

**“FOREIGN LAND AS A METAPHOR OF ONE’S OWN”:
TRAVEL AND TRAVEL WRITING IN RUSSIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE, 1200S-1800S**

Ksenia Polouektova

A DISSERTATION

in

History

**Presented to the Faculties of the Central European University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy**

Budapest, Hungary

2009

**Supervisor of Dissertation
Professor András Kovács**

I hereby declare that this dissertation contains no materials accepted for any other degrees in any other institutions and no materials previously written and/or published by another person unless otherwise noted.

ABSTRACT

In attempting to reconstruct a cultural history of travel and travel writing in Russia I read practices and narratives of travel as forms of discourse on matters of national character, cultural identity, and on ways of imagining foreign and domestic space. Understanding travel and travel writing as a “means of world-making and self-fashioning” presents travel as a fascinating venue for the exploration of the development of modern identity. My specific focus on the history of Russian travel and travelogue determines the two-fold thrust of this work. On the one hand, I look at the historical evolution of European styles and ideologies of travel and forms of travel writing (particularly focusing on the moments of transition). On the other hand, I analyze the relationship between western European textual models, ideologies and practices of travel and travelogue and their Russian adaptations, tracing continuities and ruptures between the historically evolving notions of both Russia’s domestic and foreign spaces from medieval religious imagination to modern secular consciousness. What conceptual framework should one apply to the nuances of the specifically Russian context without relapsing into patronizing, Orientalist appropriations? To what extent are western paradigms useful, if at all, in writing the history of Russian travel and travelogue? What is the role of social and cultural determinants in the evolution of Russian travelogue, a genre, which is too often considered exclusively in terms of its textual characteristics? My assumption is that the historically sensitive analysis of paradigms of travel and travel narratives illuminates mechanisms of cultural, social and ideological change and cross-cultural translation/adaptation, of which these practices are both agents and upshots and that the poetic essence of travelogues (e.g. narrative strategies, inter-textuality, sophisticated imagery) is coeval with their political contingency. Practices and narratives of travel reflect and elaborate conceptions of space and place, border (of separation or of distinction?) and border crossing, devising imaginary, symbolic maps for the actual landscapes covered during the journeys. They highlight conjunctions between the perception/imagination of space and the national character and psyche. Ultimately, and most importantly, the exploration of foreign realm and encounter with difference inevitably compels the traveler to engage with his or her own individual, national or artistic identity. It is here that the foreign country truly becomes a springboard for reflecting on one’s own, a metaphor of the native realm.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: TRAVEL WRITING: NARRATING THE SELF AND THE WORLD	1
<i>Studies of Travel in Recent Critical Theory</i>	4
<i>Travel Writing: Between Fiction and Documentation</i>	7
<i>An Overview of the Work</i>	16
PART ONE : CULTURAL HISTORY OF TRAVEL: FROM PILGRIM TO TOURIST	24
<i>Pilgrimage</i>	25
<i>“Ethnographic” travel in Antiquity</i>	30
<i>Body, Space and Time in the practices and narratives of pilgrimage</i>	33
<i>From pilgrimage to crusades and chivalry</i>	39
<i>The rise of naturalistic and ethnographic paradigms</i>	42
<i>Marco Polo’s Il Milione (c. 1298)</i>	43
<i>Demise of religious paradigm: early modern travel writing</i>	47
<i>“Science” and “Sentiment”: the Rise of Modern Travel</i>	51
<i>The Grand Tour</i>	57
<i>Romanticism</i>	63
<i>Tourism</i>	78
<i>In lieu of conclusion</i>	100
PART TWO: THE EVOLUTION OF RUSSIAN TRAVEL AND TRAVEL WRITING	111
CHAPTER 1: TRAVEL, TRAVELOGUE, SPACE AND PLACE IN MEDIEVAL RUSSIAN CULTURE	111
<i>Pilgrimage</i>	111
<i>Life and Pilgrimage of Daniil, Abbot of the Russian Land (1106-1008?)</i>	113
<i>‘Liminality’ and ‘wandering’ as cultural constants; history of Russian tradition of pilgrimage</i>	117
<i>Afanasy Nikitin, Journey Beyond Three Seas (1472)</i>	131
<i>Concepts of ‘space’ and ‘place’ in medieval Russia and beyond</i>	134
<i>Transition to secular modernity: travel reports by diplomats</i>	139
CHAPTER 2: XVIII CENTURY RUSSIAN TRAVEL WRITING: THE EMERGENCE OF LITERARY GENRE	142
<i>Travel Diary of Petr Tolstoi (1697)</i>	147
<i>Denis Fonvizin, Lettres de France (1777-1778)</i>	158
<i>Nikolai Karamzin, Letters of a Russian Traveler (1789-1890)</i>	164
<i>Aleksandr Radischev, Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow (1790)</i>	170
<i>The specificity of Russian literary travel writing</i>	176
CHAPTER 3: XIX CENTURY TRAVEL WRITING AND THE RISE OF PROSE FICTION	185
<i>Russian Orientalism</i>	185
<i>Aleksandr Pushkin, Journey to Arzrum (1835)</i>	192
<i>Orthodox pilgrimage to Palestine revived</i>	204
<i>European travelogues of Russian officers, 1812-1814</i>	206
<i>Fyodor Glinka, Letters of a Russian Officer (1808-1816)</i>	207
<i>Alternative destinations: the turn for domestic routes and the quest for Russian national identity</i>	214

