separated by walls from other cultures. On the contrary, hothouses produce weak plants, plants which cannot endure an unprotected outdoor climate. Strong cultures, to which category the Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian undoubtedly belong, acquired their national characteristics from the interchange among them and with other cultures, from the mutual influence and communication which enabled them to creatively assimilate and reshape in their own mold their neighbors' achievements.

Let me assess the kinship which mutually supports us. This kinship is valuable because the uniqueness of each of our peoples came into being and developed through interaction. The dynamic monumentalism of ancient Kiev--the stylistic formation of Ancient Rus' that I have discussed in some detail here--is manifested in the national character of Russians, Belorussians and Ukrainians up to the present day. It is manifested also in the openness of the eastern Slavic cultures and in their ties with the many peoples of the Soviet Union.

### **The Ecology of Culture**

Love for one's native land and culture, for one's native village or city, and for one's native tongue begins with little things--with love for one's family, home and school. Gradually expanding, this love for one's own becomes a love for one's country, for its history, its past and present, and then for all humanity and for all human culture.

True patriotism is the first step toward effective internationalism. When I want to imagine true internationalism, I picture myself looking at our Earth from above. The tiny planet on which we all live is infinitely dear to us and quite unique among galaxies millions of light years apart.

A person lives in a specific environment. Pollution of that environment makes him ill, threatens his life, and threatens to destroy humanity. We are all aware of the massive efforts by our government and other countries, as well as by scientists and public figures, to save our air, water, and forests from pollution in order to preserve the animals of our planet, to save the habitat of migrating birds and the breeding grounds of marine animals. People spend billions and billions of dollars not to suffocate, not to perish, but to preserve nature, which provides people with aesthetic and mental refreshment. The healing power of nature is well known.

The science which is concerned with the preservation and restoration of the environment is called ecology, and it is already beginning to be taught as a discipline in universities.

However, it is impossible to limit ecology only to the tasks of preserving the natural biological environment. The environment created by a person and by the culture of his ancestors is no less important for his existence. The preservation of the cultural environment is no less essential than the preservation of the natural environment. If nature is necessary to a person for his biological life, then the cultural environment is just as necessary for his spiritual and ethical life and "sense of permanence," for his attachment to his native land, and for his ethical self-discipline and socialization. Yet not only is the question of mental ecology not being studied, scientists in our country do not even consider it an entity in itself and vitally important for humanity. Scientists are studying various aspects of culture, the remnants of the cultural past, the issues of monument restoration and preservation, but they are not studying the ethical significance and the influence upon humanity of the whole cultural environment in all its interconnections, although no one doubts in the least the educational impact of the environment on people.

For example, it is common knowledge in Russia that nowhere near the entire pre-war population returned to Leningrad after the war. Nevertheless, the newly arrived citizens quickly acquired those behavioral characteristics typical of Leningrad and in which by rights the Leningrad natives take pride. People are raised in a defined cultural environment which is formed over the course of many centuries. They imperceptibly absorb not only the present but also the past of their ancestors. History opens a window on the world for them,

and not just a window, but even doors and gates. To live where the revolutionaries, poets, and prose writers of great Russian literature lived, to live where the great critics and philosophers lived, to absorb daily the impressions which have been reflected in the great works of Russian literature, or to visit the museum homes--all this is spiritually enriching.

The streets, the squares, the canals, the homes, and the parks are constant reminders. Past creations, which bear the talent and love of generations, are unobtrusively and gently absorbed by a person and become his criteria of beauty. He learns respect for his ancestors and a feeling of obligation toward his descendants. There the past and the future become interwoven for him because each generation is a kind of connecting link in time. When people love their native land, they cannot fail to experience a sense of moral responsibility to future generations whose spiritual needs will continue to multiply and grow.

If a person does not like to look at old photographs of his parents, even occasionally, and does not value their memory, which remains in the garden they have cultivated and in the things which belonged to them, this means he does not love them. If a person does not like the old streets, the old houses, even the run-down ones, it means he has no love for his own town. If a person is indifferent to the monuments of his country's history, as a rule he is indifferent as well to his own country.

Thus in ecology there are two divisions: biological ecology and cultural or ethical ecology. It is possible to kill a person biologically by not observing the laws of biological ecology. And it is possible to kill a person ethically by not observing the laws of cultural ecology. There is no sharp division between these concepts, just as there is no sharply defined boundary between nature and culture.

A person is a morally settled creature--even a person who has lived a nomadic life. He is "settled" in the open spaces of his unhampered wanderings. Only an amoral man has no sense of being settled and can destroy that sense in others.

All this does not mean that we should stop all new construction in old cities and keep them "in a glass case." Some excessively zealous advocates of urban renewal and city planning "improvements" wish to represent the protectors of historical monuments as perversely advocating this extreme position.

It only means that city planning must be based upon studying the history of the growth of cities, on discovering in this history everything that is both new and worth preserving, and on studying the roots upon which the city will grow. Everything new must also be studied from this point of view. To some architects it may seem that they are discovering something new when they are only destroying something old and valuable while simply creating some new "cultural fad."

Not all that is now being built in cities is truly new. Truly new cultural value comes out of the old cultural milieu. The new is new only in relation to the old, like a child in relation to his parents. There is no such thing as something new in itself, as a self-sufficient phenomenon.

Likewise, we must also say that simple imitation of the old does not necessarily follow tradition. Creative emulation of tradition presupposes research into what is alive in the old and how to extend it, not just mechanical imitation of what has ceased to exist.

Let us look at an ancient and well-known Russian city such as Novgorod. It would be easiest for me to demonstrate my point if I use it as an illustration.

Of course, not everything was strictly planned in ancient Novgorod, although there was a high degree of planning in the construction of ancient Russian cities. There were unplanned structures; there was also an element of chance in some planning which detracted from the appearance of the city, but there also was its ideal image as its builders envisioned it over the course of many centuries. The task of the history of city planning is to discover this "idea of the city" in order to extend the idea creatively in modern practice, not to suppress it with new construction that is contradictory to the old.

Novgorod was built along both low banks of the Volkhov River at the deepest part of its source. In this respect it differs from the majority of other ancient Russian cities, which were situated on steep riverbanks. These cities were crowded, but it was always possible to see on the opposite shore the flood plains and the broad expanses so loved in ancient Rus'. This sense of open space around peoples' houses was also characteristic of ancient Novgorod, even though it was not located on a steep bank. The Volkhov River flowed in a wide, swift

channel out of Lake Il'men', which could easily be seen from the center of the city.

The sixteenth century Novgorod tale, "Vision of the Sexton, Tarasii," describes how Tarasii, after climbing onto the roof of the Khutynsk Cathedral, could see the lake from there, looking as if it were hovering, ready to spill over and flood the city. Before the Great Patriotic War (World War II), while it was still a cathedral, I verified this sensation. It was really very acute and could have led to the legend that Lake Il'men' threatened to flood the city.

However, Lake Il'men' is visible not only from the roof of Khutynsk Cathedral, but directly from the gates of the *Detinets* [an early name for kremlin], which look out onto the Volkhov.

The bylina about Sadko sings about how Sadko stands in Novgorod "under the public tower" and brings greetings from the River Volga "to glorious Lake Il'men'." The view of Il'men' from the Detinets, it turns out, was not just noticed by the ancient Novgorodians, but was highly regarded by them. Songs about it were found in a bylina.

The architect, G. V. Alferov, in his article "The process of urban construction in the Russian state in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries," discusses the "City Law," which was well known in Rus' since at least the thirteenth century. This law goes back to the ancient city planning laws and is comprised of four articles: "Concerning the view of the area which is visible from the home"; "Concerning views of gardens"; "Concerning public monuments"; and "Concerning the view of the mountains and the sea." "According to this law," writes Alferov, "any resident of the town may prohibit construction on a neighboring lot if the new house breaks the interrelationship of the existing residential buildings with nature, the sea, gardens, and public buildings and monuments. The Byzantine law of *apopsia* (a view from a building) is clearly reflected in the Russian architectural legislation of the "Nomocanons."<sup>75</sup>

Russian law begins with the philosophical reasoning that each new home in the town influences the appearance of the town as a

---

75. The Nomocanon was the original collection of church canons and imperial decrees brought to Rus' with the Orthodox religion. The Russian term means "Rudder Book" (a moral rudder, that is)--trans.

whole. "Someone creates a new situation when he wants either to destroy or to change the previous view." Therefore new construction or reconstruction of existing old homes must be done with the permission of local town authorities and must be agreed upon by the neighbors. One of the provisions of the law prohibits a person who is restoring an old tumbledown house from changing its original appearance since, if an old home will be added on to or expanded, then it might take light away from the neighbors or deprive them of their view ("*prozor*" [clear view]).

Russian city planning law pays particular attention to views from houses or from the town of meadows, woods, seas, lakes or rivers.

Novgorod's connection with the surrounding natural world was not limited only to views. The connection was vital and real. The *kontsy* of Novgorod, that is, its regions, administratively control the surrounding area. The Novgorod *piatiny* are areas which fan out directly from the five *kontsy* to a huge area of land and are controlled by Novgorod. The city was surrounded on all sides by fields; along the horizon around Novgorod there was a "dance" of churches, part of which has been preserved until now. One of the most valuable monuments of ancient Russian urban art is this Beautiful Field, which still exists even today and adjoins the trade district of town. Church buildings standing at equal distances from each other can be seen around the edge of this field, like a necklace: the Cathedral of Saint George of Iur'ev Monastery, the Church of the Annunciation of Gorodets, Nereditsa, Andrei at Sitka, Kirillov Monastery, Kovalevo, Volotovo, and Khutyn'. Not one building, not one tree interfered with the view of this majestic garland with which Novgorod surrounded itself along the horizon. An unforgettable image was created of a familiar and habitable country--of spaciousness and comfort.

Now some shapeless farm buildings have appeared along the horizon of the Beautiful Field; the field itself is overgrown with bushes which will soon turn into a forest and hide the view. For a long time the quay served as a place for walks, which were especially beautiful in the evening when the slanting rays of the sun lit up the white buildings along the horizon; the view of Lake Il'men' from the trade district of Novgorod has not been restored, nor the view from the Kremlin. This view has been hidden by heaps of earth aimlessly dug up for the construction of a proposed water sports canal. Along the middle of the

Volkhov channel stand enormous piers from as far back as 1916 for a railroad bridge which was started but then fortunately not finished.

The duty of contemporary town planners to Russian culture is not to destroy the ideal structure of our cities in even the smallest degree, but to maintain that structure and to develop it creatively.

It is worth recalling the proposal made by Academician Grekov right at the end of the war after the liberation of Novgorod: "We must build a new city somewhat lower along the Volkhov in the region of Derevianitsk Monastery, but in place of ancient Novgorod we must build a park preserve. Lower along the Volkhov the territory is higher, and the construction will be cheaper; it will not be necessary to disturb the deep cultural layer of ancient Novgorod with expensive deep house foundations."

We should consider this proposal in planning new construction in many old towns. New construction will be easier to build where it will not cut into the old. New centers of ancient towns must be built outside the old, and the old town centers must maintain their valuable structural principles. Architects who build in cities which were founded long ago must know their history and carefully preserve their beauty.

But what can be done if it is necessary to build next to old buildings? A single method cannot be proposed, but one point is indisputable. New buildings must not hide historical monuments, as happened in Novgorod and in Pskov (the Church of Sergii from Zaluzh'e, crowded out of view by newly-built box homes, across from the Oktiabr' Hotel in the center of town, or the enormous movie theater built right next to the Kremlin). Nor can stylization be permitted. In stylizing we destroy the old monuments, we vulgarize them and sometimes unwittingly parody their original beauty.

I will give you an example of this. One of Leningrad's architects considered spires the most characteristic feature of that city. There actually are spires in Leningrad--three main ones--on the Peter and Paul Fortress, the Admiralty, and on the Engineer (Mikhailov) Castle. But when a new, rather high, but purposeless spire appeared on Moscow Prospect on an ordinary residential building, the semantic significance of the spires which marked the main structures in the city was diminished.

The remarkable concept of the "Pulkovskii meridian" was also destroyed. A mathematically straight miles-long boulevard extended

from Pulkovskii Observatory directly along the meridian and right up to the Admiralty Needle. The Admiralty Needle was visible from Pulkov; it sparkled with gold from a distance and attracted the attention of travellers entering Leningrad from the direction of Moscow. Now this inimitable view is broken by a new spire-topped residential building standing in the middle of Moscow Prospect.

If placed by necessity among old homes, a new house must be "socialized"; it must have the appearance of a modern building, but not compete with the previous buildings in height or other architectural features. The same pattern of windows should be preserved, and the colors should be harmonious.

But sometimes it is necessary to finish building architectural ensembles. In my opinion, the Rossi construction project on the Plaza of the Arts in Leningrad was successfully completed with the residential building on Engineer Street, which maintained the same architectural forms as the whole plaza. What we see here is not stylization, for the building exactly conforms to the others on the plaza. In Leningrad another square begun by Rossi but not finished--Lomonosov Square--needs to be harmoniously finished in the same way. A rooming house of the nineteenth century was "inserted" in the Rossi building on Lomonosov Square.

Cultural ecology should not be confused with the science of restoration and preservation of individual monuments. The cultural past of our country must be examined not in parts, as has been done, but in its entirety. We must discuss preserving the basic character of a place, "the uncommon expression of its face," and the architectural and natural landscape. This means that new construction must if possible be less contradictory to the old; new construction must harmonize with the old and maintain the everyday habits of the people (this is also "culture") in their highest manifestation. The feeling of having friends around, the feeling of ensemble and the feeling of the aesthetic ideals of the people--these are essential sentiments not only for a city planner but especially for a builder of villages. Architecture must be social. Cultural ecology must be part of social ecology.

At this point there is no branch in science concerning ecology which deals with cultural environment; however, one can speak of impressions.

Here is one of them. In September 1978 I was on Borodino Field with a most ardent enthusiast of his cause, the restorer Nikolai Ivanovich Ivanov. Has anyone noticed that the kind of people loyal to their cause are found especially among restorers and museum workers? They cherish things, and things repay them for this with love.

It was just such a spiritually rich man who was with me on Borodino Field--Nikolai Ivanovich. For fifteen years he had not taken a vacation; he cannot endure being away from Borodino Field. He lives for the several days of the Borodino battle--the day itself, August 26 (by the old calendar) and the days which preceded the battle. Borodino Field has colossal educational significance.

I hate war. I endured the Leningrad blockade and the Nazi shelling of the peaceful inhabitants from their warm shelters at positions on the Duderhof heights. I witnessed the heroism with which the Soviet people defended their native land, the unbelievable steadfastness with which they resisted the enemy. Perhaps for this reason the Borodino battle, which has always struck me with its moral strength, acquired a new meaning for me. Russian soldiers repulsed eight incredibly intense attacks upon the Raevskii battery, which followed one after another with unheard of persistence. Towards the end soldiers in both armies fought by touch in total darkness. The morale of the Russians was increased tenfold by the need to defend Moscow. Nikolai Ivanovich and I bared our heads before the memorials which were erected on Borodino Field by grateful descendants.

And here at this national shrine, drenched with the blood of the defenders of their native land, a cast iron monument on the grave of Bagration<sup>76</sup> was blown up in 1932. Those who did this committed a crime against the noblest of feelings--gratitude to a hero, a defender of Russia's national freedom, the gratitude of Russians to their brother Georgian who commanded the Russian forces with unusual courage and skill in a most dangerous battleground. How may we regard those who at the same time painted the gigantic inscription on the wall of the monastery, built by Tuchkov the Fourth's widow at the site of his death: "We have had enough of preserving the remains of our servile past."

---

76. A Georgian hero of the Battle of Borodino Field--trans.

The newspaper *Pravda* had to intervene in 1938 to have this graffiti removed.

What else should we recall? The architectural appearance of the city where I was born and lived my whole life--Leningrad--is associated above all with the names Rastrelli, Rossi, Kwarengi, Zakharov and Voronikhin. Along the road from the main Leningrad airport stood Rastrelli's Putevoi Palace. Right on target; the first large building in Leningrad was Rastrelli's! It was in very bad condition; it stood near the front lines, but the Soviet soldiers did everything they could to preserve it. And if it had been restored, how festive an introduction to Leningrad this would have been. They demolished it! They demolished it at the end of the 1960s. And there is nothing in its place. The place is empty; your soul is empty when you pass by this place.

Who are these people who kill the living past, the past which is also our present, for culture does not die? Sometimes it is the architects themselves--those who want very much to place "their own creations" in an advantageous location.

Sometimes it is the restorers, who take care to choose for themselves the most profitable projects, who care only whether a restored work of art brings them glory, and who are restoring antiquity according to their own sometimes very primitive idea of beauty.

Sometimes it is quite unexpected people--tourists--who make campfires right next to monuments and leave their graffiti or pull tiles out for "souvenirs." We are all responsible for these unexpected people. We must take care that these random killers be eliminated, so that there will be a proper ethical climate around monuments, so that everyone, from school children to employees of town and regional organizations, will know that these monuments are entrusted to their learning, their common culture, and their feeling of responsibility toward the future.

It is not enough to have some prohibitions, instructions and large signs with the warning "Protected by the state." It is necessary to carefully investigate in the courts the facts of hooliganism and irresponsible behavior toward our cultural heritage and to severely punish the guilty. But even this is not enough. It is absolutely essential to teach regional studies that are based on biological and cultural ecology in the curriculum of secondary schools, to create study groups

in schools across the country on the history and nature of the local region. It is impossible to summon people to patriotism; it must be carefully taught.

Thus, the *ecology of culture*!

There is a great distinction between the ecology of nature and the ecology of culture and, for that matter, a very important one.

Losses in nature are up to a point restorable. It is possible to clean up polluted rivers and oceans; it is possible to renew forests and wildlife. These things are possible, of course, only if those well known limits are not crossed, if one or another type of animal is not destroyed entirely, and if one or another type of plant is not eliminated. Bison have been successfully restored both in the Caucasus and in the Belovezhsk forest preserve. They are even being placed in the Beskidias where previously there were none. Nature itself in this way can help people since it is alive. It has the capacity for self-purification and for restoring the equilibrium which people have disturbed. It heals wounds inflicted on it from outside by fires, logging, poison sprays and polluted waters.

But it is otherwise with cultural monuments. If they are lost, they cannot be restored, for cultural monuments are always unique, always associated with a specific epoch, with specific craftsmen. Each monument is destroyed forever, defaced forever, damaged forever.

The "supply" of cultural monuments, the "supply" of cultural environment in the world is extremely limited, and it is being exhausted with ever increasing speed. The technology which itself is a product of culture tends sometimes to a greater degree to destroy culture than to extend its life. Bulldozers, excavators, and construction cranes, driven by unthinking, uninformed people, destroy what is not yet even discovered underground as well as what is above ground already being used by people. Even the restorers themselves, following their own not sufficiently proven theories or modern ideas of beauty, sometimes become to a greater degree destroyers rather than guardians of the monuments of the past. Even city planners destroy monuments, especially if they do not have accurate and complete historical knowledge. The earth is becoming too crowded for cultural monuments, not because there is not enough land, but because builders take for themselves the old places which have been made

habitable, and therefore seem especially beautiful and tempting for the city planners.

City planners, more than anyone else, need to know and understand the field of cultural ecology.

In the first years after the Great October Revolution regional studies grew rapidly. For various reasons in the 1930s, these studies almost ceased to exist; special institutes and many regional study museums were closed. But regional studies cultivate precisely that vital love for the native region and provide that knowledge without which preservation of cultural monuments is impossible. On this basis it is possible more seriously and more deeply to resolve local ecological problems. A long time ago people were of the opinion that regional studies should be introduced as a discipline in school curricula. This issue remains unresolved.

In order to preserve cultural monuments which are necessary for the "moral settledness" of people, merely platonic love for our country is not enough; our love must be active.

For that, knowledge is required and not only of regional studies, but also a more profound knowledge united in a special scientific discipline--the ecology of culture.

---

## On National Feeling<sup>1</sup>

**N.S.** Dmitrii Sergeevich, I remember at the beginning of the 1980s we discussed the 1000th anniversary of written culture of the eastern Slavs. Now our discussion centers around another 1000th anniversary--the acceptance of Christianity by Rus'. But our written language is older than the generally accepted 1000-year date, and Christianity penetrated Rus' long before its official introduction.

**D.L.** And in Kiev the church of Ilya the Prophet already stood in the Podol. Worship service was conducted in the church, naturally, using books. I have already discussed the idea that even before the official adoption of Christianity by Rus', a literary work came into being here which propagated a new Christian view of world history--"The Speech of the Philosopher." Later it appeared in the *Primary Chronicle*. This semi-compiled document was to have given both the people and the ruler an idea of world history.

**N.S.** I remember that you said that literature, having arisen in Rus' almost suddenly (but actually not at all suddenly, we simply do not know for sure), rose like a huge protective dome over the entire Russian land--from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, from the Volga to the Carpathians.

---

1. Interview conducted by N. G. Samveliana, "O natsional'nom chuvstve," 1988.

**D.L.** Yes, many works appeared which are notable by their high degree of historical, political and national self-awareness: *Word about Law and Grace* by Metropolitan Hilarion, *The Primary Chronicle* and the *Sermons* of Theodosius of the Caves. . . And the Kiev-Caves *Lives of the Fathers*! Serving the idea of the unity of Rus', it asserted the nation's originality and enabled the formation of a distinct Russian religious ceremony. For example, in the *Lives of the Fathers* the authors tell about the custom of putting a written text into the hand of a person who has died--a prayer for forgiveness of sins. Here is a new use of written language in one of the most "literate" countries of medieval Europe! And when the political unity of Rus' was weakening, literature took on a huge social responsibility--responsibility for a unified state. This is precisely what I had in mind when I said that literature raised a massive protective dome over Rus'--a protector of her unity and morality.

**N. S.** I would like to draw your attention to one remarkable figure of the times of fragmented Rus'--to the prince (more correctly--the king; he took this title) Daniil Romanovich Galitskii. He decisively resisted invasions from both East and West and successfully defeated the German knights. He attempted to create a strong Russian state. With equal fervor he built fortresses and churches. The Chronicle relates that he subjected the storyteller Mitus to persecutions. Perhaps for paganism? It is likely that Daniil Galitskii zealously watched over the establishment in Rus' of a unified Christian culture and cut off all others. . . . It is well known that he refused to convert to Catholicism although it promised certain immediate political advantages. Obviously he realized that Rus', not yet firmly established, would be spiritually absorbed by other countries. At the same time, during Daniil's reign, Armenians and Greeks appeared in Galicia, escaping from their own ruined countries. And they were accepted as brothers in faith. . .

**D.L.** I would say that you draw an image of a man responsible before his people. A man of high culture. One of those who used the considerable material means he had at his disposal for the development of cities, architecture, applied art, literature...

**N.S.** Thirty years after the prince/king in Galicia, Deacon Ivan Fedorov, the famous publisher, worked in Moscow.<sup>2</sup> He had a special mission which was akin to the cultural and moral concerns of Daniil Romanovich--for him as well, the idea of the unity of Rus' reigned supreme.

**D.L.** The figure of Ivan Fedorov is one of the puzzles in the history of our culture. However, it is one of those puzzles which yield to guesswork. In the year of the 1000th anniversary of the acceptance of Christianity by Rus', it is difficult not to recall Ivan Fedorov. To a great degree Christianity promoted the development in Rus' of ideas of the unity of mankind and of the responsibility of each people and each nation for world-wide harmony and enlightenment. For Cyril and Methodius it was Bulgaria, for the writers of ancient Rus', it was Rus'. The feeling of responsibility for the whole world became a particular characteristic of all eastern Slavic literature, partially inherited from Cyril and Methodius. Thanks to this characteristic, eastern Slavic literatures were always literatures with "open borders." Translations occupied just as important a position in these literatures as original works. Manuscripts from the Balkan countries were brought into Rus' and "blended" with their own; composite wording came about--Bulgarian-Russian, Serbo-Russian, Moldavian-Wallachian-Bulgarian-Russian, etc. We also need to take into account the fact that up until very recently, the literatures of three related peoples--Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian--were considered to be (and developed as) a single literature. Ivan Fedorov, taking his work from Moscow to L'vov, was in no way a defector or traitor. Remember, in the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries many Serbian and Bulgarian writers moved to Rus! They felt at home here. They defended the cause of eastern Slavdom. The eastern Slavic copyists and scribes worked in the monasteries of Mt. Athos, Bulgaria, Serbia, Moldavia-Wallachia and in Budapest. . .

---

2. Ivan Fedorovich Fedorov ( -1583) was the first printer in Russia. He printed the first book in Moscow; later he fled to Lithuania and then to Poland.