CHAPTER 4: “GEOGRAPHY OF SPACE – GEOGRAPHY OF NATIONAL SOUL”	229
<i>‘Mapping’ Russia: from travelogue to realist prose</i>	229
<i>Self-sufficiency, universality</i>	238
<i>Space vs. place; “enclosure”</i>	239
<i>Border – Order</i>	240
<i>Amorphous space – amorphous character?</i>	245
<i>Nomadism; Homelessness</i>	247
<i>Feminine discourse of Russian space</i>	250
<i>Feminine space – feminine soul?</i>	254
<i>Power - space relationship</i>	256
<i>Travel writing in the second part of the nineteenth century</i>	259
<i>Ivan Goncharov, Frigate “Pallas” (1858)</i>	260
<i>Anton Chekhov, From Siberia and Island Sakhalin (1890-1894)</i>	274
<i>Fyodor Dostoevsky, Winter Notes on Summer Impressions (1863)</i>	293
<i>Russian tourists at home and abroad</i>	305
CONCLUSIONS: “THE FOREIGN LAND AS A METAPHOR OF ONE’S OWN”	311
BIBLIOGRAPHY	337

INTRODUCTION: Travel Writing: Narrating the Self and the World

Особость русского путешествия: чужая страна – метафора своей.

Petr Vail¹

...хочется бросить рыть.
землю, сесть на пароход и плыть,
плыть -- не с целью открыть.
остров или растение, прелесть иных широт,
новые организмы, но ровно наоборот;
главным образом -- рот.

Joseph Brodsky²

In his oft-quoted essay “Of An Apocalyptic Tone Recently Adopted in Philosophy,” Jacques Derrida compiles a lengthy inventory of odds and ends that the ‘endist’ discourse in social sciences and philosophy has written off as ‘extinct’ or ‘soon-to-be-dead.’ The *Endzeitstimmung* lampooned by Derrida, had already proclaimed the end of history, ideology, philosophy, humanism, modernity: “the end of the subject, the end of man, the end of the West, the end of Oedipus...the end of literature, the end of painting, art as a thing of the past, the end of the past, the end of psychoanalysis, the end of the university, the end of phallogocentrism and the phallogocentrism, et je ne sais quoi.”³ This apocalyptic ethos is by no means new and dates back to the early

¹ “The specificity of Russian travel is that in it a foreign country serves a metaphor for one’s own.” Petr Vail, *Karta Rodiny* [The Map of the Motherland] (Moscow: KoLibri, 2007), 439.

² “And upon hearing that, one wants to quit one’s travail,
shoveling, digging, and board a steamship and sail
and sail, in order to hail
in the end not an island nor an organism Linnaeus never found,
nor the charms of new latitudes,
but the other way around:
something of no account.”