**N.S.** Here, Dmitrii Sergeevich, it is right to lament that we still study so little the historical role of monasteries in all aspects and in the whole scope of their activity. It is clear that they were the original patterns for all of feudal society and its culture. Monasteries were rich landowners and staunch fortresses along the path of the enemy. They were shelters for wanderers and protectors of thought. . . .

**D.L.** Yes, in monasteries they managed a model household. They healed people. They compiled and copied books and studied reading and writing. . . .

**N.S.** Ivan Fedorov was a spiritual figure and was buried in L'vov's Onufriev Monastery. Although his responsibilities, if they can be called that, were much greater than the rank he held, and more important than the decrees which he carried out.

**D.L.** Judging by Fedorov's Moscow editions, his business was well organized in Moscow. He had excellent assistants. Up to now, no typographical errors have been found in his Moscow editions, not a single error, which were unavoidable not only in Russia but also in Western Europe (with the exception of Venetian book publishing during the Renaissance).

The supposition that in Moscow an accusation of heresy could fall upon Ivan Fedorov could scarcely be considered serious. In what way could he be considered a heretic? He worked only at the typography business in Moscow, did not allow any deviations from the traditional text in books and verified the text with the best Russian manuscripts, not attempting to correct it according to Greek or Latin editions. I am convinced that Ivan Fedorov moved to L'vov in order to help the eastern Slavic peoples, who at that time were for him a single "Russian people," in the battle for their faith and culture. He attracted so much suspicion in L'vov and Ostrog precisely because the mediocre people around him were more inclined to believe in profit than in unprofitable, sincere feelings.

**N.S.** It is likely that many were simply not prepared to understand the mission of Ivan Fedorov. He fought for an enlightened, spiritually unified Rus'. The concept of a book as a moral shield became his

guiding force. Speaking in contemporary language, we could call Fedorov a man of democratic convictions. It seems to me that he foresaw that the efforts of Ivan the Terrible--to create a centralized state with fire and sword--would evoke counterreaction and centrifugal forces, and that this would finally lead to great discord.

**D.L.** In his novel, *Muscovy's Secret Ambassador*, you suggest that Fedorov, in conflict with his time and with the harshness of his era, proposed other means of unification and national development. For him these were above all education and a general raising of the cultural level. Remember that Fedorov published biographies of Cyril and Methodius! This could not have been by chance. This was a principled and symbolic act. Probably nowhere in the world did literature play such a huge role as for the eastern Slavs, and Ivan Fedorov understood this.

**N.S.** In this respect he was an extraordinarily patient man. Recognizing himself to be a Russian educator and being Russian Orthodox, he did not display aggressiveness in relation to other peoples, to other faiths, or to any national self-awareness. I would even call him a convinced peacemaker. One characteristic and remarkable fact about him is that as a talented engineer, Ivan Fedorov created a cannon unprecedented for those times, but judging by what we know, he destroyed his drawings, apparently realizing that the dreadful weapon would only bring grief to people. . . .

**D.L.** Peacemaking was an essential part of eastern Slavic literatures. *Mir* [peace] is "quietness," "calmness," "peaceful time." *Mir* [world] is the "universe," the "earthly globe." *Mir* is "humanity." All these meanings are in this one word. The eastern Slavic literatures have always served the cause of *mir* in all its meanings. One can see the literature of ancient Rus' as a literature of one theme and one subject. This subject is world history; its theme is the meaning of human life. The military ideal portrayed in, say, Sviatoslav's *Izbornik*, does not indicate any particular militarism among the ancient Russians. War promoted a feeling of one's own worth, a preparedness for self-sacrifice, a feeling of honor. "A prince loves a soldier, standing and fighting with enemies," just as God sympathizes with whomever "suffers

(that is, labors) for the truth." These are the qualities of the ideal established by ancient Russian art. The famous Kievan preacher Theodosius of the Caves said in one of his sermons that works of art are created not so much by a person--an artist or an architect--as much as for a person, in his name, in his glory.

The people of Kievan Rus' thought in large scale, of global problems, and considered themselves part of the huge universe. . . . The passing twentieth century has known unprecedented fragmentation and disagreement. The unification of all people on the earth can and must occur on the basis of culture and economy. I trust that the twenty-first century will be characterized by culture. It will belong to all humanity. . . .

**N.S.** But humanity is being stalked by spiritual emptiness. It is aggressive; it maintains that a person must eat his fill, sleep, and amuse himself, while working as little as possible.

**D.L.** I think that we will succeed in feeding all the people in the world soon--within another century or so. But humanity does not exist to fill its stomach and ride in fast cars. The meaning of its existence is creativity and the results of this creativity. I am convinced of this. Culture is a powerful unifying factor, a factor of peace, agreement, and mutual understanding. The culture of each people is an open door to its soul. The cultural "genetic fund" of the whole earth must be preserved in its entirety. Therefore, returning to the theme of our conversation, we must never forget that religion too is a cultural phenomenon. It is the oldest aspect of culture and the least *scientifically* studied. Here "tolerant atheists" must help--people who can be the most unfettered in their approach to the study of religion. It is likely that a representative of one religion is sometimes more intolerant of another religion than an intelligent atheist. It is true, it seems to me, even among representatives of various religions that mutual intolerance has diminished. Many alliances have appeared which have united religious figures in the struggle for peace and social justice. It is possible with time that religions will become more secular, and one more division will be mitigated--that between the religious world view and the non-religious.

I remembered hearing an idea which had been stated at an international forum dedicated to the problems of war and peace, by Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Pitirim: we must differentiate between political ideology and world view. World views can differ, but political doctrine must be common--for peace and unity. There can be similar world views and still be enmity.

In my opinion we must build the culture of the next century as united for all humanity.

**N.S.** It is absolutely clear that the arrival in the world of the "new thinking," of the new consciousness is happening right now. We are at the beginning of a long road which will possibly be both thorny and difficult at times. And our discussion is merely an attempt to broach this topic. Much of it is still an outline, scantily visible. But we must think and speak of it.



---

## The Baptism of Rus' and the State of Rus'<sup>1</sup>

In Soviet historical studies about Ancient Rus' no question is more important (and less studied) than that of the spread of Christianity in the first centuries after its adoption.

At the beginning of the twentieth century a number of extremely important studies appeared in rapid succession, variously posing and solving the problem of the acceptance of Christianity. These were the studies of E. E. Golubinskii, Academician A. A. Shakhmatov, M. D. Priselkov, V. A. Parkhomenko, V. I. Lamanskii, N. K. Nikol'skii, P. A. Lavrov, N. D. Polonskaia and many others. However, after 1918 this theme no longer seemed important. It simply disappeared from the pages of our academic press.

The purpose of my article therefore entails not completing but beginning to formulate some of the questions associated with the acceptance of Christianity. This is not for the purpose of provoking agreement, but perhaps to contradict the usual views, all the more because the established points of view often do not have a solid basis, but are the consequence of some unstated and largely mythical constructs.

One of these illusions, which has been inserted in general history courses of the USSR and other quasi-official publications, is the idea that Russian Orthodoxy has always been the same, has never changed, and has always played a reactionary role. It has even been

---

1. D. S. Likhachev, "Kreshchenie Rusi i gosudarstvo Rus'," *Novyi Mir*, No. 6, 1988.

asserted that paganism was better (the "people's religion!"), happier and "more materialistic."

But the fact is that even the defenders of Christianity often give in to certain prejudices, and their judgments are largely biases.

We will focus in this article on only one problem--the state interpretation of the acceptance of Christianity. I do not dare to pass off my views as the only prescribed ones, the more so because even the most basic, original source data are not clear enough to formulate any kind of reliable concept.

Above all we must understand that paganism was the "state religion." Paganism was not a religion as we understand it--like Christianity, Islam or Buddhism. It was a rather chaotic combination of different beliefs and cults, but not a doctrine. It was a combination of religious rites and a whole series of objects of religious reverence. Therefore, the unification of the people of various tribes, so needed by the eastern Slavs in the tenth to the twelfth centuries, could not have been accomplished by paganism. In paganism itself there were relatively few specifically national characteristics which were peculiar only to one people. At best, individual tribes and the population of different locations united on the basis of a common cult. Meanwhile, the desire to escape the oppressive influence of solitude among the sparsely populated forests, swamps and steppes, and the fear of abandonment, as well as fear of the threatening manifestations of nature forced people to seek unity. They were surrounded by what they called "mute ones" [*nemtsy*],<sup>2</sup> that is, people who do not speak an understandable language--enemies, who came to Rus' "from heaven knows where." The steppe region on the border of Rus' was the "unknowable country."

The yearning to conquer this great expanse is obvious in native art. People erected their buildings on the steep banks of rivers and lakes in order to be visible from afar. They organized noisy celebrations and engaged in religious prayer meetings. Folk songs were meant to be sung in large open spaces. Brightly colored paints were needed in order to be noticeable from a long distance away. People strived to be hospitable and treated merchants and visitors with

---

2. The current Russian word for Germans--trans.

respect, for they were messengers from the outside world, storytellers who testified to the existence of other lands. Hence the enthusiasm for rapid travel over great distances. Hence also the monumental nature of art.

People built burial mounds in order not to forget about the dead, but tombs and tombstones still did not tell of their feeling of history as a process extended over time. The past was one unified antiquity, not divided into epochs and not chronologically ordered. Time consisted of a repeating yearly cycle to which it was necessary to conform in one's farm work. Time as history still did not exist.

Time and events demanded knowledge of the world and history on a broad scale. It is especially noteworthy that the craving for a broader understanding of the world than paganism was able to provide was met above all along the trade and military routes of Rus' and especially where the first state structures were built. It is clear that the aspiration for statehood was not brought in from outside, from Greece or Scandinavia; otherwise it would not have had the phenomenal success in Rus' which characterized the tenth century.

In 980 the true founder of the huge empire of Rus', Prince Vladimir I Sviatoslavich, made the first attempt to unify paganism in the whole territory: from the eastern cliffs of the Carpathians to the Oka and the Volga Rivers; and from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, including the eastern Slavic tribes, the Finno-Ugric and the Turks. The *Chronicle* tells us, "our Prince Vladimir began to rule by himself and placed idols on a hill just outside the princely court:" Perun (in Finno-Ugric Perkun), Khors (the god of the Turkish tribes), Dazhbog, Stribog (the Slavic gods), Simargla and Mokosh' (goddesses of the Mokosh' tribe).

The seriousness of Vladimir's intentions was demonstrated by the fact that after the creation of the pantheon of gods in Kiev, he sent his uncle Dobrynia to Novgorod and there he "placed idols above the River Volkhov and the people of Novgorod worshipped them as if they were gods." As always in Russian history, Vladimir gave preference to the foreign Finno-Ugric tribe. The main idol which Dobrynia placed in Novgorod was the idol of the Finnish god Perkun, even though the cult of the Slavic god Veles (or Volos) was apparently much more widespread in Novgorod.

However, the interests of the country led Rus' to a more developed and universal religion. This call was clearly heard where people of various tribes and nations tended to associate with each other. This call brought with it a great past, and its echo is heard during the whole course of Russian history.

The great European trade route, referred to in the Russian Chronicles as the route "from the Varangians to the Greeks," that is, from Scandinavia to Byzantium and back, was the most important road in Europe even until the twelfth century when European trade between south and north moved westward. This route not only linked Scandinavia with Byzantium, it also had offshoots, the most important of which was the road to the Caspian Sea along the Volga River. The most important part of all these routes lay across the lands of the eastern Slavs and was used by them first, but it also crossed the lands of the Finno-Ugric peoples who took part in the trade, in the processes of state formation and in military campaigns against Byzantium. One of the most well-known places in Kiev was the Chudin court, that is, the inn of the Chud tribe--the ancestors of the modern Estonians.

There is much evidence to the effect that Christianity began to spread in Rus' well before the official baptism of Rus' at the time of Vladimir I Sviatoslavich in 988 (there are also other proposed dates of the baptism, the examination of which does not enter into the scope of this book). All this evidence indicates that Christianity appeared first of all in the meeting places of people of various nationalities, even if this contact was not always peaceful. This again shows that people needed a universal, world religion, which was to have served to acquaint Rus' with world culture. It is certainly no accident that this entrance into the world arena was organically linked with the appearance in Rus' of a highly organized literary language which would consolidate this acquaintance in texts, mostly translations. The written language provided the capability of communicating not only with the contemporary cultures of Rus' but also with past cultures. It made the writing of their national history, as well as philosophical generalizations about their national experience and literature possible.

The very first legend of the *Primary Russian Chronicle* about Christianity in Rus' tells of the journey of the apostle Andrew (the First Chosen) from Sinopyn and Korsun (Khersones) along the great route

"from the Greeks to the Varangians," along the Dnieper, Lovat' and Volkhov to the Baltic Sea and then circumnavigating Europe to Rome.

In this legend Christianity is already portrayed as the country's unifier and as joining Rus' to Europe. Of course, this journey of the apostle Andrew is purely legendary, if only because in the first century the eastern Slavs as such did not yet exist; they were not yet formed into a unified people. However, the appearance of Christianity on the northern banks of the Black Sea in the very earliest period was reported even by non-Russian sources. The apostle Andrew preached on his way across the Caucasus to the Bosphorus (Kerch'), Theodosius and Khersones. Eusebius of Caesarea (died c. 340 AD), in particular, wrote about the propagation of Christianity by the apostle Andrew in Scythia. The biography of Pope Clement tells of his arrival in Khersones, where he died during the reign of Emperor Trajan (96-117 AD). During Trajan's reign, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Hermon, sent several bishops to Khersones, where, one after another, they died as martyrs. The last of these bishops sent by Hermon died at the mouth of the Dnieper River. At the time of Emperor Constantine the Great, Bishop Kapiton appeared in Khersones and also died a martyr. The existence of a Christian community in the Crimea that required a bishop can be reliably dated as of the third century.

Representatives from the Bosphorus and Khersones, as well as Metropolitan Gotofil attended the first world council in Nicea (325 AD). Gotofil's diocese was outside of the Crimea, but the bishopric of Tauritius was subject to its authority. The presence of these representatives has been established by their signatures on Council resolutions. Several fathers of the church--Tertullian, Athanasius of Alexandria, John the Golden Tongued, Blessed Hieronymus--also mention the Christianity of some of the Scythians.

The Christian Goths who lived in the Crimea formed a strong state and strongly influenced not only the Slavs but also the Lithuanians and Finns--at least their languages.

Ties with the northern Black Sea area were made more difficult by the great migration of nomadic peoples during the second half of the fourth century. However, trade routes continued to exist, and Christianity unquestionably spread northward. Christianity continued to expand under Emperor Justinian the Great into the Crimea, the northern Caucasus and the eastern shore of the Sea of Azov, among

the Goths-Trapezit, who, according to Prokopius, "confessed the Christian faith with a simple spirit and great peace" (sixth century AD).

With the expansion of the Turkish-Khazar horde from the Urals and the Caspian Sea to the Carpathian Mountains and the Crimean shore, an unusual cultural situation developed. Not only Islam and Judaism were widespread in the Khazar state, but also Christianity, especially since the Roman emperors Justinian II and Constantine V had married Khazar princesses, and Greek builders erected fortresses in Khazaria. In addition, Christians from Georgia, escaping from Moslems, fled northward, that is, to Khazaria. In the Crimea and the northern Caucasus in the borderlands of Khazaria, the number of Christian bishops increased, especially in the middle of the eighth century AD. At that time in Khazaria there were eight bishops. It is possible that the spread of Christianity to Khazaria and the establishment of friendly Byzantine-Khazar relations created a likely situation for religious debates among the three religions which predominated in Khazaria: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Each of these religions strove for spiritual predominance, according to Hebrew-Khazar and Arabic sources. In particular, in the middle of the ninth century--as noted by Cyril-Constantine and Methodius, the enlighteners of the Slavs, in their "Life of Pannon"--the Khazars invited theologians from Byzantium for religious debates with Jews and Moslems. This confirms the possibility of electing a faith, as Vladimir did, by referendums and debates, as described by the Russian chroniclers.

It would seem natural that Christianity in Rus' also emerged through realization of the importance of the fact that, in the tenth century, Rus' main neighbors were states with a Christian population--the northern Black Sea area and Byzantium, and Christians travelled along the main trade routes which intersected Rus' from the south to the north and from the west to the east. Byzantium and Bulgaria played a special role in this regard.

Let us begin with Byzantium. Rus' besieged Constantinople three times--in 866, 907 and 941. These were not ordinary robbers' raids; they ended with the conclusion of peace treaties which established new trade and state relations between Rus' and Byzantium.

And though only pagans participated on the Russian side in the treaty of 912, in the treaty of 945 Christians played the major role.

Within a short time the number of Christians obviously grew. This is demonstrated also by Kievan princess Ol'ga's acceptance of Christianity. Both Russian and Byzantine historians wrote about the magnificent welcome prepared for Princess Ol'ga in Constantinople in 955.

It is not worth beginning an examination of the very complex issue of where and when Ol'ga's grandson Vladimir was baptized. The chronicler himself, in the eleventh century, refers to the existence of different versions of the story. One fact seems obvious. Vladimir was baptized after his betrothal to Anna, the sister of the Byzantine emperor, since he doubtless understood that the mighty Roman emperor, Basil II, would never agree to become related to a barbarian.

Basil's predecessor, Emperor Constantine Bagrianorodnyi, in his widely known work, "On Ruling an Empire," written for his son, the future Emperor Roman II (the father of Emperor Basil II), had prohibited his descendants from marrying representatives of barbarian peoples. In this ban, he referred to Emperor Constantine (I) the Great, Equal to the Apostles, who had inscribed on the altar of the church of Saint Sofia a ban against Romans becoming related to foreigners, especially non-baptized ones.

We also must take into consideration that the might of the Byzantine Empire had reached its peak during the second half of the tenth century. The empire had repelled the Arab threat and overcome the cultural crisis associated with iconoclasm,<sup>3</sup> which had led to a substantial decline of the fine arts. It is noteworthy that in that dawning of Byzantine might, Vladimir I Sviatoslavich played a substantial role.

In the summer of 988 a select six-thousand-man detachment of Varangian-Russian troops sent by Vladimir I Sviatoslavich rescued the Byzantine Emperor Basil II and utterly defeated the troops who were attempting to occupy the imperial throne of Varda Foka. Vladimir himself accompanied his troops as far as the rapids of the Dnieper River. Having fulfilled their duty, the troops remained to serve in Byzantium. (Subsequently the imperial guards became a bodyguard of

---

3. Literally, the religious debate over the validity of representing holy personages through icons--trans.

Anglo-Varangians.) As a reward, the highest honor was bestowed upon Vladimir. He was promised the hand of Anna, the sister of the emperor, who by this time was already twenty-six years old.

But the promise was not kept, and Vladimir I was forced to win Anna's hand by military force. He besieged and took the Byzantine fortress of Khersones in the Crimea, and after that the marriage took place. With this marriage Vladimir achieved his goal, that Rus' ceased being considered a barbarian people in Byzantium and began to be called a Christian people. The dynastic prestige of the Kievan princes also rose.

The christianization of Rus' and the relationship of its ruling family to the Byzantine court brought Rus' into the family of European peoples on a completely equal basis. Vladimir Sviatoslavich's son Sviatopolk married the daughter of the Polish King Boleslav the Courageous. Vladimir's daughter Maria Dobrognova was given to the Polish Prince Casimir I. Elizabeth, the daughter of Yaroslav the Wise, married the Norwegian King Harold the Brave, who had courted her for several years. Yaroslav's other daughter, Anna, became queen of France after the death of her husband Henry I. Yaroslav's third daughter, Anastasia, married the Hungarian King Andrei I. It would take a long time to recount all the family ties of the Russian princes of the eleventh to the twelfth centuries, but they demonstrate the immense prestige of Rus' in Europe.

But let us return to the issue of the Varangian-Russians. Russian Varangians should be distinguished from the Anglo-Varangians who later replaced the Russian Varangians in the service of the Byzantine Empire. Included among the Russian bodyguard were representatives of various countries and various peoples: Scandinavians, Germans, Saracens, Polovtsians, Bulgarians and eastern Slavs. But it is remarkable that Russian princes, whatever they were by blood and name, spoke only the colloquial Slavonic language and read only Slavonic, and that no traces of Scandinavian languages have remained in Russian Christianity. By contrast, the language of the church writings, and those books which were brought to us or recopied by us, were in the literary language of Bulgaria. This attests to the huge significance of Bulgaria in Russia's acceptance of Christianity. This is also because Bulgaria stood on the route "from the Varangians to the

Greeks," the significance of which, in the acceptance of a multi-national religion, was emphasized above.

Thanks to the Bulgarian writing system, Christianity entered Rus' as a highly organized religion with a high level of culture. There is every reason to believe that the Slavs had a primitive writing system even before the baptism of Rus'. There is evidence of this in treaties with the Greeks, one copy of which was prepared in Russian. One cannot overestimate the role and significance of the language which has come across to us with the church books from Bulgaria. The liturgy was conducted exclusively in that language. It was a language of a highly developed culture which gradually absorbed the eastern Slavic lexicon and spelling. This illustrates the great role Bulgaria played in the baptism of Rus'. That church writing system, which was transmitted to us by Bulgaria, is ultimately the most important benefit of the baptism of Rus'.

There is one final detail. Scandinavian sagas about Olaf Trigtvason tell about the baptism of the Norwegian king Olaf. According to various versions of the sagas, Olaf was baptized either in Greece or in Kiev, where he was persuaded to accept Christianity by Konung Valdemar, that is, Prince Vladimir. The same prince Vladimir, before his marriage to Anna, made the decision to be baptized under the influence of the most intelligent of his wives. Of all his wives, the only one whose language was related to his own and who could persuade him about such a complex matter was a Bulgarian.

But it was not merely a matter of a highly organized and complex literature which became known and understood in Rus'. There was also an easing of communication with other peoples which, as is well known, is often hindered by religious prejudices or a conviction of cultural and moral superiority. But Christianity as a whole stimulated a consciousness of the unity of humanity. The Apostle Paul wrote in his Epistle to the Galatians: "There is no Jew, nor pagan, nor slave, nor free," and in the First Epistle to the Corinthians: "...we are all baptized by one Spirit into one body. . . and the body is made up not of one member, but of many."

Along with the consciousness of equality, a consciousness of the common history of all humanity came to Rus'. In the first half of the eleventh century, Kievan Metropolitan Hilarion, Russian by origin, became a key spokesman for the formation of a national self-

consciousness in his famous *Word about Law and Grace*, in which he depicted the future role of Rus' in the Christian world. However, the "Speech of the Philosopher" was also written in the tenth century, presenting an interpretation of world history in which Russian history must also be intertwined. Above all, Christian teachings provided a consciousness of the common history of humanity and the participation of all peoples in that history.

How was Christianity accepted in Rus'? We know that in many European countries Christianity was imposed by force. Even in Rus', baptism was not accomplished without violence, but on the whole the spread of Christianity in Rus' was relatively peaceful, especially if we recall other examples. Khlodvig violently baptized his militia. Karl the Great violently baptized the Saxons. Stefan I, king of Hungary, violently baptized his people and forced those who had accepted Christianity according to the Byzantine rite to repudiate eastern Christianity. Yet we do not have verified information of mass violence on the part of Vladimir I Sviatoslavich. The overthrow of the idols of Perun in the south and in the north was not accompanied by repressions. The idols were discarded in the river, as they later discarded decrepit holy objects--the old icons, for example. The people wept for their vanquished god, but did not rebel. The uprising of the Volkhovs in the Belozersk area in 1071, which the *Primary Chronicle* recounts, was evoked by hunger, not by a desire to return to paganism. Moreover, Vladimir understood Christianity in his own particular way and even refused to put robbers to death, saying, "I am afraid of sin."

Christianity was won from Byzantium at the walls of Khersones, but it did not become an aggressive action against their people.

One of the happier aspects of the acceptance of Christianity in Rus' was that it spread without special demands and sermons directed against paganism. Though Leskov in the story, "At the Edge of the World," put words in the mouth of Metropolitan Platon to the effect that "Vladimir was in a hurry, and the Greeks played a cunning trick--they baptized untaught ignoramuses," it was precisely this situation which enabled the peaceful penetration of Christianity into peoples' lives and did not permit the churches to take sharply hostile positions toward pagan rituals and beliefs; on the contrary, Christian ideas were

gradually inserted into paganism, which led the populace to see in Christianity a peaceful transformation of peoples' lives.

Is this double faith? No, it is not! Double faith is in general impossible; either faith is single, or it does not exist. During the first centuries of Christianity in Rus' this situation could not have existed, for no one was in a position to take away from people the tendency to see the unusual in the usual, to believe in life beyond the grave and in the existence of a divine principle. In order to understand what actually happened, let us turn again to the specifics of ancient Russian paganism and to its chaotic and non-dogmatic nature.

Any religion, including even the chaotic paganism of Rus', has, in addition to all kinds of cults and idols, certain moral precepts. These moral precepts, whatever they are, provide organization for peoples' lives. Ancient Russian paganism penetrated all layers of the society of ancient Rus', which was at the time beginning to be feudalized. It is clear from entries in the *Chronicles* that Rus' already had an ideal of military behavior. This ideal is evident in the stories of the *Primary Chronicle* about Prince Sviatoslav.

Here is his famous speech to his soldiers: "Willingly or unwillingly we must stand up and defend ourselves, so as not to dishonor the Russian land. If need be we shall die so that those who have died be not dishonored. If we retreat, it is great shame. If we do not retreat, but instead stand firm, I will go before all of you. If I happen to fall, only then should you decide what to do."

At one time students in the secondary schools of Russia learned this speech by heart, taking in both its chivalrous meaning and the beauty of Russian speech, just as they learned other speeches of Sviatoslav or the famous characterization of him given by the chronicler: "He was light of foot like a leopard, and he made many wars. During expeditions he never had a wagon, neither cattle, nor did he boil meat, but, slicing the horse meat thinly, he roasted it over a fire. He did not even set up a tent, but only used a saddle for his pillow and saddle blanket for cover. And his companions did the same. Having prepared for war, he sent messengers to lands he was about to attack: "I am coming for you."

I am purposely stating all these quotations [in ancient Russian] (in the original Russian text) and not translating them into modern Russian so that the reader can appreciate the beauty, precision and

succinctness of ancient Russian literary speech, which for a thousand years enriched the Russian literary language.

This ideal of princely behavior--selfless devotion to country, scorn for death in battle, democratic ideals and a spartan lifestyle, directness even in dealings with an enemy--all this remained even after acceptance of Christianity and made a special imprint on stories of Christian zealots. In the *Izbornik of 1076*, a book of moral instruction written especially for a prince who could take it with him on campaigns for reading (I have written about this in a separate work), there are the following lines: "Beauty to a soldier is his weapon and to a ship its sail; the same to a righteous man is book learning." A righteous man is compared with a soldier! Independent of where and when this text was written, it characterizes the lofty Russian military ethic.

The merging of the pagan ideal of princely behavior with Christian precepts is clearly evident in the *Sermons* of Vladimir Monomakh, written most likely at the end of the eleventh century, although possibly at the beginning of the twelfth century (the precise time of writing is not important). Monomakh is praised for the quantity and rapidity of his campaigns (the idea of the "ideal prince" harks back to Sviatoslav), for his courage in battles and at the hunt (the two main princely activities): "I want to tell you, my children, that I have been on military campaigns and hunting expeditions since the age of thirteen."<sup>4</sup> Having described his life, he notes: "From Chernigov to Kiev I went (more than 100 times) to visit my father and returned before evening. I made at least eighty-three major campaigns, not counting minor ones."<sup>5</sup>

Monomakh did not even conceal his crimes: how many people he beat, and how many towns he burned. After this, as a truly noble example of Christian behavior, he cited his letter to Oleg, the high moral content of which I have had occasion to note in the past. In the name of the principle proclaimed by Monomakh at the Lubeck

---

4. "A se vy povedaiu deti moia, trud svoi, ozhe siz esm' truzhal, puti deia (v pokhody khodia) i lovy (okhoty) s 13 let."

5. "A iz Shehernigova do Kyeve nestish'dy (bolce sta raz) ezdkh ko ottsiu, dnem esy pereezdil do vecherni. A vsekh putii 80 i 3 velikikh, a proka nenspomniu menshikh"

conference of princes, "Let everyone hold onto his patrimony,"<sup>6</sup> Monomakh forgives his conquered opponent, Oleg Sviatoslavich ("Gorislavich"), in battle with whom his son Iziaslav fell, and offers to let him return to his native land--Chernigov--with the following words: "For what are we but sinful men and short-lived, today in glory and honor and tomorrow in the coffin and forgotten, except that our property will be divided by other people."<sup>7</sup> This is perfectly Christian reasoning and, one might add in passing, extremely important for this time of transition to the new order of Russian land ownership at the turn of the eleventh to the twelfth century.

Education was an important Christian virtue at the time of Vladimir. After the baptism of Rus', Vladimir, as the *Primary Chronicle* states, "began to select children from among the aristocratic clans (that is, the people of the privileged class) and send them for book learning." These lines have evoked various conjectures: where this "book study" was carried out, and what type of schools there were, but one thing was clear: "book study" became a subject of state concern.

Finally, another Christian virtue, from Vladimir's point of view, was the charity of the rich to the poor and wretched. Having been baptized, Vladimir began above all to care for the sick and the poor. According to the *Chronicles*, Vladimir "allowed every beggar and indigent to come to the prince's court and receive what he needed--drink, food or money." And for those who could not come, who were weak and ill, provisions were brought to their houses. While this concern of his was limited to Kiev or even to part of Kiev, the story of the Chronicle is extremely important, for it shows that the chronicler, and along with him no doubt the majority of his readers and transcribers, considered charity and kindness the most important aspects of Christianity. Common generosity became charity. These were different acts, for the latter act of goodness is transmitted from

---

6. "Kozhdo da derzhit otchinu svoiu"

7. "A my chto esmy, chelovetsi greshni i likhi?--dnes' zhivi, a utro mertvi, dnes' v slave i v chti (i chesti), a zautro v grobe i bes pamiati (nikto pomnit' nas ne budet), ini sobran'e nashe razdeliat'."

the person giving to the recipient, and this was the purpose of Christian charity.

Later we will return again to another aspect of the Christian religion which turned out to be extremely inviting in the choice of faith and which determined the nature of eastern Slavic religiosity for many years to come. But for now let us turn to that lower layer of the population that before the baptism of Rus' was called the "Smerd," and that later, contrary to the views of most scholars of the modern era, became the most Christian class of the population, from whose faith it also received its name, the peasantry (*krest'ianstvo*).

Their paganism was displayed not so much in the higher gods, as by the layer of beliefs which regulated work activity according to a seasonal cycle: spring, summer, autumn, and winter. These beliefs turned work into a holiday and taught the love and respect for the land necessary for agricultural labor. Here Christianity quickly became reconciled with paganism, more precisely, with its ethic and with the moral precepts of peasant labor.

Paganism was not unified. Paganism had a "higher" mythology associated with the basic gods whom Vladimir wished to unify even before the acceptance of Christianity. He wished to set up his own pantheon "outside the tower courtyard." But paganism also included a "lower" mythology which was made up mainly of beliefs of an agricultural nature and instilled in the people a moral relationship with the land and with each other.

The first level of beliefs was emphatically rejected by Vladimir, and its idols thrown down and dropped into the river, both in Kiev and in Novgorod. However, the second level of beliefs began to be christianized and to acquire shades of Christian moral principles.

Recent studies (mainly the remarkable work of M. M. Gromyko, *Traditional Norms of Behavior and Forms of Community of Russian Peasants in the Nineteenth Century*, Moscow, 1986) provide numerous examples of this.

Peasant *pomochi* or *toloka* have remained in various sections of our country, i.e., common labor, done by a whole peasant community. In the pre-feudal pagan village *pomochi* were done as a ritual of common agricultural labor. In the Christian (peasant) village *pomochi* became a form of collective aid for poor families--families with no head of household, invalids, orphans, etc. The ethical idea contained in

pomochi was reinforced in the christianized agricultural community. It is remarkable that pomochi were conducted like a holiday and had a merry character accompanied by jokes, witticisms, sometimes competitions and community feasts. In this way any offensive stigma of peasant aid to weak families was eliminated. The pomochi was given from neighbors not as alms and sacrifice which denigrated those who were helped, but as a jolly custom bringing joy to all who participated. Recognizing the importance of what was being accomplished, people dressed up in their holiday clothes and put their finest harnesses on the horses.

"Although the toloka was heavy and not especially pleasant work, it was a pure holiday for all the participants, especially for children and youth," reported an observer of the toloka (or pomochi) in the Pskov province.

The pagan custom thus acquired an ethical Christian nuance. Christianity also softened and absorbed other pagan customs. Thus, for example, the *Primary Russian Chronicle* tells of the pagan custom of betrothing brides by the water. This custom was connected with a cult of springs and wells and of water in general. With the introduction of Christianity, beliefs in water weakened, but the custom of being introduced to a girl when she went with buckets to the water remained. Preliminary betrothals of a girl to a young man were conducted at the water.

Perhaps the most important example of preservation or even augmentation of the moral principle of paganism is the cult of the land. The peasants (indeed not only the peasants, as B. L. Komarovich has demonstrated in his work, *Cult of the Family and Land in the Princely Milieu of the XI-XIII Centuries*) saw the land as an object of worship. Before the beginning of agricultural labor, they asked the land's forgiveness for "ripping open its breast" with a plow. They begged forgiveness of the land for all their offenses against morality. Even in the nineteenth century Raskol'nikov in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, begs forgiveness right in the public square primarily of the land itself for the murder he committed.

There are many other examples. The acceptance of Christianity did not eliminate the lower layer of paganism, just as higher mathematics did not discard elementary math. There are not two sciences of mathematics; neither were there two faiths among the

peasantry. Gradual christianization proceeded alongside the gradual dying off of pagan customs and rituals.

Now let us return to one extremely important aspect in the baptism of Rus'.

The *Primary Russian Chronicle* presents a beautiful legend about Vladimir's testing of the faiths. Vladimir first sent ambassadors to the Moslems and then to the Germans, who conducted their service according to the western custom, and finally they came to Tsargrad (the Russian name for Constantinople), to the Greeks. The last story of the ambassadors was extremely significant, for it was more important for Vladimir to choose Christianity specifically from Byzantium. I will present it in full in translation into modern Russian. Vladimir's ambassadors came to Tsargrad and appeared before the Byzantine emperor.

The emperor asked them why they had come. They were glad to tell him everything. Having heard their story, the emperor rejoiced and paid them great honor on that same day. The next day he sent for the patriarch and told him: "The Russians have come to test our faith. Prepare the church and the clergy and dress yourself in your prelate's chasuble so that they may see the glory of our God." Hearing this, the patriarch proceeded to summon the clergy, arranged according to custom a holiday service, lit the censers and arranged singing and choruses. He went with the Russians to church and placed them in the best location, showing them the beauty of the church, the singing and the hierarch's service, the deacons standing ready, and told them about the service to their god. They (that is the ambassadors) were enraptured; they marvelled at and praised their service. The emperors Basil and Constantine then summoned them and told them: "Go to your homeland," and sent them off with magnificent gifts and honors. They then returned to their homeland. Prince Vladimir summoned his nobles and elders and told them: "The men I sent out have arrived; listen to everything that happened to them," and he turned to the ambassadors: "Speak before the retinue."

I leave out what the ambassadors said about other faiths, but here is what they said about the service in Tsargrad:

We came to the Greek land and they brought us to the place where they worship their god, and we did not know if we were in

heaven or on earth; for there is no such wonder on earth and no such beauty; we do not even know how to describe it. We only know that god is there among the people, and their service is better than in all the other countries. We cannot forget that beauty, for each person, if he tastes sweetness, cannot then take anything bitter; thus we are now unable to remain pagans.

Let us recall that the testing of faiths meant not which faith was more beautiful, but what faith was true. But the main argument of true faith, according to the ambassadors, was its beauty. And this is no accident! It was precisely the primacy of the artistic principle in church and state life that caused the first Russian Christian princes to so carefully construct their cities and place the churches centrally in them. Together with the church vessels and icons, Vladimir carried from Korsun (Kherstones) two copper idols (that is, two statues, not idols) and four copper horses ("which the ignorant believed to be marble"), and placed them behind the church of Desiatin, the most sacred site in the city.

The churches built during the eleventh century were the architectural centers of the old cities of the eastern Slavs: Sofia in Kiev, Sofia in Novgorod, the Savior in Chernigov, the Cathedral of the Assumption in Vladimir, etc. No subsequent churches or structures outshone what was built in the eleventh century.

Not one of the countries bordering on Rus' in the eleventh century could compare with it in the greatness of its architecture or in the art of painting, mosaics, applied art or in the intensity of historical thought expressed in the writing and translation of the chronicles.

The only country with architecture of comparable complexity, technique and beauty which can rival Byzantium, the precursor of Rus', is Bulgaria with its monumental buildings in Pliska and Preslav. Large stone churches were also built in northern Italy in Lombardy, in northern Spain, in England and in Rheims, but these are far away.

The question of why church-rotundas were widespread in the countries adjoining Rus' during the eleventh century is not entirely clear. Perhaps they imitated the rotunda built by Charlemagne in Aachen, or honored the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, or perhaps rotundas were considered more appropriate for the rite of baptism.

In any case, basilica-style churches gradually replaced church-rotundas, and by the twelfth century bordering countries carried on extensive construction and caught up to Rus', which nevertheless had continued to maintain its primacy all the way up to the Tatar-Mongol conquest.

Returning to the level of art in the pre-Mongol period in Rus', I cannot help but present a citation from the notes of Paul of Aleppo, who traveled across Russia at the time of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and who saw the ruin of the church of Sofia in Kiev: "A person's mind cannot begin to comprehend (the church of Sofia) because of the variety of colors of its marbles and the combinations of symmetrical placement of its parts, the great number and height of its columns, the height of its domes, its breadth, and the large number of porticos and vestibules." This description is not entirely precise, but one can believe the general impression which the church of Sofia gave to a foreigner who had seen the churches of Asia Minor and the Balkan peninsula. One can easily imagine that the artistic aspect was not incidental in the Christianity of Rus'.

The aesthetic aspect played an especially important role in the Byzantine renaissance of the ninth to the eleventh centuries, that is, just at that time when Rus' accepted baptism. Fotii, the Patriarch of Constantinople, appealing to Bulgarian Prince Boris in the ninth century, insistently stated the idea that beauty, harmonious unity and harmony as a whole characterizes the Christian faith and distinguishes it from heresy. In the perfection of the human face it is impossible either to add or subtract anything; thus also in the Christian faith. Inattention to the artistic side of liturgy, in the eyes of the Greeks of the ninth to the eleventh centuries, was an insult to God's dignity.

Russian culture was obviously prepared to accept this aesthetic aspect, for it had been maintained for a long time and had become the determinate element of the culture. Let us recall that over the course of many centuries Russian philosophy was closely linked with literature and poetry. That is why it is essential to study philosophy in connection with Lomonosov and Derzhavin, Tiutchev and Vladimir Solov'ev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Chernyshevskii. . . . Russian icon painting was philosophical "speculation in colors" and expressed a world view above all. Russian music is also philosophy. Mussorgsky was an outstanding, and as yet little known thinker, in particular a great historical thinker.

What was the benefit to Russian history of the Christianity accepted from Byzantium? It is not necessary to recount all the cases of moral influence of the church on Russian princes. They are commonly known by all who to a greater or lesser degree are dispassionately and non-prejudicially interested in Russian history. I will just note that Vladimir's acceptance of Christianity from Byzantium turned Rus' away from Moslem and pagan Asia and brought it closer to Christian Europe. Whether this was good or bad the reader may judge for himself. But one thing is indisputable: the beautifully organized Bulgarian writing system immediately allowed Rus' not simply to begin their literature, but also to continue it, and to create in the first century of Christianity works of which we can justly be proud.

By itself culture does not know precise origins, just as the people themselves do not know the precise beginnings of a tribe or of a settlement. All commemorative dates of this kind are approximate. But if we speak of the approximate date of the beginning of Russian culture, then I would consider the date 988 well-founded. Is it necessary to push back commemorative dates into the depths of time? Do we need a two-thousand-year-old date or a one-and-a-half-thousand-year-old one? With our worldwide accomplishments in all areas of art, such a date would hardly raise the level of Russian culture in any significant way. The main contributions of the eastern Slavs to world culture were made during the last thousand years. The rest is only presumed values.

Rus' appeared on the world arena with its Kiev--a rival to Constantinople--precisely one thousand years ago. One thousand years ago high quality painting and high quality applied art appeared in our midst--the two areas in which eastern Slavic culture was most advanced. We also know that Rus' was a highly literate country; otherwise it could not have formed such a highly developed literature as early as the dawn of the eleventh century. Its most significant work, remarkable in both form and context, was by the "Rus'sian" author Metropolitan Hilarion, *Word about Law and Grace*, a composition which was without peer at that time in any country. It was religious in form and historical and political in content.

Attempts to lend credence to the idea that Ol'ga and Vladimir accepted Christianity according to the Latin rite have no scientific basis

and are of a clearly tendentious nature. Only one thing is not clear: what significance it has if all of Christian culture was accepted by us from Byzantium and as a result of the particularly close relationship of Rus' with Byzantium. It is impossible to draw any specific conclusions from the fact that baptism was accepted in Rus' before the formal division of Christian churches into Byzantine-Eastern and Catholic-Western in 1054. It is also impossible to draw any decisive conclusions from the fact that before that division Vladimir welcomed Latin missionaries to Kiev "with love and honor" (why would he welcome them in any other way?). It is also impossible to conclude anything from the fact that Vladimir and Yaroslav both gave their daughters in marriage to kings who were part of the western Christian world. Did the Russian tsars in the nineteenth century not marry German and Danish princesses; did they not marry their daughters to influential western nobility?

It is not worth recounting the weak argument which Catholic historians of the Russian church often present. As Ivan the Terrible correctly commented to Possevino: "Our faith is not Greek, but Christian."

Yet we must take into consideration that Russia in no way agreed with the Florentine union. However we look at the refusal of the Moscow Grand Prince Vasilii Vasil'evich to accept the Florentine Union of 1439 with the Roman Catholic Church, for its time it was an act of the greatest political significance. For it not only aided in preserving Russia's own culture, but it also encouraged the reunification of the three eastern Slavic peoples, and, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, during the period of Polish intervention, aided in preserving the Russian state. Sergei M. Solov'ev, as usual, expressed this thought succinctly: the rejection of the Florentine Union by Vasilii II "is one of those great decisions which determines the fate of peoples for many centuries to come. . ." The fidelity to ancient piety, proclaimed by Grand Prince Vasilii Vasil'evich, maintained the independence of northeast Rus' in 1612, made accession to the Russian throne by the Polish crown prince impossible, and led to a battle for the faith in the Polish territories.

Not even the Uniate Council of 1596 in notorious Brest-Litovsk could wash away the distinctiveness of the Ukrainian and Belorussian national cultures.

The westernizing reforms of Peter I could not wash away the facet of originality although they were necessary for Russia.

The premature and thoughtlessly conceived church reforms of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich and Patriarch Nikon led to a schism in Russian culture, the unity of which was sacrificed for the sake of the purely ritualistic religious unity of Russia with the Ukraine and Belorussia.

Pushkin thus spoke of Christianity in his reply to N. Polevii's *History of the Russian People*: "Modern history is the history of Christianity." If we understand that by history Pushkin understood above all the history of culture, then Pushkin's point is in a sense correct also for Russia. The role and significance of Christianity in Rus' was very changeable, as changeable as Russian Orthodoxy itself was for Rus'. However, taking into account that painting, music, to a great degree architecture, and almost all literature in ancient Rus' was in the orbit of Christian thought, Christian argumentation and Christian themes, it is completely clear that Pushkin was right if his thought is broadly understood.



---

## The Experience of a Thousand Years: A Preliminary Assessment<sup>1</sup>

**A.Ch.** Dmitrii Sergeevich, more than anything else I do not want this conversation to be limited by so precise an anniversary as the date itself--one thousand years of the christianization of ancient Rus'. From what point shall we begin?

**D.L.** With the question of the role of the baptism of Rus' in the history of the culture of our Fatherland. I think that in general the history of Russian culture dates from the baptism of Rus'. This applies also to Ukrainian and Belorussian culture. Generally culture goes back to the Stone Age or to the Neolithic or Paleolithic Ages. But the characteristic features of Russian, Belorussian, or Ukrainian culture--of the eastern Slavic culture of ancient Rus'--go back to the time when Christianity replaced paganism.

Christianity is a written religion, which gave Rus' access to a highly developed mythology and to the history of Europe and Asia Minor. Ties developed with the culture of Byzantium, the most advanced country of that time. By the way, this association developed when the Byzantine culture was at its peak, during the ninth to eleventh centuries.

**A.Ch.** So, let us recall how this took place. . .

**D.L.** Rus' rescued the Byzantine emperor Basil at the time of Varda Foka's rise to power. Vladimir I sent six thousand troops of his select forces--Varangian Russians--to the aid of emperors Basil II and Constantine VIII, and they put down the uprising. As a result of this

---

1. "Predvaritel'nye itogi tysiacheletnego opyta," interview with D. S. Likhachev conducted by Andrei Chernov, *Ogonek*, No. 10, Mar 5-12, 1988.

Basil II evidently even promised to give his sister Anna in marriage to Vladimir. But when Emperor Basil II and his inactive co-ruler Constantine VIII were established on their throne, Basil II reneged on his promise and decided not to fulfill it because his grandfather, Constantine Bagrianorodnyi, had forbidden Byzantine emperors from becoming related to people of other ethnic groups, and especially to pagans. As proof he referred to the inscription on the altar of Sofia where it is said that female representatives of the emperor's family name must not marry foreigners. But Vladimir managed to win his right by military force.

He laid siege to Khersones--this Greek city is now within the boundaries of Sevastopol. Khersones fell, and, according to legend, the prince himself was baptized in the Khersones baptismal font, which, by the way, has been preserved up to the present.

Basil II then gave his sister to Vladimir I, and Rus' was raised to an unprecedented height in the dynastic system; the country became related to the emperor's seat in Byzantium. And Vladimir Monomakh was a descendant of the Byzantine emperors. A barbarian power on the edge of the world suddenly became a great power with world culture and a world religion, an event immediately marked by the dawning of ancient Russian culture. This unusual dawning was soon visible in the construction of Sofia in Kiev, which even now is the central architectural monument in the city.

**A.Ch.** For almost one thousand years the Kievan Oranta, the mosaic, *Bogoroditsa Nerushimaia Stena* [Mother of God, the Indestructible Wall], with hands lifted in prayer, has held up the dome of the church. And the smalt (pigment) from which it was made has not lost its brightness and has not crumbled despite the passage of many centuries and the destruction of the mother of Russian cities.

**D.L.** But we must remember the Polotsk Sofia. This is also the central church in Polotsk. And the Novgorod church of Sofia. No matter how many skyscrapers are built around it, Sofia will remain the center of Novgorod. If only this would be Novgorod, and not some other kind of city, foreign to our culture. Then the cathedral of the Savior in Chernigov--still the center of Chernigov, and the Assumption Cathedral in Vladimir is the central church in that city. Everywhere churches arose which had no equals among their neighbors, either in size or in beauty. Remember that in Moravia, the Czech lands, and in

Poland at that time, only small church-rotundas were being erected. Whereas to the east was a great country with huge churches, frescoes, mosaics, marvellous icons and an amazing literature. For example, the *Word about Law and Grace* by Hilarion. This was an exceptional work because such theological/political discourse was not known in Byzantium. They had only theological sermons, but here we had historiosophic political speech, which affirmed the existence of Rus', its connection with world history, and its place in world history. This was a remarkable phenomenon, just as remarkable as the *Primary Chronicle*. Then the works of Theodosius of the Caves, then of Vladimir Monomakh himself, uniting idealistic Christianity with military pagan ideals in his *Sermon*. Thus Rus' immediately became a world power, and Kiev a rival of Constantinople.

**A.Ch.** I want to call our readers' attention to how vital the ties of cultural traditions were for the people of that time. If we do not, like Pushkin, "evoke dreams with the strength of our hearts," we will not notice that, for instance, the famous Yaroslavna<sup>2</sup> is compared with the same Kievan Indestructible Wall of the Virgin. Does not Yaroslavna by her passionate entreaty also hold intact the adored walls of Putivl'? And such a comparison is all the more important since in 1185 the only city taken by the Polovtsians fell only after the wall could no longer hold the weight of the defenders, two towers as well as the wall between the towers. The hands of Yaroslavna were raised to the Wind, the Dnieper and the Sun to invisibly support the wall. And did not the twelfth century troubadours also compare their women with Mary? Does not Yaroslavna rely on the Old Testament Rachel's help; are the supplications of Yaroslavna not permeated by quotations from Rachel's supplications: "The voice of Yaroslavna was heard beyond the Danube in Rama. . . her voice was heard. Tears and cries and many screams. . ." The ancient Russian reader did not require any commentary about these "similarities." For us it is much more difficult. But how did it happen that Rus' so quickly went through her apprenticeship stage and joined world culture as an equal partner?

---

2. Yaroslavna was Prince Igor's wife and a descendant of Rurik. His residence and principdom was the southern town of Putivl'. He was brave enough to attack the eternal enemy--the nomads-Polovtsians, but he did not coordinate with other princes and lost. He is considered a tragic hero--trans.