“Fin de sciecle” (1989) Trans. by the author, quoted from Ann Kjellberg, ed., *Joseph Brodsky: Collected Poems in English* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), 392.

³ Jacques Derrida, “Of an Apocalyptic Tone Recently Adopted in Philosophy”, trans. John P. Leavey Jr. *Semeia* (1982): 63-97. The paper was first delivered at the 1981 Cerisy-la-Salle colloquium, whose point of departure (including the title) was Derrida’s earlier work “Les fins de l’homme” [*The Ends of*

1950s - the post-war era of political and ideological disenchantment that fostered skepticism towards grand cultural ideals. Although Derrida makes no mention of travel, it could well have been another item on his list. From Levi-Strauss to Susan Sontag, Daniel Boorstin, and Paul Fussell, “the end to journeying” has, too, been lamented for at least half a century now.⁴ Travel writing or travelogue, as well as other cultural productions associated with travel, are similarly under attack from those who question the porous borders of the genre in the age of mass culture and mass tourism. Yet not only does travel as an idea and practice show no signs of disappearing (on its evolution more in a moment), but the spatial metaphors associated with it have made their way into numerous works body of works in contemporary critical thinking. Terms like “deterritorialization,” “border (writing)” and “border crossing”, “exile”, “displacement” and “locus”, as well as the binaries of “center” versus “periphery” and “home” versus “exile” are by now routinely employed in literary theory, psychoanalysis and cultural criticism, i.e. in the discourses on the (post)modern condition. Following Derrida’s analysis of ‘endism’ that reads decline in place of transformation in the humanities’ disciplines and traditional objects of inquiry, one is prompted to ask: What is at stake in proclaiming the death of travel? Provided that this apocalyptic discourse has legitimacy at all, does it function beyond the confines of the Euro-American critical practices? In other words, does it apply to the travel experiences that were conceived of and written about outside of North America or Western Europe?

Man.] Here cited from the English version published in *Oxford Literary Review*, 6, no.2 (1984): 3-37. On ‘endism’ see also Derrida’s *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of the Mourning, and the New International* (New York, London: Routledge, 1994), 14-16.

⁴ Claude Levi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques: An Anthropological Study of Primitive Societies in Brazil* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973); Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin Books, 1977); Daniel Boorstin, “From Traveler to Tourist: The Lost Art of Travel” in Daniel Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 77-117; Paul Theroux, *Sunrise with Seamonsters: A Paul Theroux Reader* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1985); Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), etc.

Since the present study focuses on Russian travel writing, the latter concerns are warranted indeed. What conceptual framework should one apply to the nuances of the specifically Russian (or broadly, Eastern European) context without relapsing into patronizing, Orientalist appropriations? To what extent are western paradigms useful, if at all, in writing the history of Russian travel and travelogue? How do the staples of Euro-centric cultural criticism, such as “Orientalism”, “othering”, “exoticism”, etc. (mal)function in the Russian context? What is the role of social and cultural determinants in the evolution of Russian travelogue, a genre, which is too often considered exclusively in terms of its textual characteristics (textuality)?

These are, indeed, the organizing questions of this work that reflect wide-ranging methodological and conceptual concerns articulated in most of the recent studies on the subject. In attempting to reconstruct a cultural history of travel and travel writing in Russia I read practices and narratives of travel as forms of discourse on matters of national character, cultural identity, on ways of imagining foreign and domestic space. Understanding travel and travel writing as a “means of world-making and self-fashioning” suggests travel as a fascinating venue for the exploration of the development of modern identity.⁵ My own focus on the history of Russian travel and travelogue determines the two-fold thrust of this work: not only do I look at the historical evolution of the styles and ideologies of travel and forms of travel writing (particularly focusing on the moments of transition), but I also analyze its relationship to western European analogues, by which Russian travel has been historically influenced. My assumption is that the historically sensitive analysis of paradigms of travel and travel narratives illuminates mechanisms of cultural, social and ideological change and cross-cultural translation/adaptation, of which these practices are both

⁵ Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978); Judith Adler, “Travel as Performed Art”, *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 94, No. 6. (May, 1989): 1366-1391, 1368.

agents and upshots. Moreover, travel and travelogue reflect and elaborate conceptions of space and place, border and border crossing, devising imaginary maps and geographies for the actual landscapes covered during the journeys.⁶ Throughout this work I will seek to trace continuities and ruptures between the historically evolving notions of both Russia's domestic and foreign spaces from medieval religious imagination to modern secular consciousness.