**D.L.** I think it is because there was a very rich foundation in the form of folklore and a developed legal system: The *Russkaia Pravda* [Russian Law] was apparently created before the christianization of Rus'.

\* \* \*

**A.Ch.** Dmitrii Sergeevich, right here in your office is this sacred World Tree, the most ancient axis of the universe. I mean the little tree behind the middle angel's shoulder in the reproduction of Rublev's Trinity. Even now Russian Orthodox churches are decorated with green branches on Trinity Day. Not so long ago Moscow biologist G. V. Sumarukov compiled a chronology of Igor Sviatoslavich's flight from captivity, and it turned out that in *The Lay of the Host of Igor*, he bids farewell to the River Donets on Trinity Day, and the River Donets "spread before him green meadows on its silver shores under the canopy of a green tree"! This very tree later bows its branches to the earth in grief when Rus' is invaded.

**D.L.** In one of my books I reproduced the image of an ancient Russian icon in which trees indeed bowed before Our Lady. But remember the icon of Vlasii--a kind of substitute for the pagan god Volos, on which there are multicolored horses. Horses that look like flowers.

**A.Ch.** Was the substitution of Vlasii for Volos made in the same smooth painless way?

**D.L.** I think that this process took place more or less smoothly. The uprising of the Magi in 1071 was caused in the first place by hunger, and not by defense of old gods. The Magi were sure that the shamans (who were hunchbacks) were hiding corn behind their humps. It was necessary to open up their caches so that the people would have grain. So the uprising was not purely religious but economic.

**A.Ch.** But for the sake of fairness, we must also remind the reader about Christian sermons against paganism. When pagan rituals and ethics contradicted Christian ethics, the church took a harsh stand. There was a view of the pagan gods as being the tribal ancestors, and the author of the *Tale of Bygone Years* adhered to it. And there was another view that they were demons. Many later church writers shared this view. Did it not often happen that the militant Christian himself

acted like a real pagan, and, in combatting superstition, became strictly superstitious himself?

**D.L.** Princely behavior in the world has for a long time been determined by a pagan code of honor and glory. The ideal of a soldier was not Christian but pagan. It has remained so. Vladimir Monomakh speaks of how many marches he completed and how quickly he reached Chernigov from Kiev. He brags about it.

**A.Ch.** This is not Christian behavior.

**D.L.** Not Christian. But it is very much like the behavior of Sviatoslav (father of Vladimir), who used to go "without wagons and supplies," and lived on either horseflesh or game, having sliced it thin and placed it under his saddle, carried it with him. And he slept on his horsecloth. Thus is the pagan ideal of a prince. I repeat: we do not know the details of the highest levels of the pagan cult. We know only the rituals, and they are particular to each locality. And we know the ethical norms of paganism.

**A.Ch.** Last year a book was published in which it was asserted that even the author of *Lay of the Host of Igor* was a pagan. Why is this impossible?

**D.L.** It is impossible simply because at the end of the poem Igor rides to the church of the Virgin of Pirogoshcha; the whole poem is steeped in a Christian spirit. Karl Marx long ago correctly noted this although he was not even a specialist on this book.

**A.Ch.** And here the objection will be that Karl Marx is not a specialist, and the ending was added later by a monk!

**D.L.** Then the whole book was written by a monk! Judging from the *The Lay*, it is clear that the pagan world view was not forgotten in the twelfth century. But it had already adopted that form which characterized it in the eighteenth century or the nineteenth century when writers turned to the ancient pagan gods as specific symbols. The same "arrows of Stribog" for the author of *The Lay* reflect not a religious but an aesthetic stage of paganism.

**A.Ch.** Let us also say that the mention of pagan gods and pagan attributes by the poet appears only where he speaks about the past of the Russian Land or about how this past determines the tragedy of the present. To pagan fragmentation the poet opposes Christian behavior and the Christian unity of the native land. That is why, besides the Pirogoshcha church, he mentions two Sofian churches--Polotsk and

Kiev. The poet, if we develop your thought, Dmitrii Sergeevich, shows how the progression to pagan moral norms, however attractive they were, led to the tragedy of the great grandson of Dazhd'bog.

**D.L.** They no longer believed in the former gods as gods. But the ecological system of paganism was also accepted by Christianity.

**A.Ch.** Let us note that this is a peaceful process: M. I. Steblin-Kamenskii, researcher of the works of the northern European skalds, wrote that after the christianization of Ireland and Scandinavia, the mention of pagan gods disappears for one and a half centuries. And just about in the era of *The Lay* they once again become part of poetry, but this time in another capacity.

**D.L.** Paganism is not a negative quantity. It is a particular cultural value which is not depreciated with the acceptance of Christianity, but raised to the height of another worldview. There are the following lines in one of the psalms: "Every breath praises God. . . ." The pagan concept of "every breath" is raised here to a level unattainable for paganism.

**A.Ch.** There is a wonderful book by Sergei Sergeevich Averintsev, *Poetika rannevisantiiskoi literatury* [The Poetics of Early Byzantine Literature] in which the author, among other things, points out that Christianity was a departure from the spiritual and intellectual dead end of antiquity. At the beginning of the era, such a dead end was perceived very strongly by the ancient writers.

**D.L.** Our situation (in Rus') was a bit different. The state simply could not live with fragmented belief systems. We know that Christianity was accepted the moment Vladimir united Rus'. It is necessary to speak not about a way out of the dead end, but about a state necessity which paganism was not in a position to assure. Vladimir's state was maintained not by a police system and not by a unitary military system. It was a multi-national state; that is why an inter-national religion was so necessary. Immediately after the baptism of Rus', Istvan I (Stefan I) introduced Christianity into Hungary where until then it had existed only in spots--among the Slavic tribes who accepted Christianity from Cyril and Methodius, the great Bulgarian preachers. Istvan introduced a western type of Christianity--he unified Hungary by force just as Karl the Great had earlier baptized the Saxons with weapons. But for us weapons were not necessary. For us this process was quite peaceful. What is most important in

understanding the eastern variant of Christianity? Patriarch Fotius, the one who was present when Askol'd and Dir unsuccessfully stormed Constantinople, sent the Bulgarian prince Boris-Mikhail letters in which he said that truth is recognized through beauty.

**A.Ch.** It seems that, about one thousand years later, some great western physicists asserted that if a formula is beautiful, then it must be true.

**D.L.** That is it exactly. Just as one ought not change anything in the human face if it is healthy and beautiful, so for Fotius true religion is recognized through beauty. After Vladimir's ambassadors, sent to various countries in search of the true religion, had returned, they said to the prince that it was necessary to accept the Greek faith, for they had seen beauty in the Greeks.

**A.Ch.** But could Vladimir have known of Fotius's saying?

**D.L.** He may or may not have known of it, but everything was permeated with this idea, including the decision of the ambassadors, though of course, not so laconically as it is presented in the *Chronicle*.

**A.Ch.** Does this mean that we can rely on the *Chronicles*?

**D.L.** We can rely on them. Even if we doubt the sending of ambassadors, the journey itself, and the reasoning, how can we not trust the choice itself? The main argument is the churches, which have conquered by their living, true beauty. Vladimir was concerned with the construction of churches, but Istvan I in Hungary was not concerned. Poland and Moravia, which had accepted Christianity from the West, were not concerned. But Vladimir built and built and built. He invited the Greeks. He created a whole network of trades. And this had an effect on all of Russian culture. It was manifested in the primacy of the aesthetic aspect over the philosophical. Who are the best Russian philosophers? Derzhavin (in the ode "Bog" [God]), Tiutchev, Dostoevsky, Vladimir Solov'ev. Even Chernyshevskii strives to become a writer. One can debate whether they are good or bad, but Russian philosophers are all writers and artists. And icons are "speculations in paint." What is our greatest treatise of the beginning of the fifteenth century? The Trinity of Rublev.

**A.Ch.** Dmitrii Sergeevich, I would like to ask you about this in a little more detail. We were told that when Gagarin<sup>3</sup> flew into space, he saw no god. Of course, for a small child growing up in an atheistic family, this might be a persuasive argument. But can we really call such atheism scientific if, as any believer knows, an icon is a "representational image," created to raise the viewer's vision to what a Byzantine philosopher said "has no sensual image."

**D.L.** In striving for beauty, and for understanding of the world through beauty, there was an advantage, but there was also a disadvantage.

**A.Ch.** Now a collection has been published in *Nauka* [Science] in which there is an article about the monogram "INTsI," [INRI] inscribed on the columns of the building in Rublev's Trinity. It is an abbreviation of what Pontius Pilate wrote on the top of the cross. On the left is "I." To the right of that is "N." Together they make up "Ts." And the last letter coincides with the same "N." Such graphic combinations are seen in ancient Russian books. Rublev's monogram is structured in such a way that the smallest distortion of proportions would destroy it. And just a few decades later icon painters do not see it; they rationalize Rublev's architecture. But, perhaps, the most surprising thing is that Rublev's cryptography is not an end in itself, but a key to his philosophical picture of the world.

**D.L.** There was no university education in Rus', but the country was literate. Very literate. Academician A. I. Sobolevskii proved this in his time by the signatures at the bottom of documents, but now this has been made clear by excavations in Novgorod. We have already ceased being surprised by the [ancient] birch bark writings. There were no universities; on the other hand, art in no way lagged behind the West.

**A.Ch.** And it followed its own distinctive path.

**D.L.** Distinctiveness in what? Our churches are happy, decorated. If you wish, here there is even an element of the East. Or, more precisely, an element of jolly beauty. Orthodox Christianity is the happiest Christianity. Remember what Tiutchev wrote: "I, a Lutheran, love the liturgy"? But the poet emphasizes the gloominess of this liturgy. Note that even Catholic churches are barren in their

---

3. Yuri Gagarin, the first man to fly into space--trans.

grandiosity. But see how a Russian church, thanks to its light, bright, shining, iconostasis, thanks to the humanistic organization of space, its cosmic nature and golden flames, is simply beautiful. And it shines.

**A.Ch.** Let us stop to discuss just one particular monument. Last summer I was stunned by the Cathedral of the Transfiguration of the Savior at Mirozhskii Monastery in Pskov. Now the restoration there has been completed, and the frescoes from the middle of the twelfth century appear in all their splendor. Near the dome Christ rises in a multi-colored rainbow, and rays of light from narrow little windows hold him aloft. Here, from the same window, hangs a beam from the archangel to Mary. And the ancient Russian masters allowed themselves to violate the canon and created a composition of the circumcision in mirror image. Having deviated from the literal canon, they depicted Mary holding the infant out to the center of the church where her adult son already sits on the throne. It must have been clear for every woman of Pskov as she brought her child here: this is how it must have been once for Mary. Why is this clear? Because the road from the city is placed exactly from right to left, from south to north. And the whole northern part of the church tells of death, while the southern part tells of resurrection. We see the grotto where Lazarus is transformed into a green tree. It is evident, even at the most superficial glance, that the pagan and Christian faiths intersect, and a brilliant attempt is made to bridge the gap into the animated and spiritualized cosmos. There are no pictures of the Fearful Day of Judgment; instead of that there is the descent of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles. You look around, where is the Fearful Day of Judgment? It is in you, in your soul, because Justice already sits on the throne directly in front of you. It was most surprising that the church was designed by Greek and Russian masters together, but they did not create an ensemble of frescoes, but a single narrative, the like of which I do not know.

**D.L.** It needs to be said that Rus' was never isolated from other countries. It absorbed Byzantine culture, western culture, Scandinavian culture and the culture of its southern neighbors, the nomads, because its foundation was unusually strong. What a language we had even before the influence of the church and literary language! How stunning in their brevity and beauty the appeals of princes to their

troops and the speeches in princely conferences! This is not folklore, but oratory; the oral tradition was unusually strong.

**A.Ch.** Dmitrii Sergeevich, I would like to touch upon the role of the monasteries in the christianization of Rus'.

**D.L.** The role of the monasteries is extremely interesting. We are accustomed to culture developing mainly in the cities. In fact, however, *smerdy* [farm laborers] were very quickly becoming *krest'ianami* [peasants], that is, *khristianami* [Christians]. In the most ancient chronicles *smerdy* are mentioned only once. This means that Christianity spread very quickly among the peasantry. This was impossible to accomplish with the aid of a sword, but perfectly possible with the aid of paganism, which was itself christianized and made Christianity understandable. *Smerdy* saw Christianity as a continuation of their paganism. But new horizons were opening, and they were ready to accept them. Rus' understood that besides cyclical calendar time, there was also horizontal time in which neighboring peoples were also involved. And there was vertical time.

**A.Ch.** The circle became a spiral?

**D.L.** Yes. Our Christianity began to develop along the great pathway from the Varangians to the Greeks because here people saw foreigners, foreign goods, and they knew about the existence of other peoples. And here the concept appeared that history is not limited by local burial mounds, that there is a history of humanity. The Slavs had a written language, but it was disorganized. The black monk Khrabor says that the Slavs wrote in strokes and cuts, but without structure. The first writing consisted of their signs and occasional Greek letters. Let us say, one sign indicating that wine of a particular kind is found in this vessel and in the other vessel is grain. With Christianity came writing of another, much higher type. It was writing with structure, with punctuation marks and divisions into words and with a defined grammar. This was a writing system of a literary language and of a very rich literature. Extremely complex concepts developed, which means that the language was prepared to accept Christian ideas and to accept writing. And this is where the remarkable contribution of the monasteries came in. How were new territories incorporated? They were incorporated by monasteries, which above all busied themselves with writing. A letter is a most God-pleasing deed. This is why monasteries were founded from the very beginning of the advancement

of Christian culture in the north. Yaroslavl' is the Monastery of the Transfiguration of the Savior. Vologda is the Cyril-Belozerskii Monastery. And it was mainly here that writing developed. Then comes the Valaam Monastery. Writing here, too. Then the Solovetsk Monastery--the same picture. The monasteries were huge book-writing workshops. A book provided familiarity with new territories. Now it is clear that books were carried to Siberia. And it was thus that Siberia was conquered, not so much by weapons as by books.

**A.Ch.** One need only recall the so-called Zyrian Trinity, the icon with an extensive inscription in the Zyrian language, made by Stefan of Perm, enlightener of the Zyrians. It comes to us from the fourteenth century, and it can be seen in the Vologodsk Museum.

**D.L.** Monasteries were built outside the city. The Kiev Monastery of the Caves was outside the city, as was the Trinity-Sergius, the most important center of Russian learning, a monastery which is mother to the many Russian monasteries. Our department of ancient Russian literature at the Pushkin House is studying the book centers of ancient Rus'. It is absolutely clear that book learning reached the frontiers, and that a tremendous amount of work with books took place at the frontiers of the country. If now people write in five- and twenty-story buildings, at that time they wrote in forests.

**A.Ch.** But could there have been a pre-Christian Russian literature? What do you think of the "Vlesova manuscript"?

**D.L.** It is a forgery. It is clear both when and how this primitive falsification appeared, and why it became popular among White Russian emigres. The "Vlesova manuscript" is not interesting. Let us discuss something authentic. . . .

**A.Ch.** If Rus' was baptized, as some authors claim, by fire and sword, then why was there no restoration of paganism during three centuries of the Tatar yoke?

**D.L.** The Tatar/Mongols who conquered Rus' worshipped many gods, but their polytheism was so strong that it could acknowledge new gods. Batu was tolerant. But when Islam won over the Tatar/Mongols, that is when Dmitrii Donskoi's holy war began against Mamai. Mamai's march was not simply a ordinary march, it was the march of Islam on Rus'.

**A.Ch.** By the way, this was understood by people at that time: it is said in the stories of the Kulikov cycle that Mamai planned not to destroy

the Russian cities, but to capture and control them. That is, they set themselves the task of occupying and enslaving Rus', turning it into a Moslem country, and turning the Mongol-Tatar horde into a settled rule over Russian cities.

**D.L.** Then Dmitrii needed the support of Christianity, and he turned to Sergius of Radonezh. Sergius was the main authority among the Russian peasantry. Why? Because he did all kinds of peasant work. Sergius of Radonezh was the Russian analogue to Francis of Assisi. He had the same relationship to nature, to birds and beasts. . . . This was humble Christianity, proceeding from poverty and close contact with people. But Francis lived one and a half centuries earlier and really subsisted on charity. Sergius did not beg; he did simple peasant work. For a peasant, Sergius of Radonezh was more of an authority than the metropolitan, than even the church in Moscow or elsewhere.

**A.Ch.** But why did the Moscow prince go to him?

**D.L.** Dmitrii needed a militia. For the first time in Russian history they needed to mobilize a peoples' peasant militia. And the prince turned to the main authority of both the peasantry and of Christianity. For the peasants, Sergius was the head of the people. And Sergius of Radonezh proceeded to violate the church canons.

**A.Ch.** He gave Dmitrii two monks. . .

**D.L.** Not simply monks, but two *skhimniki* [monks who have taken the strictest monastic vows in the Orthodox Church]. This does not mean that he gave him two warriors. Two warriors, however good they were, would mean nothing in such a battle. But they created an assurance among the troops that this was a holy battle, that dying here would bring them to Paradise, and that this battle was not simply dying for the sake of saving their native land, but was a holy war. They went to protect their land, and therefore they destroyed the ferries that carried them across the Oka. They crossed. They would not come back; they would stand, on the territory of Riazan.

**A.Ch.** And there they did die, having strengthened the Russian land with their blood. It is no accident that the very concept of Russia appeared at the end of the fourteenth century. Let us recall that Andrei Rublev created the icon Trinity "in praise of Reverend Father Sergius," and--as it is said by Epifanius--"in order that looking on the Sacred Trinity may destroy fear of dissension in this world."

**D.L.** Sergius of Radonezh was a conduit for specific ideas and traditions: the unity of Rus' was linked with the church. The princes fought among themselves and thus invited the Tartar invasion of the Russian land as they had once brought the Polovtsians. There was constant rivalry for the great principedom and for the title of Grand Prince, but the church was united. And therefore the main idea of Rublev's Trinity was the idea of unity, which was so important in the darkness of our separation. . . . Dmitrii Donskoi began not with an attempt at territorial unity, but with national and moral unification. In this respect the Moscow prince, who stood at the head of the Russian troops, was remarkable. Because of this Moscow gained prestige in the eyes of all Rus'. She won not because, as some have tried to prove, she was located on very advantageous trade routes, but because in this most complex situation, she led the unification of the Russian land, i.e., Moscow won spiritually.

**A.Ch.** But there are economic laws!

**D.L.** We have an incorrect, vulgar perception of economic laws. These laws, of course, are at the basis of everything, but when they lead to a flourishing spiritual life, at some point the spiritual basis begins to play the main role. Moscow was not economically stronger than either Tver or Novgorod, but she turned out to be spiritually stronger. While Novgorod did nothing to help unify Rus' because it was a republic, the metropolitan of all Rus' moved to Moscow, and Moscow became the symbol of spiritual unity.

**A.Ch.** Was the church schism in the seventeenth century necessary? Were the Nikonian reforms necessary and unavoidable?

**D.L.** To some degree they were necessary, but they could have been different. Moscow became the center for the Ukraine and for Belorussia, and therefore the Orthodox Church had to have unified rites. Nikon initiated the schism because he abolished the old way of making the sign of the cross with two fingers in favor of the new three fingered style. By that time the Greek rites, it was said in Rus', "had been defiled," and there were "novelties," but in Russia the traditional customs were maintained. It might have been possible to find some kind of compromise solution, but Nikon took the side of the Ukraine in order to unify it with Belorussia and Russia. The Ukraine had adopted the three fingered way which "came from Greece." Now it is clear that in many instances the old rites were correct; therefore, it is common

knowledge that the Nikonians had to forge several documents. Moreover, Nikon was an extremely cruel person, as was Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, who was also very stern. It is not surprising that he was Peter's father. Nikon and Aleksei began to introduce ritual uniformity with very cruel measures, thus deepening the schism within the Russian church. Here is an example of the role personality can play in history.

**A.Ch.** At what point in history did the spiritual quests of the flower of the nation diverge from the principles of official orthodoxy?

**D.L.** I think that the system of seminary instruction played a very large role here, a negative role. In the nineteenth century the seminary came to replace aristocratic education. *Raznochintsy* [middle-class intellectuals] came to replace aristocratic culture, i.e., the culture of Dobroliubov and Chernyshevskii. *Raznochinstvo* was the main conduit of atheism because its educational basis, as paradoxical as it may seem, was the seminary. The seminary actually discouraged interest in seemingly outdated church dogmas. When a person approaches sacred subjects and customs too closely, the sacred loses the fascination of the holy. The church became too ordinary, too simple for the intelligence of the *raznochintsy*. It smacked of the village, of old-fashioned life in it. It seemed too theatrical, with roles and actors too well-scripted. In addition, among Catholics, debates took place in our seminaries; someone took the role of atheist or heretic, and students became adapted to the role simply because of their youthful spirit of contradiction. Their atheism was provoked by authority and teaching. But the main reason, of course, was that the whole civilized world was becoming atheist. This applied both to Europe and to America. The appearance of materialists was a pattern of development of contemporary science. Scientific spirit differs at different times. For example, in the era of the Renaissance science was visual; therefore in Italy the Academy of Lynx Eyes was formed. At that time the mark of a scholar was a precise eye, capable of noticing both minute things in everyday life and in the sky, for example, stars in a telescope. Then came the period of mathematization of science and the explanation of phenomena from the phenomenon itself. Then the following formula

appeared. A person is what he eats. All sorts of Bazarovs<sup>4</sup> appeared. Bazarov is a common European phenomenon because science was going through a period when God was not considered necessary. Then in the twentieth century, in outer space and in the space within the atom, various indecipherable phenomena are observed, and now a scientist can also be a believer. We know of many such cases.

**A.Ch.** But first, let us go back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when a conflict arose between science and the church, when Western European scientists in cassocks were compelled by force of scientific facts to go against the church's view of the world. Was not religious orthodoxy itself to blame in this conflict? We know the monk Copernicus testified against the geocentric system of the pagans Ptolemy and Aristotle.

**D.L.** Of course. But it also seemed to the scientists of the nineteenth century that the edifice of science was just at the point of completion, and everything would be explained. Thus it was until the appearance of Mendeleev's<sup>5</sup> table. Then a million new questions arose. After Mendeleev's table the possibility of atomic physics developed, and the expanding universe and many other possibilities.

**A.Ch.** Entire branches of contemporary science grew out of the religious quests of medieval scientists. From calculating how many angels can fit on the point of a needle arose integral and differential calculus and the theory of "diffuse numbers." Much of what science relegated to the archives as superstition, at the end of the twentieth century can be interpreted as an insight of prescientific thought.

**D.L.** Much is the result of a deficit of imagination. The system of Copernicus and Galileo does not encroach upon church dogmas. The earth could remain as the center of the universe and rotate around the sun. It was simply necessary to construct a more complex mathematical model. We know the sun itself moves in outer space.

---

4. Bazarov was a character in Turgenev's Fathers and Sons--and a consummate materialist--trans.

5. Dmitrii Ivanovich Mendeleev (1834-1907) was a great Russian scientist and businessman. His greatest contribution to science was the periodic table of elements--trans.

**A.Ch.** In order to conclude this theme: a gap has formed between the development of religious thought and its opponent--scientific atheism. Our criticism of religion often takes on forms lower than any criticism. I would like to take this opportunity to urge the publication of some kind of "Dialogue" in which scientists, theologians, philosophers, poets and writers would speak as equals. Thus, at least, we could be released from prejudices and find the common points in our positions. In any case, we could avoid falling into polemics in various areas, not hearing and not understanding each other. Thus, moving onward, when did the ideology of official orthodoxy become a spiritual hindrance in the development of the nation? Where to begin? From Tsar Nicholas I's formula, Autocracy--Orthodoxy--Populism? Or earlier? Why were the majority of Decembrists believers, and the *raznochintsy* were not?

**D.L.** I think that very much depended on Peter I. Although Peter himself loved the orthodox liturgy, sang in the choir and was in no way an atheist, his reforms were a continuation of Nikon's reforms and greatly reduced the authority of the church. If a confessor is deprived of the right to a secret confession, if a priest by state order is obligated to inform on his colleagues, then what kind of authority can the church have? This is when the Old Believers began to flourish. They flourished not so much under Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich as under Peter and Nicholas I. By then it was impossible to do anything. The role of Nicholas I in this process was very negative. By persecuting the Old Believers he did much to destroy the economy of Russia. The wealthiest of the working class were Old Believers. The Old Believers created the Ural mining industry. The laws of Nicholas I against them destroyed Russian metallurgy. Under Catherine and under Alexander I Russian artillery was the best in the world. Russia was in the forefront in both quantity and quality of smelted metal. If you ask an archaeologist, digging in the Borodino field,<sup>6</sup> they will say that the distinctions of Russian shot from French are immediately obvious: the quality of Russian casting is something else; there are no blisters. Russian cannons of old casting, seized by Englishmen, stand in many English and Scottish cities. Englishmen even now delight in the quality of these cannons. But under Nicholas Russia began to fall behind.

---

6. Site of a famous battle between Novgorod's army and General Kutuzov's--trans.

**A.Ch.** Nevertheless, why did Nicholas' and Uvarov's (Minister of Education under Nicholas I) formula--Autocracy--Orthodoxy--Populism--meet with such aversion among the Russian intelligentsia?

**D.L.** One should not identify autocracy with orthodoxy. I will not judge how much the church was at fault here although Metropolitan Fotii and others share some of the blame. The guarantee of the authority of the church lies in its separation from the state. The church and the state were interwoven, and all the faults of the state fell upon the church. This formula killed the Russian Orthodox church of that time or, in any case, undermined it. The church must be separate from the state. One thousand years ago Christianity became the state religion of ancient Rus' and unified Rus', and then Russia, Belorussia and the Ukraine. In this unity there was strength, but also weakness. Subject to the state, the church lost its spiritual freedom, its freedom of conscience. The future was then foreordained. Being a believer meant being a monarchist. But Christianity is not an ideology, bourgeois or socialist. It is a world view plus ethical norms of behavior in daily life and in all of life.

**A.Ch.** For about the last fifteen years the word spirituality [*dukhovnost'*] has appeared on the pages of our newspapers. Is it used in a purely secular sense, and is it often simply contrasted with a lack of spirituality?

**D.L.** I do not know what newspapers mean by "spirituality." The word dazzles, but no one can define it.

**A.Ch.** So it is a phantom? A substitute for real meaning?

**D.L.** I understand it in this way. If by this concept one means mental or intellectual life, then its level is really falling. Intellectual interests are declining--fewer people read philosophical, classical, artistic literature or real poetry. Poetry is being invaded by satire. This is bad. The intellectual side, so strong in Pushkin, Tiutchev and Fet, in the poetry of Vladimir Solov'ev and Aleksandr Blok, is weaker in our most popular contemporary poets. Poetic satire, that is, poems which disclose or glorify some event of social life, substitute for poetry. This, by the way, is also true of the nineteenth century poet, Nekrasov. But Nekrasov knew how to raise satire to the level of poetry; the current ones do not.

**A.Ch.** The contribution of the Russian Orthodox Church to the victory over Fascism is undeniable. Why are there no church testimonials, or do we simply not know of them?

**D.L.** Where could they appear if we have not yet published the works of Platonov<sup>7</sup> or Nabokov?<sup>8</sup> Never mind that the general spiritual collapse has also affected the church.

**A.Ch.** Nevertheless, in the 1970s many of my contemporaries turned to religion. Reaching personal civic fulfillment was extremely difficult for those who refused to participate in glorifying the system or whoever wanted to just have a quick career. . . .

**D.L.** Now, here I do not agree with you, Andrei Iur'evich. When a person enters the church because it is fashionable or only for a change in worldview, it is also a lie. The church is not simply a change in worldview, it is a change in the way of life and in customs. A believer's daily life must be religious; he must observe fasts, holidays and so forth. But many turned to the church out of a feeling of protest against the official lie. But there was an element of lying in this too. Christianity demands not just a Christian worldview, but actions. Without action faith is dead. But it is precisely action that was missing.

**A.Ch.** To believe a faith means to do a deed? But in the 1970s the press sounded an alarm; members of the Communist Youth League were baptizing their children. Orthodox priests even began to speak of the second baptism of Rus'.

**D.L.** A very imprecise expression. Christianity existed in Rus' even before the baptism of Rus', before the acceptance of Christianity. Princess Ol'ga was baptized, and the Church of Il'ia existed in Kiev. The baptism of Rus' meant the official acceptance of Christianity by the state, the unification of the church and the state. One should not speak of a second baptism of Rus'; in any case, it would be a misfortune for Christianity--the reunification of church and state. On the contrary, the church must be completely separated from the state

---

7. Sergei Fedorovich Platonov (1860-1933) was a Russian historian, expert on the seventeenth century "Time of Troubles." He was a leading and vociferous opponent of the Communist regime, especially regarding falsification of history. He was arrested and banished and died in exile--trans.

8. Vladimir Nabokov was a Russian writer who emigrated after the revolution--trans.

in order that it can develop freely and be a religion in the complete sense of the word. In general, social progress lies in freedom and in increasing the realm of freedom. I wrote about that in my article, "Concerning the Future of Literature"; it was reprinted in my three volume collection. The realm of freedom in all areas is increasing, and the realm of freedom of the church lies in renouncing its dependence on the state. What kind of dependence? Either encouragement or discouragement.

**A.Ch.** A question that is especially troubling today: why can a Christian not be a nationalist, and a nationalist not be a Christian?

**D.L.** This is an easy question. Because Christianity is a universal religion, in equal measure a religion both for blacks and for Chinese. Inasmuch as Christianity is international, it is a great religion. If it becomes a national religion, it will stop being itself. I do not want to mention religions focused upon one people. There are some, but it is a major defect of these religions.

**A.Ch.** Dmitrii Sergeevich, what is the main lesson to be drawn from the jubilee of the Russian church?

**D.L.** It is that the church should not interfere in the affairs of state, or the state in the affairs of the church. This dependence was pre-ordained by Vladimir I. Much is left to be done, in particular overcoming the fear of bureaucrats. Here is a small example: near Gatchina in front of the museum of the Vyrska post office someone is afraid to place a cross on the restored chapel. Is this not also superstition? Finally, we need to publish the Bible because the Bible is the code of contemporary art. This means that not only believers suffer from such a situation, but also atheists. We teach patriotism, but we do not know the richest ancient Russian literature. It is inaccessible without a knowledge of Christian subjects. As a result, there are speculations, sects and obsessions with god knows what. I hope the situation is correctable if only we will not be afraid of dialogue.



---

## Pangs of Conscience<sup>1</sup>

Once a very long time ago, I was sent an important edition of the *Lay of the Host of Igor*. For a long time I could not understand what had happened to it. At the institute they recorded the fact that a book was received, yet there was no book. At last it was explained that a certain respectable lady had taken it. I asked the lady: "Did you take the book?" "Yes," she replied, "I took it. But if it is so necessary to you, I can return it." And the lady smiled coquettishly. "But clearly the book was sent to me," I replied. "If you needed it, you should have asked me for it. You placed me in an awkward position with the man who sent it to me. I had not even thanked him."

I repeat, this happened long ago. And I might have forgotten about the incident. But even so I sometimes recall it; life reminds me of it.

Truly it seems only a trifle! To "take and keep" a book, to "forget" to return it to its owner. . . . It has now become standard procedure. Many people justify it by saying that they need the book more than the owner does; I cannot manage without it, but he can manage! A new phenomenon has become widespread--that of "intellectual" thievery, somehow completely excusable, justified by the charm and attraction of culture. Sometimes they even say that "to take and keep" a book is not theft at all, but a sign of intelligence. Just think: a dishonest act--and intelligence! But does it not seem to you that this is simply color blindness? Moral color blindness. We have unlearned the ability to differentiate colors, more precisely--to

---

1. D. S. Likhachev, "Trevogi sovesti," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, Jan. 1, 1987, p. 11.

distinguish black from white. Stealing is stealing; theft is theft; a dishonest act remains a dishonest act, however and by whatever method one tries to justify it! A lie is a lie, and in the final analysis, I do not believe that a lie can lead to salvation.

After all, even not paying one's fare on the tram is theft. There is no such thing as petty stealing, no petty theft; there is simply theft and simply stealing. There is no such thing as small treachery and large treachery; there is simply treachery and deceit. For good reason it is said that he who is true in small things is true in large things. Sometimes, by chance, for a fleeting moment you may recall some insignificant episode when you ignored your conscience in some seemingly harmless and trifling matter. You too will feel a pang of conscience. And you will understand if someone suffered from your trifling, harmless act, that your conscience and your honor suffered even more.

The new stands in opposition to the old although, perhaps, not everything that is new is better than the old. As light opposes darkness, so reason and wisdom oppose ignorance and folly. This is an eternal confrontation. And if we continue the chain of comparison, or more correctly, contraposition, then accordingly we must link love and jealousy, cruelty and mercy, hostility and peace, friendship and enmity, and, of course, truth and falsehood. Thus it turns out that our whole lives are in a constant battle, with some forces overcoming others. This has been true from time immemorial, and it is likely that without such eternal confrontation neither life nor the world itself could exist. However, when the balance of forces is disrupted in peoples' souls, this antagonism becomes acute.

People have become accustomed to leading double lives--saying one thing and thinking another. They have lost the ability to speak the truth, the whole truth. And a half truth is the worst type of lie; in a half truth the lie masquerades as the truth, hidden by a screen of partial truth.

Our conscientiousness has begun to disappear. I feel obliged to speak about this because many times in my life, not in my personal affairs, but in those matters which are vital to the preservation of our culture, I have had to deal with people whose feelings of conscientiousness had disappeared.

Anyone who has been to Leningrad knows the Rusk portico, one of the masterpieces of municipal architecture in our city. It now stands not where it was built, but off to the side of the main thoroughfare of Nevskii Prospect. How did it end up there? The construction of the metro station was in the planning stage. The portico "was in the way"; so they planned to remove it. I approached the former chief architect of Leningrad and as to a professional I explained to him that the Rusk portico is very important precisely at that location because it is right in a line with the portico of the Russian museum, that this was even in Rusk's architectural plan. The chief architect listened to me, did not raise any objection, called his assistant, and said, "We must think over the situation. Dmitrii Sergeevich Likhachev is here requesting us not to destroy the Rusk portico, and he has good reasons. Think about it, how can it be here, and how, without destroying it, can we build the metro station?" That is the extent to which this man lied! Relying upon his words, I did not appeal to the press for assistance. Sometime later the Rusk portico was dismantled, and to all my subsequent bewilderment the chief architect responded: "But we did not destroy it. We dismantled it, and we are going to restore it."

And they did restore it. . . . But clearly there are unrestorable objects, unreproduceable ones--for example, a column. It is like a living body; it is, of course, a little irregular; the narrowing near the top of the column does not proceed in a straight line. A column is a sculpture. . . . And what of the Rusk portico? Outwardly it appears the same, but the columns are different. Moreover, the portico was moved several meters back, and that immediately changes the view; it no longer lies directly opposite the Russian museum. This intrusion upon the architectural ensemble damaged Nevskii Prospect.

Suddenness and speed is one common tactic of our architects. When the public raises its voice in defense of memorials of the past which are slated for demolition, the architects pretend to listen. They pacify people in every way in order to lull their alertness, and then they inflict a sudden blow. A successful, safe tactic!

Using this tactic the Pirogovskii museum in Leningrad was wiped off the face of the earth in one night (or in a single day). In our city there is probably no building which so sharply intrudes upon the landscape, with its open expanse of the Neva River, as the hotel

Leningrad. It was built on the location of the Pirogovskii museum. Although the museum was built rather recently, at the end of the nineteenth century, it was nevertheless in the best architectural tradition of Petersburg/Leningrad. The architect, in building it, understood that at this location one must not erect a tall building. He built a one story building, and behind it, one could see the long two story building of the War Medical Academy extending along the shore. The expanse of the Neva seemed larger due to the fact that the faraway buildings were low and extended along the shore. The museum was placed correctly, along the shore. Moreover, it was built at public expense, by subscription. We had no right to demolish it. However, the same story of my negotiations with the chief architect was repeated; the same promise "to heed our wishes," and the same deception.

It seems that the bitter experience of these lessons should have taught us to relate to the culture of the past and to nature with great care, to care for the small world and for the large world in which we live and which are very closely intertwined with us. It would seem to have taught us something. . . . But, did it really teach us anything? Look at Moscow. The metro system runs through the woodland preserve of Kolomenskoe. A long time ago this woodland preserve was broken up under various pretexts, and now they are proposing to build a shallow bed station. Thus, one of our most important historic and culturally valuable woodland preserves, and along with it one of the most beautiful landscapes, is threatened with destruction. Of course, public opinion is again being ignored.

And how can one forget the recent events in Leningrad concerning Del'vig's home? It occurred because several organizations are jointly responsible for preserving our historic buildings, and the consent of one organization contrasted with the refusal of others. The metro system (again the metro system!) received approval for the destruction of Del'vig's home in Vladimir Square. I think that the only people who could have given such approval are those who do not know who Del'vig is, or the kind of friendship that existed between Del'vig and Pushkin. Someone who had never heard of the lycee date--October 19. For precisely on October 19 they began to destroy Del'vig's home. School children gathered nearby. They read the poems of Del'vig and the poems of Pushkin. Del'vig and Pushkin were

for them symbols of comradeship! School children placed a candle at each window. It was a requiem for Del'vig's home. It was a real tragedy of youthful feelings, worthy of filming. Even the metro builders themselves realized what they had done, but could do nothing to help. The foundation was already undermined and soon crumbled.

Long ago, you may remember, Dostoevsky's heroes wanted to go to Europe to touch the ancient rocks. Is it not time for us finally to touch our own ancient rocks, our own memory, our own culture?

It is true that very important changes are taking place now in social consciousness. People now do not wish to depict themselves as consistently stubborn, narrow-minded executors of a foreign will, which formerly was considered almost a virtue. People's attitudes toward history have changed so much that defenders of antiquity often turn up among those who formerly destroyed it. And that is a very gratifying phenomenon.

I can compare this situation with other years, and can say that social consciousness has changed over time; it was previously very difficult for honest people. Now times have changed and good people can advance. This also means that evil people are forced to conceal themselves, to disguise themselves, to hide their animosity, their evil qualities, their unseemly acts. They must pretend to be good, benevolent, courteous, etc. Let them pretend. Over time sincerely good qualities will replace bad ones because--I am convinced--after the changes in social consciousness there will be a transformation of people's characters. There will be more genuinely good and honest people. In a healthy, open society with our current demands for openness and publicity and for public discussion few will stoop to defrauding people, making arbitrary decisions, or to anonymous letters and denunciations. It will be more difficult to do.

The absence of conscientiousness in people who work in the economy causes material damage. The absence of conscientiousness in people who are responsible for culture causes damage which is not manifested materially. But while it is possible to make up for what is lost in the economy, the damage to culture usually cannot be undone. However, without changes in our cultural climate, even the economy will not move a step forward.

Honesty, decency and conscience are all qualities which we must value as much as we value our health, for without these qualities a person is not a person.

I received a letter recently in which a schoolgirl wrote about her friend. The literature teacher had given her an assignment to write a composition about a great Soviet writer. In this composition the schoolgirl, paying due respect to both the genius of the writer and to his significance in the history of literature, wrote that he had made mistakes. The teacher considered this inappropriate and scolded her severely. And then the schoolgirl's friend appealed to me with this question: can one write about the mistakes of great people? I answered her that not only is it possible, it is necessary to write about the mistakes of great people so that a person's greatness does not depend only on his making no mistakes. No one is free of errors in our lives, in our complex lives.

But there is yet another aspect to this issue. Can a pupil voice an opinion which is not in agreement with the teacher? It seems to me that a teacher must encourage independent thinking in his pupils. Imagine if he forces them to adhere only to his own opinions, what will happen with this pupil when he leaves school and ends up working with some stronger, though more evil personality who will inspire him with his own opinion. He will not be able to resist him. Indeed he will have nothing to resist with because he will have nothing that is his own. Clearly, if a person does not know how to defend his own opinion, and only knows how to listen, he will listen to an evil person and forget about conscience and honor. It often happens that the "best" pupils who look up to their teacher, wind up as evil people. They have no independence and do not know how to defend their own point of view. They are accustomed to listening to others, to doing only what they are told, and to repeating only what the teacher tells them. Defending one's own point of view is a very important skill. It is extremely important in our political and social life. Only then can we be sure that a person will not fall under evil influence and will be able to live according to his conscience.

Conscience is a very complex concept, and, of course, it is difficult to demand conscientiousness from each person. But one can demand honor because a dishonest act in public is clearly noticed by public opinion. Dishonest acts give rise to a variety of situations. Let

us assume that a person is not seeking personal advantages or privileges. He is a good comrade, a good director of an institution. Is it not a great virtue to be a good comrade and a good director of an institution? So that the institution may receive additional capital funds, he invents additional work which, in essence, does not match the actual expenses and does not match the staff's capability. He then protects the staff, protects the people and fulfills his obligation as a manager. But he violates the rule of honor and compromises his conscience although in the face of his personal conscience he, perhaps, is right. After all, he managed to preserve the position of Ivan Ivanovich and Maria Ivanovna. Here we see a most complex discrepancy between duty, honor and conscience.

I do not like categories and often am not willing to embrace them. But I can point out the differences between conscience and honor. Conscience prompts. Honor acts. Conscience always arises from the depth of the soul, and a person is always cleansed to a greater or lesser degree by his conscience. Conscience nags. Conscience is never false. It can be muffled or exaggerated (extremely rarely). By contrast perceptions of honor are completely false, and these false impressions inflict great harm on society. I have in mind what is called the "honor of the uniform." Concepts such as the honor of the nobility, uncharacteristic of our society, have virtually disappeared from our midst. But the honor of the uniform remains. As if, though a person has died, the uniform from which the medals were taken, and within which the conscientious heart no longer beats, were still alive. The honor of the uniform forces leaders to defend false or faulty projects, to insist on continuing obviously unsuccessful construction, to battle people who are protecting monuments (our construction is more important), etc.

True honor is always in accordance with conscience. False honor is a mirage in a desert, the moral desert of the human (more correctly "bureaucratic") soul. And this mirage is harmful. It creates false goals which lead to dissipation and sometimes to the death of authentic values.

Honor must therefore be in harmony with conscience. Honor and conscience must be adopted not only as part of the structure of personal relationships, but also at the state level. If a person does good deeds, as often happens, not on his own account, but on account of the

state, then it is not goodness, not unselfishness, but utilitarianism and cunning.

How is inner honor expressed? When a person keeps his word. Either as an official personage or as an ordinary person. When he behaves in a respectable way; when he does not violate ethical norms, acts dignified, does not grovel before a superior or before any "benefactor," does not conform to outside opinion, is not obstinate in proving his own rightness, does not settle personal scores, does not compensate people he needs with state funds, with various indulgences, with arrangements for his people's work, etc. In general such a person knows how to differentiate the personal from the state and subjective from objective, in evaluating his environment.

Honor is the virtue of a morally alive person.

In *Literaturnaia gazeta* (Literary Gazette) not too long ago there was a good article which stated that in elections it is necessary to propose not one but several candidates. And that is right. It is very important because then a person who is elected to state office will be energetic and will value his reputation and honor. He will know that if he begins to toil not for the good of society but only for the sake of his own personal privilege and advantage, then next time someone else will be elected.

Of course, even an ordinary leader who stains his honor with cunning or deception should be removed from his post. It is impossible for him to be a leader even if he cheated for the sake of his own organization.

In recent years especially we have sharply felt the lack of civic conscience. It is not that so many vices and unaccustomed phenomena have accumulated in our society. Not that many more people have become involved in intrigues, in unseemly acts, and that these unseemly acts have gone unpunished for too long. We have felt the lack of civic conscience because we have kept silent. Perhaps there were objective reasons for our silence: people who have committed evil deeds occupy important positions. Yet even so, this does not take away our own responsibility, does not justify our mutual guilt. We have seen everything and have kept silent. Our conscience has kept silent.

What are we--afraid? In truth there is no fear. Truth and fear are incompatible. We should fear only our own vicious thoughts, thoughts which are disrespectful toward our friends, toward any

person, or toward our native land. There is only one fear we should have--the fear of lying. Then there will be a healthy moral atmosphere in our society.

From the very beginning, as soon as perestroika blew in with the wind of change, some people began to say that it will not last long, that perestroika is a temporary phenomenon, and that this was supposedly a recurring campaign. They tried to reassure themselves and those around them. And, of course, they expected--and still expect--that this wave will ebb or decline. Some preferred to look ahead to which way the wind would blow. In short, we have observed alertness, confusion and a quite tangible desire to oppose this development which has inspired our society. Despite the fact that this inspiration is obviously real!

You will see what occurs in our literary world, how it will be enlivened--the atmosphere is changing before our very eyes. We have begun to see publications of works by authors who for various reasons had not been published for a long time (not to mention that they were condemned to oblivion--the people never forgot them). Readers, at least the overwhelming majority of them, embraced these new publications. However, some voices were heard: why do we need this? Some from the "bureaucrats of literature"--opponents of renewal--rushed to employ illegal tactics: as an attempted argument against this, they pointed out the complexities of that route, the complexities presented by the lives of these writers or poets, such as, for example, the poet Gumilev. Or they use as examples the least successful of their works, the vulnerable aspects of their creative talent, and on the basis of these misleading tactics, they draw conclusions about the imaginary "harmfulness" of certain authors' works, the "harmfulness" of their views for our readers. Here it is appropriate to recall how Lenin regarded the extremely sharp satire of Averchenko in spite of its malevolence. He suggested reprinting several stories, calling them brilliant.

If we publish the unpublished works of Andrei Platonov, *Chevangur* and *Kotlovan*, and several works still remaining in the archives of Bulgakov, Akhmatova and Zoshchenko, then this, it seems to me, will also be useful for our culture.

Quite recently I re-read Pasternak's novel *Dr. Zhivago*. I was asked to write an article about it, and I did. I remember the opinions

that our highly respected writers expressed about that book when it first came out. But here is what I thought after re-reading the novel: much of it is now perceived differently, and evidently it needs a new evaluation, as was done for several others of our literary works.

Remember twenty years ago when Bulgakov came into our lives with his extremely sharp yet funny satire, and with his novel, *Master and Margarita*. What happened? Did anything happen? Yes, something happened. We received a marvellous work of art which "works" for us, not against us. We need satire--sharp, attacking our vices, and at the same time funny. It will help us!

A long time ago it was time for us to begin to "rake" the archival "beds." To open wide the doors for that literature which we have so long silenced. To return it to the people and to our culture. This is both inevitable and necessary. Thanks to the fact that journals began to publish the works "which lay in the beds" in archives, favorable conditions are also being created for the development of contemporary literature. Culture is expanding; we are demanding more of what is being written today. Works which are nondescript, passable, opportunistic, and discrediting the worth of literature cannot compete with works of high culture, of exacting moral and ethical content. Is it not a joy that we are opening wide the doors to our rich literature and to the past and to the present?! Is it not a joy--the knowledge that justice is triumphing and those writers, whose creation we so long and stubbornly met with unfair suspicion and belittled, are now given their due!

Along with this, as a scholar, I can agree with the fact that the atmosphere of hysteria, of some kind of "boom," is harmful to these publications. They must become an ordinary matter, as any normal natural work, but a work which is consistent and without lapses, without any hitches or pauses. Meanwhile the perfectly sound notion that hysteria must not be created can be misused. Under this banner some journals and publications have revised their publication schedules, eliminating works which have long awaited publication and which have been awaited and are still being awaited by readers.

Our contemporary literature is extremely rich and varied. However, in the literary sky alongside the truly notable phenomena are also many false stars. Some of our greatest writers have supposedly turned out to be empty shells. I know an instance when no one wanted

to subscribe to the collected works of one such writer. A way out was found. A subscription, almost in the form of an order, was allotted to all army libraries. But why should these "compositions" (at least they could be on military themes!) go to the army, if they are not even necessary to civilian readers!

About twenty years ago in the Department of Literature and Language of the USSR Academy of Sciences, a Ukrainian scholar and statistician gave a very interesting speech about the sharp decline in reading of the classics. It was thought to be caused partially by the decline in the level of culture, or the decline in reader demand for the classics. It turned out to be nothing of the kind. Interest and demand exist, and they have not fallen off at all, but the publishers have simply been publishing books by contemporary writers at the expense of the classics. Look around you and see how much of this verbal garbage is published. This was discussed at the writer's conference, albeit, unfortunately, in rather abstract form. No one spoke about why such insipid works were being published. But it must be said: it is because their authors belong to the category of so-called influential writers in the Writers' Union. The publishing house, "Sovetskii pisatel'" [Soviet Writer], depends on them. They can demand that even "Khudozhestvennaia literatura" [Artistic Literature] publish their collected works. How many currently living writers have acquired such "collections" of five or even ten volumes! Meanwhile the thirty-volume collection of the works of Dostoevsky has been out just fifteen years! Is this permissible? Of course, it is not. But try to buy Leskov, Bunin or even Pushkin, Gogol, Lermontov, which comprise our national pride. You cannot buy them. Now a collection of the works of the marvellous author Mikhail Zoshchenko is coming out. But how much effort was needed to "push it through" to publication? When there was so much talk about including the story, "Before the Sunrise," in the collection, one of the officials of the publishing house told the members of the commission on the literary legacy of Zoshchenko: "We cannot possibly include this story because it was condemned in the resolution, and no one repealed the resolution." "But read the story! There is nothing 'criminal' in it," insisted the members of the commission. "There is no point in my reading the story. I read the resolution."