Studies of Travel in Recent Critical Theory

The last decade has seen a manifest growth in the output of critical writing that seek to rework conventional categories, in which travel and its telling are generally couched. If age-old Euro-centric, imperialist, male-dominated, and overtly elitist travel is indeed dead, as some critics assert it to be, what comes in its stead is a reinvented, more inclusive discourse that feeds into proliferating cross-disciplinary cultural studies. Scholars and writers, such as James Clifford, Ronald Wright, Paul Theroux, Jan Morris, Caren Kaplan and Charles Forsdick conclude that contemporary travel has come to encompass a more diverse range of spatial, social and cultural practices, than was previously held common. Increased awareness of determinants of gender, class, culture, race and psychology have important implications for reinventing the field.⁷ At the same time, elaborating a comprehensive definition of travel is obviously not

⁶ Sara Dickinson, *Breaking Ground: Travel and National Culture in Russia from Peter I to the Era of Pushkin* (Amsterdam, New York: Editions Rodopi, BV, 2006), 20.

⁷ James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); James Clifford, *Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996); Ronald Wright, *A Short History of Progress* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2005); Jan Morris, *The World: Travels 1950-2000* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003), Jan Morris, *The World: Life and Travel* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005); Charles Forsdick, *Travel in Twentieth-Century French and Francophone Cultures: The Persistence of Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

made any easier by the upsurge of competing discursive practices (post-colonial studies, gender studies, “ethnic” studies, etc.)

While few subjects elicit of late as much intellectual fascination as travel, few are so inured to an avalanche of deconstructions. The question of “where do we put it and what do we make of it?” - has been approached differently by cultural critics, historians, or ethnographers, each stressing either political, social, scientific or aesthetic connotations of travel as both idea and practice.⁸ Scholars of the post-colonial vein have analyzed conventions of traveling as well as thematic and rhetorical aspects of travelogues to expose the political subtext of domination and “othering”⁹ underlying the European encounters with the foreign. Predictably influenced by either Foucault or Said, (or both) studies in the discourse of travel, especially of travel to the far-off, “exotic” destinations, explore the European visual imagination and subjugating gaze as it creates and fixes the ‘Other’ as culturally and ontologically inferior.¹⁰ The centering of questions of power similarly characterizes the recent critique of travel advanced from within the anthropological discipline. It

⁸ See, for example, Tzvetan Todorov, “The Journey and Its Narratives” in Chloe Chard and Helen Langdon, eds., *Transports: Travel, Pleasure and Imaginative Geography, 1600-1830* (New Haven and London: Paul Mellon Center BA, 1996), 287-296; Jan Borm, “Defining Travel” in G. Hooper and T. Youngs, eds., *Perspectives on Travel Writing* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), 13-26; Chris Rojek and John Urry, “Transformations of Travel and Tourism” in C. Rojek and J. Urry, eds., *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory* (London: Routledge, 1997), 1-19, etc.

⁹ Mary Louise Pratt coined the term in her article “Scratches on the Face of the Country; or What Mr. Barrow Saw in the Land of the Bushmen.” She defines “othering” as a practice of lumping the encountered people into a collective and homogeneous “they”, that is further distilled into a invariably masculine anonymous “he.” “The portrait of manners and customs,” argues Pratt, “is a normalizing discourse, whose work is to codify difference, to fix the Other in a timeless present where all “his” actions and reactions are repetitions of “his” normal habits. Thus, it textually produces the Other without an explicit anchoring in the observing self or in a particular encounter in which contact with the Other takes place.” [In Henry Louis Gates Jr., ed., *Race, Writing, and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 139-40.]