Fortunately, the story was subsequently returned to the collection of works from which it had been removed.

I personally have no doubt that we need to learn to acknowledge our own mistakes, for acknowledgement of a mistake not only does not diminish the worth of a person or of a society; on the contrary, it evokes a feeling of trust and respect both toward the person and toward the society.

Literature is the conscience of a society, its soul. The honor and merit of a writer consists in defending truth and the right to that truth under the most unfavorable circumstances. Particularly for a writer, the question is definitely not: to speak the truth or not to speak it? For him it is: to write or not to write. As a specialist on ancient Russian literature I can say with conviction that Russian literature has never kept silent. Can you really consider literature literature, or a writer a writer if they side-step the truth, if they silence it or try to falsify it? Literature which does not evoke a pang of conscience is already a lie. And to lie in literature, you will agree, is the worst form of lying.

Although we have a marvellous literature, marvellous writers (I will not name them; you know them well), nevertheless we are discovering them twenty or thirty years later. We have not found great new discoveries recently. In literature in recent decades the spirit of consumerism has gained ascendancy. The tendency to write "for sale" has appeared, that is, to write what will surely be successful. Many times I have had to hear complaints that the publishers will not print something.

You are not being published? Well, what of it. Write! You will be published if you write something worthwhile. Your voice will be heard--the voice of your conscience. Patience is the mother of courage, but courage must be learned. It is necessary to teach it. It is necessary to strengthen oneself, to temper one's talent, one's gift. Creativity demands courage. Creativity is not glory; it is not laurels. It is a thorny path which demands complete sacrifice.

I do not agree that writing is a profession. To be a writer is fate. It is a life. A writer can receive his honorarium only as a result of gargantuan effort. For us writing is seen as a sort of feeding trough. Writers publish their booklets, then they elbow their way into the Union of Writers in order to not work anywhere, forgetting that the bread of art is a stale and hard bread.

Why, for example, did the excellent Bulgarian poet Atanas Dalchev publish only a few of his poetic works during his lifetime?

Poetry for him was not a means of earning a living. All the works he published were excellent. In pursuit of the honorarium we have lost our sense of brevity. And not only brevity; we have forgotten that literature is teaching, and its mission is enlightenment, which from the beginning constituted its essence. Could Pushkin have been thinking about the honorarium when he wrote "The Captain's Daughter," or about it being necessary to bring it up to the size of a huge novel? He placed his creativity and his honor first and foremost, and the honor of the literature which he served although, as we know, even he had to be concerned with his honorarium.

I will give you another example, more familiar to us--an incident about which I was told, from the life of Andrei Platonov. Platonov, as we know, was not spoiled by the attention of publishers. Few of his works were published and with great difficulty. Many more were criticized. In the 1930s, having received a mere pittance of an honorarium, Andrei Platonov met another writer in the publishing house who in those years was "honorable." His colleague, brandishing bundles of money which he was barely able to hold, admonished Platonov: "Here is how one must write, Platonov, here how one must write!" Today, Platonov, as we know, is known throughout the world, but if I were to name the writer who "instructed" Platonov on how to write, scarcely anyone of my readers would recall him.

Bulgakov also had a difficult life, as did Akhmatova and Zoshchenko. But their difficulties did not break their will to create. A writer, a true writer, does not ignore his conscience, even if he suffers deprivation.

What is important to a person? How should life be lived? Above all it is essential not to commit any acts which would injure one's self-esteem. It is possible not to do very much in life, but if you do not do anything, even a little, against your own conscience, then in this very way you will bring colossal benefit. Even in our ordinary everyday lives. But of course there can also be difficult situations in life when a person has a choice before him--to be disgraced in the eyes of those around or in his own eyes. I am sure that it is better to be disgraced before others, than before one's own conscience. A person must know how to sacrifice himself. Of course, such a sacrifice is a heroic act. But it is a necessary choice.

When I say that a person must not go against his conscience, must not compromise it, I in no way mean that a person cannot or must not make a mistake or stumble. No one is free from errors in our complex lives. However, the worst danger lies in wait for a person who has stumbled: it often leads him to despair. It begins to seem as if everyone around him is a scoundrel, that everyone lies and acts maliciously. Disillusionment ensues, a loss of faith in people and in decency, which is the most awful. One day one of my co-workers said that he did not trust a single human being, that all people were scoundrels. It turned out that at one time when he was in great need, his paycheck had been stolen from his desk. And I understood that I likewise could not trust him. A person convinced only of the force of evil can himself steal money from another's desk.

Yes, they say: "Guard your honor from the time you are young." But even if you do not manage to guard your honor from your earliest youth, it is necessary and possible to retrieve it in mature adulthood, to master oneself, to find in oneself the daring and the courage to acknowledge mistakes.

I know a person whom everyone now admires, whom everyone appreciates greatly, whom even I, in the later years of his life, have come to love. However, in his youth he committed an evil deed, extremely evil. And he told me about that deed. He himself acknowledged it. One time we were sailing together on a steamship, and he remarked, leaning on the handrail: "I thought that you would never speak to me again." I did not even know what he was talking about. My attitude toward him had changed long before he had acknowledged the sins of his youth. I had already understood that there was much that he had done that he had not realized then. . . .

The way to repentance can be long and difficult. But how it enhances one's courage to acknowledge one's guilt--it enhances both the person and all of society.

The pangs of conscience. . . . They prompt, they teach; they help a person uphold ethical norms and preserve dignity--the dignity of a morally alive person.

---

## Memory Overcomes Time<sup>1</sup>

Cultural monuments can be very diverse. They are folk songs and costumes, the creations of architects, poets, artists, carpenters, stonecutters and blacksmiths. They can be recounted endlessly. One indicator of people's cultural level is their attitude toward those monuments.

Offensively lacking in memory were those who in the 1930s blew up the tomb of Peter Bagration on Borodino Field, and the Church of Christ the Savior in Moscow, built with the people's money in honor of the victory over Napoleon, and those who broke the "Dog's Square" and prohibited Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva, Gumilev, Pasternak, Platonov, Zoshchenko, Khodasevich, Kliuev, Nabokov, and others from publishing. We have still not finished assessing the damage which was inflicted by them on our culture, our morality and our patriotism. Vladimir Il'ich Lenin appealed to us to enrich our memory by the "knowledge of all those riches which humanity has produced," but a wall of denial of true artistic values, a wall of oblivion and ignorance was placed across the path to this enrichment of the memory and to people's moral improvement. This barrier blocked the people's access to whole historical periods and historical figures. That wall was the bureaucratic system. Dullness and featurelessness were propagated in literature, painting, architecture, etc. It is perfectly clear to me, for example, why some contemporary writers actively speak against the publication of those literary works which for decades could not find a

---

1. D. S. Likhachev, "Pamiat preodolevaet vremia," *Trud*, Aug. 21, 1988, p. 4.

place in our publications. It is because compared to them their own works will look inferior.

I think that one of the basic tasks of the recently created Soviet Culture Fund should be continuous, broad-based, consistent cultural and educational work.

The idea of culture must take hold of the masses. We must resurrect in the youth a pride in being well-read, in knowledge of the monuments of classical literature, and in their own aesthetic discernment. This is why I see youth programs as the most important tasks of the Soviet Culture Fund.

The Fund must constantly invent new forms of aid to culture. For example, in the suburbs of Leningrad, in Arkhangel'skoe near Moscow and in other old parks, marble statues perish from external influences. It is necessary to create new technological methods of treating marble surfaces in order to protect and to preserve the statues which decorate our gardens and parks. Consequently, we must initiate contact with science and technology. We need people from many different professions.

The problems facing the Fund are enormous. The main task of the Fund is to save the spiritually deathless from material death. We must gather, assimilate and preserve.

To gather is to aid collectors in assembling and placing their collections in museums and libraries, to establish the very fact of the presence of these or other cultural treasures. To assimilate is to enable people to become acquainted with cultural treasures, to receive from them lessons in beauty, wisdom, respect for their ancestors and knowledge of history (above all the history of culture), and to learn about them. To preserve is to restore, to conserve and to renew. For example, we must take care not to spoil the landscape in this effort.

Therefore, it is necessary to tend to the development of taste, especially among youth. This does not mean that I am calling only for refined art forms. After all, even a good detective novel can be art. But there are no fewer mediocre or poor detective novels than there are poor verses. An artistic taste for language is now quite a rare phenomenon. Language is becoming degraded and impoverished.

At a conference of the Department of Literature and Language of the USSR Academy of Sciences, I spoke about language. Since 1953 I have been taking note of the mistakes made by speakers at the

Academy of Sciences. I have observed a decline in the intelligibility of the academicians and candidate members who make speeches at the Academy. We need a state committee of the Russian language. We need a committee for technical terminology. Now, for example, instead of "to prove" [*dokazat'*] they say "to verify" [*verifitsirovat'*]. Why is that? In the ancient Russian literature section of the Pushkin House, I have posted lists of expressions which cannot be used in our works. My colleagues add to these lists. In my opinion, it is necessary to publish and extensively distribute brochures for the people containing incorrect words and expressions.

One of the most pressing problems of contemporary life, in my opinion, is the preservation of our cities, large and small, their appearance, their spirit and their individuality.

Utilizing the potential of the Culture Fund, we must attract young people to restoration work in cities, villages, and regional centers, even if they place only one architectural monument in a museum and organize a youth cultural center in a restored building. Let there be a video library there, movable exhibitions, and contemporary and classical music playing. Each such rescued monument can become a focus for consolidating cultural forces.

We must discover new cultural monuments. But we must remember that culture is not only what is created by a person's hands. Are not natural monuments and preserved ecology also monuments which illustrate our culture?

Of course, it is necessary to develop regional studies [*kraevedenie*] in every possible way. Regional studies provide precise knowledge of one's own area, and the love for it without which it is impossible to undertake restoration and preservation.

It seems to me that it would also be very useful to create a youth society, "Klassika." We must help young people to understand the charm of classical music and classical poetry, painting and architecture.

I recently found out that in the oldest university in the country, MVTU [Moscow Higher Technical School], named for Bauman, a new department of sociology and humanities has been established. Nothing like this has yet occurred in any technical school in the country. The idea is wonderful. We must not turn out technocrats and narrow specialists from our schools. It is necessary to train intelligent people, engineers in the old sense of this word, with a broad outlook and the

knowledge of foreign languages, the skill to understand, evaluate and preserve works of art. This last is very important.

How does a work of art educate? Above all it raises the people's level of humane culture, which is necessary not only for the revitalization of taste and understanding of art. Along with the appearance of aesthetic instinct ethics is also developed. Without aesthetic feeling ethics can exist only by inertia transmitted from the older generations.

Besides aesthetic education, we can speak also of moral education. . . . It is precisely through works of art that we can judge the spirit of people and countries, cities and their inhabitants.

The perception of "other," the cognition of an "other" nation is the consciousness of the existence of oneself beyond the limits of oneself, the consciousness of one's own people in the midst of others. This consciousness is extremely important in our moral conclusions. If we profoundly understand others, another people, then we cannot be hostile toward that other people.

With the same certainty we can say that art inspires respect for the peoples who create it. It is oriented against nationalism, for it profoundly understands national values created by others.

I have briefly recounted some aspects of the vital moral role of art. I must say in this connection that the protection of art and the preservation of cultural monuments is an important task of each people, and I am not afraid to say, especially of our multi-national people. For the fact that our country consists of many nationalities requires special attention to everything that contributes to mutual understanding between peoples. Without this even national individuality is impossible.

The cultures of different peoples develop in contact with each other. If this contact disappears, the culture dies, losing even its specific national characteristics. Russian culture has, from the very beginning, been a culture of different peoples, united by Rus', by a single government. Ancient Rus' was distinguished by a complete absence of racial prejudice against those to whom their influence spread--the Polovtsians, the Tatars and the Finno-Ugric peoples. There is no trace of racial or chauvinistic motive in a single ancient Russian document, and a great number of them have been preserved. Yes, there were battles with the Polovtsians, the Mongolian-Tatars and

other enemies, but there was no racial contempt toward them. Our historical experience permits me to assert that Russian culture was open to other peoples and actively absorbed their experience. It is precisely thanks to this that Russian culture became a great culture. Dostoevsky spoke prophetically about this in his speech about Pushkin.

The best representatives of the Russian intelligentsia never had an arrogant attitude toward other peoples. Belligerent impatience toward other peoples is characteristic of the pseudo-intelligentsia. In any nationalism there is a lack of national dignity, an absence of self-respect. Must not a great people, respecting itself, also respect other peoples?

The fact that Russian culture was established under the cultural influence of other peoples can be demonstrated using the example of Moscow, which, having absorbed many nationalities, still was so attractive precisely because of its Russianness. Petersburg could not have become Petersburg without the buildings and entire sections of it built by Italians, Dutch, French, Scots and Germans or without the treasures of the Hermitage Museum.

Cultural links are our underestimated wealth, on the basis of which developed the internationalistic character of the Russian people and the peoples who have settled our country--the Armenians, the Georgians, the Ukrainians, the Tatars, etc. Look at the culture of the peoples of the Soviet Union. It is absolutely international, and this internationalism was created above all by a cultural community of peoples. It was there during the time of Lomonosov, Derzhavin and Pushkin. It was in the Russian Chronicle, in the *Lay of the Host of Igor*, in the *Kazan History* and in the literature of Ancient Rus'. . . .

Do not the pictures of foreign artists, preserved in our museums, and the world literature which has become ours, thanks to the magnificent, still undervalued translations by our scholars, attest to the fact of this community? The individuality of a nation is created by contact and communication, not by isolation, by kindness toward others, not by malice. And if we acknowledge all this, will we not then accept the responsibility which rests upon us?



---

## Russia<sup>1</sup>

What I have to say about Russian culture in these notes is my personal opinion. I do not ascribe it to anyone else. The fact that I have studied Rus' throughout my whole life, and that there is nothing dearer to me than Russia, gives me the right to speak of my general, though subjective, impressions.

Russia is both extolled and reproached. Some consider its culture an imitation or reflection of others. Others take pride in its prose, poetry, theater, music and icon painting. . . . Some see in Russia a malignant growth of state authority, and the people as submissive. Some see anarchism in the Russian people, constant rebelliousness and hostility to authority. Others see in our history an absence of striving for defined goals. Still others see in Russian history the "Russian idea," the presence in us of our own abnormally aggrandized mission. Meanwhile, we can only progress toward the future if we have a clear understanding of the past and of what is distinctive about us.

Russia is immense, not only in its surprising variety of humanity and cultures, but also in the variety of levels--levels in all the souls of its inhabitants, from the highest spirituality to what people term having "vapor in place of a soul."

But I will be brief. I am obviously not a prophet or a preacher although it has often been necessary in recent years for me to convince and to make appeals. I will say, as Vladimir Monomakh did to his readers: "even if you do not accept all, then at least half."

---

1. D. S. Likhachev, "Rossiia," Literaturnaia gazeta, No. 41, Dec. 12, 1988, pp. 5-6.

This is a gigantic land; I mean the terrain itself--the ground. It is a country, a state and a people. And it is no accident, when Russians went to worship, to its holy sites, to have their sins forgiven, to thank God, they went barefoot or in *lapti*;<sup>2</sup> they went on their knees so they could feel the ground and its expanse, the dust of the road and the grass of the roadside paths, so they could see and experience everything along the way. There is no holiness without heroism. There is no happiness without difficulties in its attainment. To walk hundreds of miles to Kiev, to Solovki, or to swim to Mt. Athos is also an element of Russia.

I named Kiev among the places where pilgrims have gone. And this was not by chance. The greatest of Russian holy places was the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev. Ukrainians can be proud that their city was from the very beginning the center of the vast Russian land--of the future Ukraine, Great Russia and Belorussia. To think otherwise is narrow-minded; it diminishes the significance of Kiev as a world-class city.

I remember with what spiritual trepidation I roamed the streets of Belozersk as a schoolboy. This was a city that was well known even in the tenth century because one of the three Varangian brothers--Sineus--occupied the prince's throne there. (I did not know then that the mission of the Varangians is itself a legend. Belozersk had been moved to its present location in the fourteenth century.) But I also visited Izborsk with this same trepidation (the principedom of the other brother--Truvor) and Novgorod where Rurik ruled, and Vladimir, founded by Vladimir Monomakh, and Rostov, and Novgorod-Seversk and Putivl'. Each city preserves its own special beauty and along with that something common to all. Each village which I visited--from Kola near Murmansk and the northern stations, to the villages on the Volga, in Pskov oblast, in Volkhov and Pineg--each has its own characteristic appearance. An incredible variety and yet some kind of higher unity. All Russian. Even after division into three eastern Slavic peoples, not cut off by a blank wall from the Ukraine, from Belorussia, from the villages of the Tatars, the Komi-Zyrians, the Mordovians and the Karelians.

---

2. A form of footwear, made of animal hides, worn by poor peasants--trans.

Common destinies connected our cultures, our ideas about life, everyday activity and beauty. In the byliny the main cities of the Russian land remain Kiev, Chernigov, Murom, Karela. . . . The people recalled and still recall many other things from the byliny and from the ancient songs. They keep beauty in their hearts, a kind of lofty, unified beauty above and beyond the local level. This "idea of beauty" and spiritual nobility are common despite distance and separation. Yes, separation, but always yearning for unification. This sensation of unity arose a long time ago. The very idea of the brotherhood of the tribes who drew their princely origin from related ancestors was a phenomenon which, I long ago pointed out, emerges from the very legend of the calling of the three Varangian brothers. And who summoned the Varangians? According to the legend in the *Chronicles*, it was Rus', the Chud' (ancestors of the later Estonians), Slovenians, Krivichi and Ves' (Vepsy)--all Slavic and Finno-Ugric tribes; hence the chronicler of the eleventh century perceived these tribes as living a unified life linked with each other. And how did they march on Tsargrad?<sup>3</sup> Again, in a union of tribes. According to a story in the *Chronicles*, Oleg took with him on the campaign a great number of Varangians, Slovenians, Chuds, Krivichi, Mera, Drevlians, Radimichi, Polians, Severtsi, Viaticchi, Khorvati, Dulebi and Tivertsi. . .

The Russian land, or more correctly, the land of Rus', i.e., the whole land area of the future Ukraine, Belorussia and Great Russia--was relatively sparsely populated. The population suffered from this forced disconnection and lived primarily along trade routes--the rivers. They lived in villages, though not very large ones, and they feared the surrounding unknown territory. Enemies came "from Heaven knows where"; the steppe was "an unknown country"; their western neighbors were "foreigners," that is, "dumb" [*nemtsy*], who spoke an unknown language. Therefore, amidst the forests, swamps and steppes, people strove to maintain their existence, to provide a sign of their existence by building tall churches like lighthouses, placed at river bends, on lakeshores, or simply on hills so that they would be visible from afar. Nowhere in the world is there such love for glittering gold church domes and cupolas visible from afar, a deliberate "harmonization of

---

3. Tsargrad was the Russian name for Constantinople--trans.

themes" across the wide expanses, choir singing, bright colors that contrast with the green background and stand out against the background of white snow; love for the pure colors of popular art. A love for "colors," [*tsveta*] that is, for the colors of flowers [*tsvety*]. A love for colors taken from nature, harmonizing with it and at the same time standing apart from it.

Even now when I see the golden top of a church or the golden steeple of the Admiralty, lighting up the whole Neva by itself, or the golden steeple of the Peter and Paul fortress--a sword protecting the city--my heart contracts with a sweet feeling of delight. The golden flame of the church or the golden flame of a candle are symbols of spirituality. "Let not the candle go out"--thus the Moscow princes who cared for the entire Russian land wrote in their wills.

This is why Rus' so loved wanderers, travelers and merchants. And they welcomed guests, that is, traveling salesmen. "Do not let a person pass by without welcoming him," wrote Monomakh in his "Teachings." Hospitality, distinctive to many peoples, became an important feature of the Russian character--Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian. A guest spreads kind words about his hosts. One can also hear about the surrounding world and faraway lands from a guest. That is why the Christian faith, superimposed upon good old paganism, was accepted in Rus' with so little opposition--it brought world history and world geography to Rus'. People stopped considering themselves a solitary people in their own faith and saw humanity as a whole.

But the broad expanses worked against unification in the Russian land since they separated villages and cities. The Scandinavians called Rus' "Gardarikie"--"a country of towns." However, between the cities and villages stretched unpopulated expanses, which were sometimes difficult to overcome. Because of this, what became established in Rus' were not only unifying principles, but also disconnecting ones. Each city had its own rules, its own customs. The Russian land was always made up not only of thousands of cities, but also thousands of cultures. Take what strikes you more than anything and what concerned the inhabitants of Russia more than anything--architecture. The architecture of Rus' is a complex world unto itself. A world of cheerful inventions and a vast number of styles, which have been created in different ways at different times in different cities. Churches were built contemporaneously in Novgorod and in

Vladimir, Smolensk and in Yaroslavl'. In Novgorod churches are built not only in the spirit of the Novgorodians but also in the spirit of Smolensk, and later of Muscovy and the Volga. There was nothing aggressive, nothing that did not permit the existence of buildings of another style or another ideological content. In Novgorod there is a Varangian icon case, and there was a Chudintseva Street--a street of the Ugro-Finnic tribe of Chuds. Even in Kiev there was a Chudin court--obviously an inn for merchants from the far distant north of Estonia on the Chudskii Lake. In the nineteenth century on the Nevskii Prospect--the street of religious tolerance, as it was called by foreigners--there was a Dutch church, as well as Lutheran, Catholic, Armenian and only two Orthodox churches--the Kazan Cathedral and Znamenskaia Church.

\* \* \*

I set about the second part of my article with some trepidation. It is easy to find fault with the thoughts here expressed if you take them out of the context of the whole article, if you pull them out one at a time, if you simply do not wish to understand all that there, in fact, is in Russian culture.

The first part of the article has somewhat prepared the way for what I will now say. A sense of community across the expanses was typical not only for Russian cities and villages, but also for Russian culture as a whole. We are a country of European culture. Christianity prepared us for this. Along with that we also took on Byzantine culture, in large part through Bulgaria. We created our own writing, our own literary genres and expressed our concerns in our literature. We were aided in this process by Bulgarian books, writings and genres used in Bulgaria and brought to us at the time. But the most important factor was that literary language which we received along with the whole Bulgarian culture. We shall not at this time delve into the complex issue of what to call that church language in which books were written and works recopied which were brought to us. Let us say only that this language, in its reworking and return to earlier forms and then once again in movement away from them, nourished the Russian literature of an entire millennium. There were two linguistic centers around which Russian literature revolved while becoming enriched.

The first center is the Church Slavonic language traditionally associated with Bulgaria. This language was studied by all Russians, all the way up to the end of the second decade of the twentieth century. It was studied in childhood preparatory classes, from the first grades of city schools, technical, commercial, secondary and church schools where they prayed. They learned to understand worldwide subjects of European painting, poetry and philosophical thought. . . . The second center (but perhaps really the first, since it preceded Church Slavonic) is the conversational language, traditionally Russian, with its proverbs and sayings, to which the Chronicles constantly refer, as well as legal documents, ancient Russian tales, satirical works, etc. Close to the conversational language is folk poetry: *byliny*, historical songs, religious verses (forgotten now along with all of their folk wisdom), fairy tales, etc. You could not count all the genres of folk poetry, but one thing is clear--that this is an organized language and, in its own way, one of high quality. What a joy it was to be a Russian writer, constantly drawing in the necessary quantity and quality, first from this spring, then from another! This is the answer to the riddle of the unusual richness and subtlety of the language of Russian literature, and especially of its poetry.

Our folklore, Church Slavonic, Polish and Western European genres of Russian literature and poetry have come from various sources. The genres of Russian, Belorussian and Ukrainian literatures have enriched each other. It is surprising that not one of the genres has disappeared without a trace. Not one of the great strata of literature! Ancient Russian literature continued to exist up to the twentieth century. Narratives like "The Tale of Bov," about the robber Barbos, were published in the twentieth century by Sytin.<sup>4</sup> Many works of ancient Russian literature have passed on into children's literature, like the old shapes of locomotives, sleighs and military uniforms, which continue to exist in children's toys today.

It is true, the literary genres have become simplified, changed in form and accommodated to the literary necessities of their eras.

---

4. Ivan Dmitrievich Sytin (1851-1934) was a Russian publisher of popular novels, then later of textbooks, children's books and encyclopedias and popular science books--trans.

This process of genre formation has proceeded along the entire development of Russian literature. These genres were recreated, but were also borrowed: the novel, the ballad, the poem, and others. Everywhere they acquired their own original Russian character.