¹⁰ More recently, Mary Louise Pratt has suggested to look at the reverse process, which she called “transculturation” – the role of the metropolitan periphery in producing native forms of self-representation (often times selected from the modes of representation that emanate from the dominant culture). It was through the phenomenon of transculturation, Pratt argues, that Europe’s borders have been defined from within as much as from without, via the local cultural productions that percolated into the European perceptions of the non-European world. [Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992)]

questions the very possibility of truly “knowing” the object of one’s scientific inquiry when the relationship between the inquirer and the inquired about is so heavily bound up with the reality of Western imperialism.¹¹ By the late twentieth century the traveler-scientist, equipped with post-structuralist epistemology, is alert to the causal relationship between the strengthening of the methods and structures of knowledge and the strengthening of the methods and structures of domination embedded even in the most idealistic and sympathetic of scholarly endeavors. The ambiguous position of anthropological writing in between the literary conventions typical of travelogues and the exigencies of scientific precision and detachment is indeed the site of crisis for scientific paradigm of travel in general as I argue elsewhere in this chapter, and it had been recognized as such by practitioners in the field from Malinowski to Levi-Strauss. The resultant shift in focus from the actual fieldwork to the discourse *about* it, or in the words of Clifford Geertz, from “participant observation to participant description” threatens to place anthropology on Derrida’s list of redundant intellectual endeavors.¹²

Critics of travel informed by theories of gender question its sexualized vocabulary, seeking to reinsert and “normalize” women as active and autonomous subjects in this predominately masculine ideology.¹³ They look at the ways in which travel has been traditionally gendered, allegorically imagined and structured by the

¹¹ See, for instance, Peter Kiston, “General Introduction” in P.J.Kitson, ed., *Nineteenth Century Travels Explorations and Empires: Writings from the Era of Imperial Consolidation, 1835-1910*, vol. 1 *North and South Poles* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003), ix-xxvi; Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to "Culture", 1800-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), etc.

¹² Clifford Geertz, *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 83 cited in Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 247.

¹³ See, for instance, Dea Birkett, *Mary Kingsley: Imperial Adventuress* (London: Macmillan, 1992); Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1993); Kristi Siegel, ed., *Gender, Genre, and Identity in Women's Travel Writing* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2004); Jennifer Craik, “The Culture of Tourism” in Chris Rojek and John Urry, eds., *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory* (London: Routledge, 1997); Sidonie Smith, *Moving Lives: Twentieth Century Women's Travel Writing* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), etc.

male quest for sexual adventures and conquests on the one hand; and by women's emancipatory flight from the bondage of domestic patriarchy on the other. This distinction has been visibly blurred and complicated in the recent decades as the gender categories and relations are probed and inverted outside the monotonous discourse of male privilege. Last but not least, some cultural critics have seized on the apocalyptic proclamations of travel's death to assert tourism as its postmodern, vulgarized heir and the tourist as a *faux voyageur*.¹⁴ Comparative examination of the semiotics of travel and tourism reveals continuities and discontinuities between modernity and post-modernity. It also helps to isolate travel's essential characteristics and motives that its nemesis, tourism, lacks – e.g. search for authenticity, originality, solitude, elitism, highbrow sophistication, etc.¹⁵

Travel Writing: Between Fiction and Documentation

This brief identification of the major venues pursued by the scholars of travel is by far incomplete and schematic but it does attest to the plurality of ways in which travel has

¹⁴ Urbain, Jean-Didier, *L'idiote du voyage: Histoires des touristes* (Paris : Payot, 1992) and "Sémiotiques comparées du touriste et du voyageur," *Semiotica*, vol.58, No.3/4 (1986): 269-286; Dean MacCannel, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999); Daniel Boorstin, "From Traveler to Tourist: The Lost Art of Travel" in Daniel Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 77-117; Jonathan Culler, "The Semiotics of Tourism," *American Journal of Semiotics* 1 (1981):127-140; Robert Chi, "Towards a New Tourism: Albert Wendt and Becoming Attractions", *Cultural Critique*, No. 37 (Autumn, 1997): 61-105; John Frow, "Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia", *October*, Vol. 57 (Summer 1991): 123-151; Georges Van Den Abbeele, "Sightseers: The Tourist as Theorist", *Diacritics*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Winter, 1980): 2-14, etc.

¹⁵ Further deconstructing the notion of authenticity as central to modernity's ideologies of travel, cultural criticism arrives at the figure of post-tourist. Foretold by Umberto Eco in his elegant "Travels in Hyperreality" and further elaborated on by Azine Feifer and John Urry – a post-tourist is conscious of the commodified essence of his or her travel experience in the post-industrial world, and thus celebrates and seeks out the pre-fabricated and the non-authentic. The choice here is between the manageable and controllable experience on the one hand, and frustrations and contempt bred by capitalism's own cultural hierarchies, on the other. [Robert Chi, "Towards a New Tourism: Albert Wendt and Becoming Attractions," *Cultural Critique*, no. 37 (Autumn, 1997): 70-71; see also Maxine Feifer, *Going Places: The Ways of the Tourist from Imperial Rome to the Present Day* (London: Macmillan, 1985) and John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage, 1990).]

been read, deconstructed and “problematized.” Travel writing is a similarly contested terrain concurrently claimed by historians, ethnographers, and literary scholars.

Whether or not concerns for historical validity of the text should be given precedence over its “literariness” (i.e. narratorial techniques, modes of emplotment, and lyrical tropes employed by the author) is a recurring question in much of the relevant scholarship. Either approach may potentially expand the borders of the genre almost infinitely to include anthropology, sea journals, espionage, children’s adventure stories, logbooks of explorers, epistolary accounts of leisured tours, imagined literary –“armchair” - journeys, etc. Percy G.Adams’ work on the function and role of travel writing in the evolution of the novel, for instance, examines a host of distinctions that can be applied to any loosely understood body of travel texts: i.e. type of traveler and narrator, purpose and style of travel and its retelling, destination, the degree of narratorial presence within the text (“subjectivity” versus “neutrality”), form of writing (diary, dialogue with an imaginary reader, letters) etc. Adams concludes that the degree of internal variation in the discursive properties within the group commonly understood as “travel writing” precludes any analytically meaningful use of the term “genre.”¹⁶

To be sure, the very term “genre” has been increasingly unpopular with cultural critics and literary historians who point out its inherently prescriptive and hierarchical nature, restricting creative freedom and regulating the field of cultural production by including or excluding specific works that comply (or fail to do so) to rather rigid and inflexible conventions.¹⁷ Yet at the same time, the diverse historically-

¹⁶ Percy G. Adams, *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983), 282.

¹⁷ See, for example, David Duff’s anthology *Modern Genre Theory*. especially Jacques Derrida’s 1980 essay “The Law of Genre” in David Duff, ed., *Modern Genre Theory* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2000), 219-231 and Tzvetan Todorov, “The Origins of Genres”, *Ibid*, 193-209.

contingent processes of regulating or compartmentalizing the creative field of literary production through the construction of literary conventions and the socio-political functions attached to them are a fascinating object for critical inquiry in and of itself and it comes into focus in most of today's genre-studies. Moreover, as Tzvetan Todorov perceptively notes, the very insistence on the redundancy of genre-inspired conventions and boundaries is itself a historically-specific convention, a product of modernist and post-modernist cultural discourses.¹⁸ Throughout this work I will retain the term "genre" since the generic boundaries and internal variations within the body of texts studied here do not encumber the examination of discursive continuity, historical and spatial, across different kinds of travel account as well as the study of inter-textuality and cultural adaptation and translation, which is the focus of my research.