Having developed in many centers of writing and in "literary families," this literature was unusually rich, combining in each era the most varied source materials, our own and others, using freedom of choice, but also a freedom of interaction with other genres. This refers both to those genres which came to us from Byzantium and the Balkans, and to those which came to us from the West, like, for example, the novel, which, in Russia, acquired its own distinctive form. Getting ahead of ourselves, we added a unique, distinctive Russian intellectual content.

This capacity of Russian culture to be enriched by foreign cultures and by the transformation of one's own, previous culture, is most evident in the change of styles. The Russian land created distinctive artistic styles in the ancient period of its development up to the era of Peter's reforms, but after Peter it joined the common development of artistic life of the West, constantly transforming the artistic styles which first arose in the West and then were echoed in Russia. But how they echoed! In Russia, each style acquired its own distinctive higher forms. Baroque, classicism, sentimentalism, romanticism and realism! Did not all these currents and "great styles" acquire their own forms and their own content in Russian, their own direction in solving common problems? Simeon Polotskii<sup>5</sup> was a Belorussian, who brought with him the ideas and forms of school baroque. In Moscow he did not work at all on schoolboy themes, but instead took up profound social positions in his work which were important to Russia. Were Radishchev<sup>6</sup> and Karamzin<sup>7</sup> simply

---

5. Simeon Polotskii (1629-1680) established a new Russian literature based largely on western Baroque styles, especially Polish--trans.

6. Aleksandr Nikolaevich Radishchev (1749-1802) was a writer and thinker who is generally credited with starting the revolutionary tradition in Russia--trans.

7. Nikolai Mikhailovich Karamzin (1766-1826) was a historian, author of the twelve-volume History of the Russian State. He was an important contributor in the formation of the modern Russian literary language--trans.

sentimentalists? Or did they write in other styles? And the realism of Dostoevsky? Was his not a realism of the highest level, going beyond the limits of conventional literary realism? We could make analogous observations in the field of architecture. Even the many Italian architects, working in Petersburg, did not make Petersburg look just like an Italian city. Let us look a little closer, and we will see that Petersburg in general is not a typically European city. Our European cities are Tallin, Vil'nius, Riga and L'vov, but not Petersburg. It is even less an eastern city. Petersburg is Russian and therefore extraordinarily receptive to anything foreign or to a creative reworking of what is basically foreign.

\* \* \*

To write the history of Russian culture or even of literature, architecture, philosophy, painting or music is extraordinarily difficult. This is precisely because the phenomena of culture are independent; they are not always clearly part of a common process. They are free, and as free entities, they freely absorb and creatively remake foreign material--foreign or simply old--and return to this old style or move a step forward, using not only its own time and its own country, but also what is foreign in other countries, as it was during the "silver age" of Russian literature or in the Russian avant-garde in painting. Blok, for example, in "The Scythians" speaks about this in particular:

We love everything--the heat of cold numbers,  
 The gift of divine visions  
 We can comprehend everything -  
                     Sharp Gallic wit,  
 And gloomy German genius. . .

Many people in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries noticed this characteristic of receptivity and understanding of one's own, and of what is foreign as one's own, but there is no use repeating and developing this observation. I will say only (more correctly, I recall that long ago it was said) that this last characteristic has led Russians not only to much that is good, but also to much that is bad.

By the way, look at what diverse writers, poets, artists and philosophers live in the past as contemporaries. Their associations according to common creative principles are made lightly, but are also lightly broken. Are there not analogous phenomena in western countries? There are, of course. There can be no single characteristic of the national character or national image of any people which is not shared by another, but this does not prevent the existence of individuality. There is no single face which corresponds to any other. The image of Russia is particularly distinctive because of its receptivity not only to foreign influence, but also to its own. It may seem strange to speak of being "receptive to one's own." What I mean is the characteristic of a special truthfulness in which a person does not conceal himself, is sincere and in everything strives to the utmost.

\* \* \*

"Modesty of form" is a feature which is strikingly manifested in Russian literature and is linked with everything I have thus far been saying. As soon as any style, manner, genre or language begins to acquire definable forms, it becomes somewhat set, and becomes visible, noticeable, and is then repudiated; and the author, seeking simplicity and truth, then tries to distill something new from lower literary forms thereby. He turns, for instance, to conversational language, then to commercial genres and tries to make the nonliterary literary. This is especially noticeable in the work of Nekrasov, Leskov, Tolstoy, Mayakovsky and many others. Sometimes this is combined with a sharp turn to the old and even to the ancient, as in the work of A. Remizov.<sup>8</sup> On this was based the ongoing "competition" of the two main strains of the Russian language in the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries--Church Slavonic and the colloquial, common parlance.

Modesty of form is a constant source of enrichment of the Russian literary language and the Russian genre system in literature. But it not only appeared in genres and language but also mainly in content and in ideology. Modesty of form is also a passion for exposing

---

8. A. Remizov (1877-1957) was a Russian writer, associated with the Serapion Brothers. He originated the "patterned, ornamental" style of prose writing. He emigrated in 1921--trans.

all pompous lies, a striving for the unvarnished "naked truth," and a hatred of the stock phrase. Any "simplification," any shame about one's education and intelligence, any going to the people and idealization of peasantry and community, or idealization of Ancient Rus', interpreted by the Slavophiles as something simple, homogeneous, peasant-like. A striving which now seems humorous, of writers to be clothed as peasants, as wanderers, sometimes as small-scale merchants, is a reflection of that ideology. And in this respect we are completely "original."

\* \* \*

But if we speak of ideological distinctiveness, then here the main feature, undoubtedly, must be the search for truth which constantly separated Russian thought from Russian state activity. For a short while truth even subordinated the latter to itself.

The search for truth was the main content of Russian literature, beginning in the tenth century. Yes, since the tenth century, although the eleventh century has usually been accepted as the beginning of Russian literature--more precisely "Rus'sian"--for it was the beginning also of Ukrainian and Belorussian literature. Indeed, historical literature--which sought "whence it [Russia] came to be," or "how things started" or the place of the Russian people among the people of other countries or the place of Russian history in world history--such historical literature was also a kind of search for truth. The most ancient of what has come down to us of collected works relates to the times of the baptizer of Rus', Vladimir I Sviatoslavich. The "Speech of the Philosopher" was of precisely this nature. The "Speech" tells about world history in its medieval context, shows the position of Rus' in world history and in conclusion exhorts Vladimir to accept Christianity. Historical literature was composed and rewritten with unusual scope in Rus', all the way up to the seventeenth century. And it is characteristic that one of the first chroniclers, the creator of the chronicle form itself, the monk of the Kiev-Caves Monastery, Nikon, was forced to flee to Tmutarakan' from the prince's wrath. And thus it began. . . . The authors of the ancient Russian compositions were constantly in opposition to the princes--like the author of *The Lay of the Host of Igor* or Daniil Zatochnik, or the author of *Tales of the Destruction of Riazan*,

etc. The *Sermons* appealed to the princes more often than to the representatives of any other estate. The Tatar-Mongol invasion unified the people of different social levels, but separated them even more. Princes and monarchs kept an eye on the literature or themselves took up the pen, but this did not eliminate the gap between the state and literature.

There was not only intellectual and political opposition to the state in Russia, but also an "opposition of the soul." We recall what fine, tender faces are depicted on several icons of the time of Ivan the Terrible. Along with this, at the time of the weakening of the state, in the period of feudal fragmentation and internecine rivalry, literature itself became a distinctive "second state." It took over the state's unifying functions. National self-awareness and national unity was maintained by the relative unity of language, folklore, art and everyday life. I speak of "relative unity" since, along with the phenomena in common, there existed also the differences which I have already discussed. There were tribal and regional differences, differences between cultural groups and centers. The greatest unifying force of all was literature, works which "wandered" across all of Rus', were rewritten from one literary center to another, unified Rus' in a common literary culture, and, thanks to its openness, did not know even national boundaries with the southern Slavs.

\* \* \*

Breadth was peculiar not only to the area populated by Rus', but also to the nature of the Russian person and Russian culture. The variety of forms, the variety of one's own cultural heritage, and of "regional" cultural groups and literary centers, determined to a significant degree an exceptional freedom in dealing with the cultural values of various times and various peoples. This is why the distinctive symbol of Russian culture is Pushkin, who strove to join his creativity to all the peaks of world poetry: Dante, Hafiz, Goethe, Shakespeare, etc.

The Pushkin encyclopedia, when it is compiled, could be a source of tremendous education for any reader.

And, in essence, in Russian culture, any phenomenon of culture appears in its best forms, strives to rise to a higher level, to be filled with significant content, to find freedom from restrictive canons. Such

was the philosophical opera of Mussorgskii, the philosophical novel of Dostoevsky, the philosophical prose of Gogol', the philosophical lyrics of Tiutchev, even the philosophical "avant-gardism" of Malevich, Filonov, Goncharov and many others.

Russian culture did not imitate, but creatively made use of the world's cultural riches. Our huge country always had a huge cultural legacy and used it with the generosity of a free and rich personality. Yes, I mean personality, for Russian culture and along with it all of Russia is a personality, an individuality.

Personality or individuality has no patience with self-isolation and seclusion. Russia always strove to lovingly assimilate the legacy of the past: the legacy of Greece, of the Balkan countries and among them first of all Bulgaria, the culture of Italy in all its variety, from the beginning in the fifteenth century--the architecture--then in the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, not only architecture but also music, painting and literature. This same kind of striving to assimilate the culture of Holland was noted as early as the seventeenth century and appears most strikingly at the time of Peter the Great. But in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries this zeal for assimilation of foreign cultures includes, besides Italy, France, Germany, England and Spain. . . . What this Russian assimilation can produce can be demonstrated by looking at one specific area, such as ballet.

\* \* \*

Nevertheless, there is one feature of Russian culture which clearly affects all other areas: this is the importance of aesthetic principle. The "argument of beauty" played a primary role in the choice of faith by Vladimir I Sviatoslavich. The *Chronicle* account of the impression which the church service made on Vladimir's ambassadors in the Constantinople church of Sofia, is well-known to all Russians. It is precisely this which motivated the Russian princes to build magnificent cathedrals in all the major cities of Rus': Kiev, Novgorod, Polotsk, Vladimir, Suzdal', Rostov, Pskov, etc. Even the foreign yoke could not completely eliminate aesthetic forms of culture. There is no question that there was no lag at all in the areas of architecture, painting, applied arts, folklore or music. In literature not

the personal but the "choral" principle dominated, but this choral principle must be viewed against the background of the existence of the same choral tradition in Russian music and in Russian folklore, whose level of accomplishment in epos and lyric is unquestioned.

Much has been written about the influence of Christianity on Russian history and on Russian national character, in particular on the aesthetic ideas of the Russian people. There is no need to repeat it here. But one aspect of Russian religious consciousness has never been discussed. If we compare Sergius of Radonezh with Francis of Assisi (such a comparison is often made), a huge difference in essentials and in principles stands out. Francis considered poverty one of the main merits of monasticism. Sergius agreed with this. But Francis preached begging and vagrancy for monks whereas Sergius prohibited going out of the monastery to ask alms. The monks had to work and earn their bread with their labor. Sergius did all his own farm labor. Pafnutii of Borovsk, up until his very death, continued to give orders for management. Father Superior Filipp of Solovetsk remodeled and equipped the monastery and considered this his main heroic act at the Solovetsk Monastery. Juliania Osorgina worked out her salvation in her own home in managing chores, equated with heroic acts of piety. It is possible to bring up a multitude of such examples of the special relationship of the Russian saints to labor. The Christian ideal acquired an important virtue in Russia--industriousness--care for the wealth of the whole group, be it a monastery, a principedom, the state as a whole or a simple family household with its servants.

\* \* \*

There is one more feature of Russian culture which is irrevocably tied to its peculiarity as a personality or an individuality. In the works of Russian culture there is a very great proportion of lyricism, and of an author's distinctive relationship to the subject or object of creativity. One might ask: how can this be reconciled with the choral principle I just mentioned? And yet it is reconciled. . . . Take, for example, the ancient Russian period, the first seven centuries of Russian culture. What an immense quantity of letters--letters, sermons, and historical works as parts of appeals to readers, how many polemics! True, it is rare that an author strives to express his personal

views, but it turns out that he may just the same. . . . In the eighteenth century how often Russian classical literature turns to letters, diaries, notes, to first-person stories. All poetry lives by self-expression of personality, but take prose like Radishchev's "Journey. . .," Pushkin's *The Captain's Daughter*, Lermontov's *Hero of Our Time*, Tolstoy's *Sevastopol Stories*," Gorky's *My Universities*, Bunin's *Life of Arsen'ev*. Even Dostoevsky (with the possible exception of *Crime and Punishment*) always conducts his story from the point of view of the narrator, an outside chronicler, someone who observes and does not even understand what happens and grants to the reader the joy of guessing. This domesticity, intimacy, and confessional nature of Russian literature is its outstanding feature.

Such authors are always conscious of the reader as intelligent and quick witted, and in this way the author raises him above himself, releasing himself from petty guardianship.

Here is another contradiction in my characterization of Russian art. Literature has maintained an instructional character throughout the whole course of its existence. Literature is a podium from which the author does not thunder, no, but nevertheless he turns to the reader with moral questions. Moral questions and questions regarding his overall world outlook.

Perhaps these contemporary impressions arise because the author really does not consider himself superior to his reader. Avvakum does not so much insist in his *Life* as he encourages. He does not teach, he explains; he does not preach, he weeps. In his *Life* he weeps for himself, weeps for his life before its inevitable end. After all, he wrote his *Life* just as it was coming to an end.

\* \* \*

Passion and spirit make up the distinctive character of Russian art, not only of literature, but also of painting in all its forms, and at all times music and, I dare say, architecture. If some way could be found to determine the dose of lyric principle in architecture, I am sure this lyric principle would be found to an especially high degree in the wooden architecture of the countryside, in spite of all the variety of its forms and styles in different epochs and in different areas. Freedom from the drafting process greatly enhanced this quality. Sample

drawings and preliminary sketches existed, of course, but basically the architects worked in nature; they worked "from a model," that is, according to the approximate desire of the person ordering the work to reproduce one or another existing church or building, relying on the fact that, for the architect, "measure and eye will guide." Builders of onion domes and marquees were given many opportunities for self-expression, freedom from strict symmetry, the choice of location amid the natural landscape--amid spruce trees, beside a lake (with a variety of reflections on the water's surface), as completion of a road or as "elevation," rising to the sky amid the ordinary peasant structures. Not everything could be foreseen in a drawing, but the builder can take everything into account in the process of his work (especially, I would say, if he sang while wielding his axe; I observed just this as a child).

\* \* \*

The *Primary Chronicle* reports that a Greek philosopher, in telling Vladimir I Sviatoslavich about Christianity, unrolled in front of him a "zapona" representing the universe and people in it moving in groups--some to hell, others to paradise. Was this visual propaganda with a moral imperative? Yes, Russian literature began from its own "didactic," sermonizing work, but later Russian literature laid out before its readers more complex compositions in which one or another variant of behavior was proposed to the reader as material for thought. Included in this material were also various moral problems. Problems of morality were posed as artistic tasks, especially by Dostoevsky and Leskov. Russian literature never provided much simple entertainment such as a "mediocre level." The mountain ranges of Russian culture (not only in literature) consisted of peaks, not plateaus upon which simple entertainment or games for reading or rhetorical crosswords usually rests. Rhetoric per se is not tolerated in Russian literature. And pure sermonizing always requires rhetoric.

Rhetoric is also intolerable in painting. Meanwhile the most characteristic painting for Russia is the portrait. I cannot prove this in this article. Let this remain for the reader as my opinion. But a Russian portrait causes me to rejoice whenever I turn to Russian painting, even to ancient Russian painting. For in ancient Russian painting the expressiveness of a portrait lies in the moral

instructiveness of its image. Standing before a fresco or icon, you experience a certain pressure of something standing opposite you--almost like a living interlocutor.

You will say, ah, Rembrandt, Velasquez. . . . Yes, it is true that these artists very strongly influenced Russian painters. They were related to them. Thus it is very important to have them in the Hermitage. But in the Hermitage the "lesser Dutch" artists are also very interesting. They also were necessary to the Russian *Peredvizhniki*,<sup>9</sup> and not only to them.

Examining the map of European culture, we see how much we have discovered in it that is our own and so necessary to us! This is why our natural openness, bred by the absence of natural boundaries, is so important to us. Any attempt to prevent the borders from being crossed in both directions is disastrous for our culture. We not only receive from abroad, but we also give abroad. As strange as it seems, this self-return of the "unexchangeable ruble of culture" gives us no less than the process of receiving from abroad. Each culture has, as does a bat, its echo-sounding apparatus, its radar. Publications, translations, responses to our works from abroad help us, along with our own responses, to constitute ourselves as a part of world culture, to find our place in it. It is for this precise reason that foreign publications and research concerning Dostoevsky, Bulgakov, Pasternak, Sholokhov, etc. are so important to us. It is for this precise reason that attention to our music and musicians, to our icons and frescoes (alas, we still have no real museum of copies of frescoes!), the impressions of tourists of our cities, their style and their individual appearance, are so important for us.

\* \* \*

National character is contradictory. Each positive quality encounters its opposite negative characteristic: openness and reclusiveness, generosity and greed, love for freedom and slavish obedience, etc. However, we judge any national type above all by its

---

9. Members of the Russian school of realist painters of the second half of the nineteenth century--trans.

positive characteristics. In art research, for example, its history is always represented by its best works, its best creators, not the worst or even second rate ones. Still, unquestioning obedience to the state is attributed to the Russian people as one of its main features. There is a grain of truth in this, for in Russia there were no permanent traditional forms for expressing popular opinions. But what of the *veche* [peoples' assembly], the *zemskie sobory* [district council meetings] and village gatherings, you say? These were clearly not enough. As a result, independence and love for freedom were expressed primarily by resistance which took on a mass and persistent character. Migration from one principedom to another of peasants and departures of princes and boiars. Joining the Cossacks beyond the reach of the authorities to meet whatever dangers lay out there. Rebellions--Medny, Razin, Pugachev and many, many others! People fought not only for their own rights, but also for the rights of others. One of the most amazing phenomena in world history was the Decembrists' uprising. And it was typically Russian. Very wealthy people, of high social station, sacrificed all their class and privileges for the sake of the common good. They spoke out not for their own rights, as was usual in such cases, but for the rights of those whose labor they themselves had previously managed. In the heroic deed of the Decembrists there is much of the people. Rus' was still in its eastern Slavic unity, up to the Tatar-Mongol yoke, when it did not consider separate the three main eastern Slavic peoples--the Ukrainians, Great Russians and Belorussians--yet it already knew the courage of non-resistance. Saints Boris and Gleb accepted death without resistance from their brother Sviatopolk Okaiannyi [the Accursed] in the name of state interests. Prince Mikhail of Tver and his boiarin Fedor voluntarily rode to the Golden Horde and accepted death for their refusal to carry out a pagan ritual. Peasants abandoned serfdom for the end of the world in search of the happy kingdom of Belovodsk. Old believers prefer self-immolation rather than submitting to the temptation to change their faith. Is this non-resistance to evil? It is likely that history has rarely seen such resistance! Royal disregard of material wealth, in its extreme forms turning into extravagance.

It would be absurd to propose that features of the Russian national character are innate in Russians. In fact they are inculcated by history and the historical situations to which Russia most often was heir, and before her the common native land of all eastern Slavic peoples--Rus', the Rus'sian land.

The character of the people was not unitary. We note how distinctions in the Russian character were formed, and are being formed along the sea coasts, others in Siberia, still others along the Volga--in its middle and lower parts. One cannot separate Russia from the peoples who populate her, who make up together with Russians its national body. Russia, by the wealth of her cultural types, by the complexity of the intertwining in them of various features, by the energy of her various developments, and finally by the intensity of her relationships with other nationalities is truly unique among countries.

We wrote above that Russian culture in the Middle Ages (and even later) was a mobile unity of various centers of culture. In these centers were different kinds of formations happening at different times. . . . These centers were territorially and socially fragmented. This has led to the coexistence of very ancient classes and brand new, easily formed ones in Russian culture.

Russian historical development was characterized simultaneously by conservatism and by rapid changes of social moods and views. Even generational changes seem to occur in Russia in a shorter period of time than in the West. This occurs not simply because of the somewhat unregulated nature of Russian life, but also because in Russian life without fail something remains from the old and even from the improbably old; and, on the other hand, there is a passion which develops this old and punishes the new. Who could think that today we would continue traditional ancient Russian icon painting, or compilations of the lives of the saints (and pretty good ones) and the recopying of manuscripts in the ancient Russian style? The structure of Russian culture was never monolithic, even as it developed as a unified whole, relatively even and steadfast.

The cultural structure of Russia changed, on the one hand, in a radical way, yet on the other hand, entire ancient structures remained. Thus it was also in Peter's era. On the one hand decisive changes, and on the other, little change in the life of the peasantry, and a decisively "ideological basis" for preserving the old lifestyle of the Old Believers.

Russian history is like a river in an ice drift. The ice-islands collide and move along, but some are stuck for a long time, having run into obstacles.

This peculiarity of Russian culture can be evaluated in two ways: as favorable for its development, or as negative. It has led to dramatic situations. But it is important to note that thanks to it, Russian culture is remarkably broad. The peculiarities of Russian culture are extremely difficult to evaluate in a few simple categories--as is Russian nature, by the way. To evaluate the breadth of its parameters in one article is impossible. It is possible only to be amazed by the wealth and variety of all that Russian culture includes.

\* \* \*

At the present time we have a huge and living, developing legacy--a legacy of the fields of culture. A part of these cultural phenomena continues its active life in the present (as, for example, the aforementioned Old Believers); the other part lives in the protection of museums, books, architectural monuments and municipal monuments (not to be confused with the architecture of individual homes). This legacy (especially if it is truly preserved as a legacy) can affect the freedom of creative choice. Freedom of choice was also increased thanks to the openness of Russian culture. The culture of all of Europe, of all the European countries of all eras is within the realm of our legacy. Next to the Russian museum is the Hermitage, which greatly influenced the development of Russian painting. Crossing the Neva, pupils of the Academy of Arts studied Rembrandt and Velasquez and the "Lesser Dutch" painters who so influenced the future *Peredvizhniki*...

Russian culture, thanks to its combination of legacies, is full of internal freedom. Unfortunately, this freedom consists not only of the freedom to choose teachers and textbooks, not only of the freedom to create, but also of the freedom to repudiate what is foreign and what is one's own, the freedom to ruin and to destroy, to sell, to discard, to send into obscurity buildings, cities, villages, pictures, monuments, folklore, and even the authors and artists themselves--the intelligentsia as a whole.

Thus, there is no doubt that one of the riches of Russian culture and of its broad creative potential is the free and extensive choice of teachers, pathways and legacies, which is not at all a narrow one. It is no accident that Russian philosophy has paid so much attention to the problem of inner freedom: in the philosophy of Berdiaev,<sup>10</sup> Frank<sup>11</sup> and Karsavin,<sup>12</sup> and before them in that of Dostoevsky. Consciousness of the proffered choices was sharply defined in the writings of Tiutchev and many others. The necessity of freedom is almost painfully felt in the philosophical lyrics of Blok<sup>13</sup> and Vladimir Solov'ev.<sup>14</sup> Appealing to Russia, Solov'ev said:

Which kind of East do you wish to be:  
The East of Xerxes or of Christ?

In order to comprehend the paths of our culture, we must above all study the details of the history and culture of Russia. It is extremely important for modern times to comprehend Russian history, to make known the important features of Russia, for much of what has happened and is happening in our day is determined and will yet be determined by what Russia perceives herself to be. Internationalism,

---

10. Nikolai Aleksandrovich Berdiaev (1874-1948) was a Marxist philosopher, one of the main exponents of Personalism. At first he was sympathetic to revolution; after 1905 he became disillusioned. He opposed the Bolshevik regime because of the lack of freedom. He was exiled in 1922 and went on to become a leading Christian philosopher--trans.

11. Semen Liudvigovich (1877-1950) was one of the leaders of the early twentieth century religious and philosophical renaissance in Russia. He was at first a Marxist, then became a Christian and was exiled in 1922--trans.

12. Lev Platonovich Karsavin (1882-1952) was a philosopher and historian, exiled from Russia in 1922. He was associated with Berdiaev and Solov'ev and their philosophies--trans.

13. Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Blok (1880-1921) was a famous poet and leader of the Symbolist movement, strongly influenced by Solov'ev. He sympathized with the revolution at first, then became deeply disillusioned--trans.

14. Vladimir Sergeevich Solov'ev (1853-1900) was a Christian philosopher and poet. He developed the philosophical system called "All-Unity--trans"

the nature of the movement toward the future, and the attitude toward the past must all be adjusted by what Russia perceives herself to be. Our task is to restore the fullness of Russian culture.

The past Russia cannot be dismissed today, even by those who sincerely seek her future preservation through the ages.