The anxieties that adhere to the conception of the genre that is often drawn so widely as to become abstract and analytically useless, lay the groundwork for the contemporary theorizing about the travelogues' coexisting documentary and poetic impulses. Before anything and everything turns into a *recit de voyage*, some critics propose to differentiate between travel literature (a mode that accommodates both literal and literary journeys) and travel writing (that by virtue of being strictly factual supposedly keeps "literariness" at bay).¹⁹ Percy G. Adams' earlier, much criticized work, *Travelers and Travel Liars, 1160-1800* bluntly distinguished between "true

¹⁸ David Chirico, "The Travel Narrative as a (Literary) Genre", in Wendy Bracewell and Alex Drace-Francis, eds., *Under Eastern Eyes: A Comparative Introduction to East European Travel Writing on Europe* (Budapest, New York: CEU Press, 2008), 7 – 59, 34.

¹⁹ Charles Forsdick, *Travel in Twentieth-Century French and Francophone Cultures: The Persistence of Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

travel books” and “travel lies” to caution against the uncritical reading of all travel accounts as potentially fraud²⁰.

This dichotomy, however, is not without its limitations: like most binary models it essentializes arbitrary categories that pit the texts against each other. Obviously, the “pure” cases exist largely in theory, while in reality fiction and factuality constantly impinge upon one another. The absolute majority of the travelogues that I will discuss further in this work would have been left unaccounted for if I were to classify them squarely within this simple taxonomy.²¹ The problem here is three-fold. First of all, the straightforward juxtaposition of truth versus lie, or authenticity versus fiction, builds on the notions that are hardly popular with most critical thinkers. With the snowballing of self-reflexivity and skepticism towards “stable and essential” qualities characteristic of the late-twentieth century Western culture, it is perhaps inevitable that the notions of “truth” or “authenticity” are no longer taken for granted. Without slipping into moral relativism, the political and ideological terms on which these categories are employed can and should be interrogated. Furthermore, the question of factual validity of travel writing is misguided as long as the modes of *representation* of these facts employed in each particular case are not assessed critically. The assumption that a documentary account is necessarily impartial, accurate and “transparent” – i.e. allows the author to put forward his/her sources so as to let the facts speak for themselves - is difficult to bear out beyond the confines of positivistic/mimetic understanding of representation. It downplays the “making” element that goes into re-presentation of reality: the modality

²⁰ Percy G. Adams, *Travelers and Travel Liars, 1160-1800* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 1962), 16.

²¹ See David Henige, “Ventriloquists and Wandering Truths” in *Studies in Travel Writing*, no.2 (Spring 1998): 164-180.

of written language, the agency of the author in selecting, conveying, and “making sense” of his/her observations, the role of the socio-cultural perspective within which the text is conceived, etc. At the same time, neither does fiction need to be entirely fictitious. The more appropriate distinction here seems to be not between reality “itself” and its depiction (referent vs. representation) but rather between various kinds of representations (signifier vs. signified) and their respective effectiveness and force, poetic or/and political. Hence, the problem of representation, of narrating, interpreting, and generalizing one’s experience is made particularly acute by the field of travel writing because of travelogue’s precarious position in-between literary and historical discourses, but also due to the not infrequent political and ideological stakes involved in (mis)representing the Other on one’s own terms.

Finally, a more subtle problem, which is less often addressed, concerns the uncritical use of the label “literature,” or rather the capital “L” Literature in a normative neoclassical sense that implies “high”, intellectually and aesthetically sophisticated creativity, superior to and radically divorced from non-creative writing. Yet the substance of the term is far from being as self-evident as the rigid categorization suggests. The criteria that determine what text deserves to be catalogued as literature in the sense of *belles-lettres* are completely enmeshed in the specific historical contexts and are subject to change. The author’s intentionality is one of these criteria, and perhaps, the most obvious one. However, certain texts that were not intended as literary may have literariness thrust upon them by the evolving conception of what constitutes a literary canon.²² How, when and why travel accounts

²² One just needs to recall the evolution of epistolary form, which parenthetically, alongside with memoir literature had a critical role in the development of travelogue as a distinct literary genre. Marquise de Sevigne’s extensive correspondence with her daughter, for all its remarkable literary quality, was certainly not meant as a work of literature, let alone intended to be read by outsiders. De Sevigne’s contemporary, Marianna Alcoforado, in contrast, published her own *Letters of a Portuguese*

gain literary sanction is an important question but it is better addressed by the works that specifically analyze the relationship between the advent of travel writing as a recognized genre and the development of other literary forms, most notably, the novel²³ Such comparative analysis reveals a non-small degree of cross-fertilization enjoyed by the emergent genres, which is evident not only in the shared repertoire of plot structures, descriptive devices, tropes, stylemes, and other textual features, but perhaps, even more importantly, in the typology of narrators and protagonists that both brought to bear.