To what does this breadth and polarization of the Russian persona testify? What are the "lessons of Russia"? Above all they are about the immense variety and potential concealed in the Russian nature, about the openness of choice, about the suddenness of the appearance of new things, about the possibility of rebellion against rebellion, of discipline against chaos, of sudden manifestations of good against the most evil, of the inner freedom of the Russian person in whom, through a curtain of evil, the best, the pure, and the conscientious can unexpectedly break out. The historical path of Russia testifies to her immense reserves not only of material wealth, but also of spiritual values.

Russia is not an abstract concept. In developing her culture, it is necessary to know what her culture has produced in the past as well as what it is now. However complicated it may be, we must learn about Russia.



## About the Book and Author

Among the most respected public figures in Russia today, Dmitrii Sergeevich Likhachev has profoundly influenced generations of Soviet historians, literary scholars, philosophers, and other intellectual and cultural leaders. This is the only available English translation of his *Zametki o russkom*, a collection of notes on nature as an essential component of the character and culture of a nation.

In the *Zametki*, Likhachev offers his own definitions of national character and of patriotism and describes his concept of an “ecology of culture”—a recognition of the need for balance and continuity in the elements of national culture (language, history, religion, and other traditions) that are as sustaining to the life of a nation or an individual as are the elements of the material environment.

Patriotism, for Likhachev, is the manifestation of concern for the continuity of one's national culture, but it is not synonymous with the narrower concept of “nationalism.” He argues convincingly for cultural *glasnost*, asserting that although efforts to maintain one's own national language, history, and traditions are necessary, they cannot be successful in isolation from outside influences; without openness to and interaction with other cultures, one's own will stagnate and die.

These and other themes introduced in the *Zametki* are further developed in the second half of the book, which is composed of several articles by, and interviews with, Likhachev.

Dmitrii S. Likhachev is a philologist and a member of the USSR Academy of Sciences.



# Index

Academy of Arts, 177  
Academy of Sciences, 154-155  
Aesthetics  
    and art education, 156  
    in Russian culture, 125, 161,  
    170-171  
Aivazovskii, Ivan  
    Konstantinovich, 75,  
    75(n71)  
Akhmatova, Anna Andreyevna  
    (Gorenko), 23, 23(n22),  
    38, 74, 151  
Alferov, G. V., 81  
Alpatov, Mikhail  
    Vladimirovich, 32-33,  
    32n  
Alupka, 37  
Andreevskii Church, 76  
Andrew (the apostle), 100-101  
Antropov, V., 75  
Architecture  
    Bulgarian, 26-27  
    of churches, 11-13, 113-114  
    and city planning, 80-84, 86-88  
    garden, 43-45  
    lyricism in, 172-173  
    in Petersburg, 166  
    and preservation, 40-41, 141-  
    143  
    of Rus', 162  
    See also Styles

Armenia, 28-31  
Art  
    and ancient Rus', 65-66, 68-70,  
    71, 73, 113-114  
    in cities, 34-35  
    and national traits, 23  
    religious, 11  
    Ukrainian influences, 74-76  
    See also Painting; Styles  
Assimilation, 165-166, 170. See  
    also Culture, exchanges of  
Atheism, 126, 132  
Averchenko, 147  
Averintsev, Sergei Sergeevich,  
    124  
Avetisian, Minas, 30  
Avvakum, 50-51, 172  
  
Bagration, Petr Ivanovich, 85,  
    85n  
Bagrianorodnyi, Constantine,  
    103  
Baranov, Aleksandr Andreevich, 60  
Baroque. See Styles  
Basil II, 119-120  
Batu, 64, 129  
Belorussia, 131  
Belozcrsk, 160  
Belyi, Andrei, 28-29, 28n  
Benoit, Aleksandr, 38  
Berdiaev, Nikolai

- Aleksandrovich, 178,  
 178(n10)  
 Bible, 137  
 Blok, Aleksandr  
   Aleksandrovich, 166,  
   178, 178(n13)  
 Boris, Saint, 175  
 Boris Godunov, 46, 46n  
 Borodino Field, 85, 134  
 Borovikovskii, Vladimir Lukich,  
   74, 74(n62)  
 Bortnianskii, Dmitrii  
   Stepanovich, 75, 75(n66)  
 Briusov, Valerii Yakovlevich,  
   30-31, 30n  
 Brothers Karamazov, 52  
 Bukhara, 9(n9)  
 Bulgakov, Mikhail, 77, 148, 151  
 Bulgaria, 25-27  
   and ancient Rus', 67, 104-105,  
   113, 115  
   influences from, 163  
 Byliny, 8-10, 8n, 9(n10), 63, 161  
   and Novgorod, 81  
 Byzantium, 64, 67  
   and ancient Rus', 102-104,  
   112, 114, 116, 119-120  
   influences from, 163  
 Cathedral of the  
   Transfiguration of the  
   Savior, 127  
 Catholicism, 90, 126-127. *See*  
   also Christianity;  
   Russian Orthodoxy  
 Change, 176-177  
 Charity, 109-110, 110-111  
 Chekhov, Anton, 5, 74  
 Chernyshevskii, 125  
 Christianity  
   acceptance of, 162  
   and ancient Rus', 89, 91, 97-  
   117, 119-121, 136  
   internationalism of, 124, 137,  
   163  
   and paganism, 122-124, 128  
   and Russian culture, 119, 126-  
   127, 171  
 Chronicles, 10, 64-65, 100-101,  
   106, 109, 111, 112, 125,  
   161  
   ideology and, 89, 90, 107, 121,  
   109  
 Chudin court, 100  
 Churches  
   in ancient Rus', 68-70, 113-  
   114, 120-121, 161-162  
   architecture of, 10-13, 162-163  
   in Kiev, 89, 120, 163  
   of Novgorod, 10, 82, 120, 163  
   and Russian aesthetics, 125,  
   126-127  
 Church of Il'ia, 136  
 Church Slavonic language, 164  
 Citics  
   art in, 34-35  
   and nature, 20  
   preservation of, 80-88, 155  
   of Rus', 62-63, 68  
   Russian qualities of, 160  
   *See also* City planning  
 City planning, 80-88  
 Clement, Pope, 101  
 Climate, 21  
 Conscience  
   absence of, 140-145  
   and honor, 145-146  
   literature as, 147-151  
 Constantine (I) the Great, 103  
 Constantine V, 102  
 Constantine VIII, 119-120  
 Constantinople, 65-66, 102. *See*  
   also Byzantium  
 Consumerism, 150  
 Copernicus, 133  
 Courage, 7, 150, 152  
 Culture  
   of ancient Rus', 49-52, 63-74  
   and Christianity, 117  
   international exchange of, 58-  
   59, 72n, 74-77, 127-128,  
   156-157, 163-164, 165-  
   166, 174  
   and nature, 16-20, 33

- and perestroika, 148
- philosophy and the aesthetic, 114, 125
- preservation of, x, xiii, xvi-xix, 78-88, 143, 153-156
- roots of Russian, 1, 115, 119-122
- Russian, 53, 54, 159-179
- of Ukraine, 73-77
- and unity, 94
- See also National character
- Culture Fund, x, xix, 154
- Cyril, Saint, 55, 55(n46), 91, 102
  
- Dalchev, Atanas, 150-151
- Dance, 8
- Decembrists' uprising, 175
- Del'vig, 142-143
- Derzhavin, Gavriil Romanovich, 125
- Donskoi, Dmitrii, 129, 130, 131
- Dostoevsky, Feodor Mikhailovich, 41-42, 74, 125, 166, 178
- on nationalism, 54, 56-57, 157, 170
- and Russian character, 47, 52
- Dr. Zhivago, 147-148
- Dynamic monumentalism, 66-70, 72, 77, 99
  
- Ecology, 78, 155
- cultural, 79, 84, 86-88. See also Preservation
- Economy, 134
- Education, 17, 144
- and ancient Rus', 93, 109, 126
- in culture, 154, 155-156
- seminary, 132
- England, 24
- Environment, 78, 87. See also Climate; Nature
- Ershov, Petr Pavlovich, 12n
- Ethics, 19, 139-152
- and aesthetics, 156
- and Christianity, 108-110
- and Likhachev, xix
- and literature, 172
- paganism and Christianity, 107-108, 110-112, 122-123
- in Russian culture, 173-174
- Europe, 163, 177
- Eusebius of Caesarea, 101
- Evelyn, John, 43-44
- Expanse. See Space
  
- Fedorov, Ivan Fedorovich, 91, 91n, 92-93
- Fedosova, Irina, 3, 3(n2)
- Ficheto, Koliu, 26-27
- Filipp, Father Superior, 171
- Filonov, 170
- Finno-Ugric peoples, 99, 100
- Florentine Union of 1439, 116
- Folklore
- and ancient Rus', 63-64, 122, 127-128, 164
- the "fool" in, 12, 13
- and freedom, 6-7, 8-10
- and kindness, 3, 14-15
- about Novgorod, 81
- Fotii, Patriarch of Constantinople, 114, 125, 135
- Francis of Assisi, 171
- Frank, Semen Liudvigovich, 178, 178(n11)
- Freedom, 6-7, 177-178
  
- Gagarin, Yuri, 126, 126n
- Galitskii, Danila Romanovich, 90
- Gardens, 36-37, 41-47
- Georgia, 27-28
- Gleb, Saint, 175
- Gogol, Nikolai Vasilievich, 76, 77, 170
- Goncharov, Ivan, 42(n35), 170
- Gorky, 34
- Goths, 101
- Gotofil, Metropolitan, 101
- Government, 63
- Greece, 32-33
- Grekov, 83

- Gromyko, M. M., 110  
 Gumilev, 147
- Hamlet, 16-17  
 Hermitage, 177  
 Hesychasts (religious movement), 50, 50(n43)  
 Hilarion, Metropolitan, 55, 55(n47), 105-106, 115, 121  
 History, 178-179  
   and internationalism, 59-61, 128  
   Likhachev's approach to, xiv, xviii, xv-xvi  
   preservation versus restoration, 37-42  
   Rus'ian, 90-94. See also Rus' and Rus'ian literature, 67, 89, 121, 168  
 History of the Capture of Kazan, The, 54-55  
 Honor, 144-146, 152  
 Hungary, 124
- Ideals  
   of ancient Rus', 50-51, 50-52, 70-71, 72, 93-94, 107-108, 123  
   industriousness, 171  
   and modesty of form, 167-168  
   and Russian national character, 14, 47-49, 52-53  
 Igor, Prince, 121n  
 Individualism  
   in art, 69-70, 71-72  
   in Russian thought, xv, xviii-xv  
 Intelligentsia, 16, 157  
 Internationalism  
   and ancient Rus', 72, 72n, 77, 91  
   and appreciation of cultures, 156-157  
   of Christianity, 124, 137, 162  
   and patriotism, 77  
   of Russian culture, 53-61, 165-167, 178-179  
 Ishtvan I (Stefan I), 124, 125  
 Islam, 102, 129  
 Ivanov, Nikolai Ivanovich, 85  
 Ivan the Terrible, 13-14  
 Izbornik of 1076, 108  
 Izborsk (city), 160  
 Izmaragd, 50
- Judaism, 102  
 Justinian II, 102
- Kapiton, Bishop, 101  
 Karamzin, Nikolai Mikhailovich, 165-166, 165(n7)  
 Karsavin, Lev Platonovich, 178, 178(n12)  
 Khabarov, E. P., 59-60  
 Khazaria, 102  
 Khersones (city), 120  
 Kiev  
   as capital of Rus', 62-75, 160  
   churches of, 89, 120, 163  
 Kiev Caves Monastery, 63, 64, 75, 129, 160  
 Kiev-Mogilianskii Academy, 75  
 Kizhi, 19, 19n  
 Komarovich, B. L., 111  
 Komarovo, 3(n1)  
 Konek-Gorbunok, 12, 12n, 13  
 Koprivshchitsa (city), 26  
 Kostroma (city), 34  
 Kozhdoian, Akop, 30  
 Kuindzhi, Arkhip Ivanovich, 74, 74(n64)
- Labor, 171  
 Lake Il'men', 81  
 Language  
   and ancient Rus', 63, 64, 127-128  
   and education, 154-155  
   and religion, 55(n46), 104-105  
   and Russian national character, 5, 7-8  
   Ukrainian influences, 74  
   See also Literacy  
 Law

- and ancient Rus', 71, 122
- and city planning, 81-82
- Lay of the Host of Igor, The, 10, 65, 67, 72, 122, 123
- Lenin, Vladimir Il'ich, 147, 153
- Leningrad. See Petersburg/Leningrad
- Lermontov, Mikhail Iur'evich, 75, 75(n68)
- Leskov, Nikolai Semenovich, 75, 75(n70)
- Levitskii, Dmitrii, 74, 74(n61)
- Libraries, 154
- Life, 172
- Likhachev, Dmitrii Sergeevich, ix-xx
- Literacy
  - cultural effects of, 90, 115, 119, 163-164, 167
  - roots of written language, 89, 100, 104-105, 128-129
- Literature
  - of ancient Rus', 10, 61, 64-65, 67, 73, 89-90, 91, 93, 121, 129
  - and cultural criticism, 54
  - and ethics, 147-151, 172, 173
  - and gardens, 41-42
  - historical, 168
  - kindness in, 4-5
  - and language, 163-164
  - and Likhachev, xv-xvi
  - literary genres and styles, 164-166, 171-172
  - modesty of form, 167
  - and unity, 169
- Lives of the Fathers, 64, 65, 90
- Lorrain, Claude, 42, 42(n34)
- Losenko, Anton Pavlovich, 74, 74(n63)
- Lyricism, 171-173
- Magi, uprising of, 122
- Malevich, 170
- Mamai, 129-130
- Mandel'shtam, Osip, 30
- Marx, Karl, 123
- Materialism, 132
- Mayakovsky, Vladimir Vladimirovich, 74
- Mendelev, Dmitrii Ivanovich, 133(n5)
- Methodius (monk), 55, 55(n46), 91, 102
- Mikhail of Tver, Prince, 175
- Mikhailovich, Aleksei, 117, 132
- Mikhailovskoe, 45-46, 47
- Monasteries, 92, 128-129
  - gardens of, 43
- Monastery of the Caves. See Kiev Caves Monastery
- Monet, Claude, 22
- Monomakh, Vladimir, 13(n14), 69, 108-109, 120, 121, 123, 162
- Monumentalism. See Dynamic monumentalism
- Monuments. See Preservation
- Morality. See Ethics
- Moscow
  - architecture in, 142
  - art in, 34
  - churches of, 10-11, 12-13
  - gardens in, 44
  - and internationalism, 157
  - and unification of Russia, 73, 131
- Moscow Higher Technical School (MVTU), 155
- Museums, 34, 154
  - memorial apartment, 39-40
- Mussorgskii, Modest Petrovich, 170
- MVTU. See Moscow Higher Technical School
- Nabokov, Vladimir, 136, 136(n8)
- Narodnik movement, 16, 16n
- National character, 2, 22-23, 159, 176, 179
  - and cultural preservation, 40-41
  - and ideals, 47-49

- internationalism in, 60-61, 169-170
- kindness in Russian, 3-5, 14-15, 162
- and Likhachev, xviii-xv
- and modesty of form, 167-168
- and patriotism, 55-56
- receptiveness of Russian, 167
- resistance and Russian, 174-175
- role of "fool" in Russian, 12-13, 14-15
- space and Russian, 6-10
- and stylistic formation of ancient Rus', 77
- See also Culture
- Nationalism
  - and Christianity, 137
  - and Likhachev, xvii-xviii
  - versus patriotism, 57-58, 59-61
- Nature
  - in art and architecture, 22-33
  - and culture, 5-6, 16-20, 35-37
  - and national character, 48
  - in Pushkin's poetry, 45-47
  - See also Gardens
- Nekrasov, Nikolai Alekseevich, 75, 75(n69), 135
- Nicholas I, 134-135
- "Nighttime in Pasaauri," 27-28
- Nikon, Patriarch, 117, 131-132, 168
- Nikonian reforms, 131-132
- Nomocanon, 81n
- Novgorod, 80-83, 160
  - art in, 34
  - churches of, 10, 82, 120, 163
  - and paganism, 99
  - and unification of Russia, 131
- Novgorod-Seversk, 160
- Okaiannyi, Sviatopolk (the Accursed), 175
- Old Believers, 50, 50(n42), 134, 175, 177
- Oleg, Prince (the Prophetic), 62
- Ol'ga, Princess, 103, 115, 136
- Oral tradition, 127-128. See also Folklore
- Orthodox Christianity. See Russian Orthodoxy
- Osorgina, Juliania, 171
- Ostroukhov, Ilia Semenovich, 21(n18)
- Pafnutii of Borovsk, 171
- Paganism
  - in ancient Rus', 98-99, 107-108, 110-112
  - and Christianity, 122-124, 128
- Painting, 173-174
  - landscape, 20-23, 29-30
  - and Peredvizhniki, 174, 174n
  - styles of, 34
  - Ukrainian influences in, 74
  - See also Art
- Parks, 36-37, 41-47
- Pasternak, Boris Leonidovich, 147-148
- Patriotism
  - and internationalism, 77. See also Internationalism
  - versus nationalism, 57-58, 59-61
- Paul of Aleppo, 114
- Paustovskii, Konstantin, 74
- Peace, 94-95
- Peasantry
  - and Christianity, 128
  - and Rus'ian culture, 110-112
- Perestroika, 147-149
- Peter I (Peter the Great)
  - and gardens, 37, 44
  - and the Orthodox church, 134
  - and western culture, 34n, 117
- Petersburg/Leningrad
  - architecture in, 83-84, 86, 141-142, 166
  - art in, 34
  - gardens in, 44
  - and internationalism, 157
- Philology, 58
- Philosophy, 178
- Pirogovskii museum, 141-142

- Pitirim, Metropolitan, 95  
 Platonov, Andrei, 147, 151  
 Platonov, Sergei Fedorovich,  
     136, 136(n7)  
 Pliska (city), 25  
 Poetry, 135, 164  
     nature in, 21  
     pagan symbolism in, 123-124  
     and Pushkin, 45-47  
 Poland, 116  
 Politics, 95, 146  
 "Poliushka-pole"  
     [Meadowland], 6, 6n  
 Polotsk, 120  
 Polotskii, Simeon, 165, 165(n5)  
 Pomochi, 110-111  
 Population, 161  
 Preservation, cultural, 34-35,  
     78-88, 94, 143, 153-156  
     versus restoration, 37-42  
 Preslav (city), 25  
 Primary Russian Chronicle.  
     See Chronicles  
 Prokofiev, Sergei Sergeivich,  
     75, 75(n67)  
 Pskov (city), 10, 25, 127  
 Publishing, 149  
 Pushkin, Aleksander  
     Sergeevich, 45-47, 75,  
     117, 151, 169  
     memorials of, 40-41, 47  
     works of, 37, 45(n38)  
 Pushkin (city), 41  
 Pushkin House, xii  
 Putevoi Palace, 86  
 Putivl' (city), 160  
  
 Radishchev, Aleksandr  
     Nikolavich, 48, 165-  
     166, 165(n6)  
 Razin, Stepan "Stenka", 48  
 Rebellions, 175  
 Regional studies, 88, 155  
 Religion, 50nn, 63, 94. See also  
     Christianity; Russian  
     Orthodoxy  
 Remizov, A., 167, 167n  
  
 Repentance, 152  
 Rerikh, Nikolai, 7-8, 7n  
 Restoration, 37-42. See also  
     Preservation  
 Rossi, 84  
 Rostislavich, Riurik, 66  
 Rostov (city), 160  
 Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 16  
 Rublev, Andrei, 5n, 130  
     Trinity by, 125, 126, 131  
 Rus', 62(n51)  
     and Byzantine civilization, xiv  
     and Christianity, 89, 97-117,  
     131  
     culture of, xv, 49-52  
     and internationalism, 55, 156-  
     157  
     literature in, 90  
     unity in, 62-74  
 Russian character. See  
     National character  
 Russian Orthodoxy, 97  
     and aesthetics, 126-127  
     and Fascism, 136  
     and individualism, xv  
     and language, 55(n46), 104-  
     105  
     and Nikonian reforms, 131-  
     132  
     and science, 133-134  
     and the state, 134-135, 136-137  
     See also Christianity  
 St. Basil's church, 12-13  
 Sar'ian, Martiros, 29-30,  
     29(n27)  
 Science  
     and international exchange,  
     58-59  
     and preservation, 154  
     and religion, 132-134  
 Scotland, 24-25  
 Sergius of Radonezh, 130-131,  
     171  
 Sermons, 169  
 Sermons (Theodosius of the  
     Caves), 68-69, 90  
 Sermons (Vladimir

- Monomakh), 65, 69, 71  
108-109, 121
- Shchedrin, Silvestr Fedosievich,  
22, 22n
- Shevchenko, Taras  
Grigoryevich, 76
- Sobolevskii, A. I., 126
- Social consciousness, 143. See  
also Conscience
- Solov'ev, Sergei M., 53, 116
- Solov'ev, Vladimir Sergeevich,  
125, 178, 178(n14)
- "Sovetskii pisatel'" [Soviet  
Writer], 149
- Space  
effect on Rus'ian culture of,  
98-99  
in Novgorod, 80  
and Russian national  
character, 6-10, 35
- "Speech of the Philosopher," 89,  
106, 168
- Spirituality, 135, 162
- Steblin-Kamenskii, M. I., 124
- Styles, 72, 163, 165-166  
baroque, xvi, 11, 44-45, 73, 75,  
165  
dynamic monumentalism, 66-  
70, 72, 77, 99  
of gardens, 43-45
- Stylization, 83-84
- Sumarukov, G. V., 122
- Sviatoslav, Prince, 107
- Sviatoslav (father of Vladimir),  
23
- Sviatoslavich, Vladimir I  
and aesthetics, 170  
and Byzantine court, , 103-104,  
119-120  
and Christianity, 105, 106, 112-  
113, 115-116, 125, 168  
and education, 109  
and paganism, 110  
and unification of Rus', 99
- Sytin, Ivan Dmitrievich, 164,  
164n
- Tale of Bygone Years, 65, 67,  
122
- Tale of Grief and Misfortune,  
4-5, 4(n4)
- Tale of Princes, The, 65
- Tale of the Ruin of the Russian  
Land, The, 10, 43
- Tatar/Mongol invasion, 129-  
131, 169
- Tchaikovsky, Petr Il'ich, 74,  
74(n65)
- Technology, 154
- Theodosius of the Caves, 68-69,  
94, 121
- "The Scythians," 166
- Three Sisters, 5
- Tikhonov, Nikolai Semenovich,  
31, 31n
- Tiutchev, 125, 170, 178
- Trade routes, 100, 102, 161
- Trigorsk, 45-46, 47
- Trigtvason, Olaf, 105
- Trinity-Sergius (monastery),  
129
- Tsarskoc Selo (city), 38, 39, 44-  
45
- Ukraine  
culture of, 73-77  
and Nikonian reforms, 131-  
132
- Uniate Council of 1596, 116
- Unity  
and ancient Rus', 62-74, 90,  
99, 124  
and Christianity, 105-106, 131,  
162  
and culture, 94  
of human history, 128  
and literature, 169  
of Russia, 160-163
- Varangians, xiv, 103, 104, 119,  
160, 161
- Vasil'evich, Vasilii, 116
- Vasnetsov, Viktor

- Mikhailovich, 75,  
 75(n73)  
 Velikii Ustiug (city), 35  
 Veliko-Turnovo (city), 25-26  
 Venetsianov, Aleksei Gavrilovich,  
 21(n19), 22  
 Vishniakov, Ivan Iakovlevich,  
 75, 75(n72)  
 "Vision of the Sexton, Tarasii,"  
 81  
 Vladimir (city), 62, 160  
 Volkhov River, 80-81  
 Volkhovs, uprising of, 106  
 Vologda, 129  
 "Vospominaniia v Tsarskom  
 Sele" [Recollections in  
 Tsarskoe Selo], 37  
 Vrubel', Mikhail  
 Aleksandrovich, 75,  
 75(n74)  
 Vyborg (city), 37  
 White Sea Canal project, xii  
 Wind from the Caucasus, The,  
 28-29  
 Word (tale) about Law and  
 Grace, A, 67, 90, 106,  
 115, 121  
 World views, 95. See also  
 Christianity  
 Writers, 150-151, 167  
 versus the state, 168-169  
 See also individual authors  
 Writers' Union, 149  
 Yaroslavl', 34, 62, 129  
 Yaroslavna, 121, 121n  
 Zabelin, Ivan, 44  
 Zabolotskii, Nikolai, 27-28  
 Zarudnyi, Ivan, 75  
 Zoshchenko, Mikhail, 149, 151  
 Zyrian Trinity, 129













MICHIGAN STATE UNIV. LIBRARIES



01298007733920

0-8131-7793-9