The amplified narratorial voice, whether first- or third-person, that becomes an essential element of the post-Renaissance Euro-American travel is not a mere act of literary stylization, but an expression of particular cultural models that developed at the time.²⁴ A Sentimentalist Grand Tourist, Romanticism's heroic wanderer, a decadent escapist or a modernist disenchanted exile were typecast by novelists and writers of travelogues alike, with both genres borrowing extensively from each other's patterns of narration, descriptive devices and strategies for organizing a dramatic, captivating action. This succession of characters and archetypes, each of them rooted in a particular rhetorical makeup, is underlain by an ever-increasing attention to the psychology – “sensibility”- of the protagonist manifest in the post-Renaissance

Nun (1668) to the wide acclaim of the public. Similarly, biographies, autobiographies, historical chronicles only become recognized as distinct literary genres by late Middle Ages.

²³ See, for instance, Reino Virtanen, Frans C. Amelinckx, Joyce N. Megay , eds., *Travel, Quest, and Pilgrimage as a Literary Theme. Studies in Honor of Reino Virtanen* (distributed by University Microfilms International, 1978); Percy G. Adams, *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983), etc.

²⁴ In a less obvious way it is also a reflection of the fact that as late as the seventeenth century the majority of travel journals were compiled not by the noble travelers themselves but by intermediate ‘scribes’ – usually secretaries, to whom the notes were entrusted, or dictated. Consider, for instance, Marco Polo's ghostwriter Rustichello di Pisa, or Columbus's Bartolome de las Casas. A co-authorship of a secretary-ventriloquist presumes a different relationship – a lesser degree of intimacy, perhaps – between the author and the text, that partially explains why very few travel accounts of the period are recast in the first person singular.

European literature explicitly focused on the inner world of the narrator. Thus, an alternative way of conceptualizing the “literature versus writing” distinction as it applies to the travelogue is through the place and functions of the narratorial persona within the text. The idiosyncratic and self-conscious authorial voice that ventures opinion on matters beyond the immediately observable landscapes is taken by some scholars to be the defining index of the travelogue’s literariness²⁵

Others suggest that the boundary between literary and non-literary travelogues be drawn according to the author’s awareness of and conscious allusions to other (earlier) travel narratives, or in general terms, to other textual models.²⁶ Regardless of whether he/she is intent on emulating, ostracizing or parodying his/her predecessors, the writer is drawn into the intertextual space where his/her travel observations lose some of their immediacy and genuineness to the multiple literary echoes. As a result, the text’s dialogical relationship with its literary counterparts (antecedents) may overwhelm the initial – empirical - objectives of the travel writer, so much so that the extratextual reality becomes secondary to the inter-textual one. The measure of the text’s literariness, thus, is in the extent to which it is shaped by and defines itself in relation to the broader literary discourse.

This argument works well in Schönle’s study as he is concerned with very specific models of the eighteenth and nineteenth century travel writing – i.e. the period when the concept of Literature becomes a delineated category and the travel writing seeks entry into the “high” canon. Dennis Porter argues in the same vein that

²⁵ See, for instance, Charles Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth Century Travel* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1978); Casey Blanton, *Travel Writing: The Self and the World* (New York: Routledge, 2002), etc.

²⁶ Andreas Schönle, *Authenticity and Fiction in the Russian Literary Journey, 1790-1840*. (London and Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).

the sense of belatedness, which haunts modern travel, throws down a double challenge to the traveler-cum-writer,

to prove his (sic) self-worth by means of an experience adequate to the reputation of a hallowed site. If he (sic) is a writer, he will be in the even more exposed position of having to add something new and recognizably his own to the accumulated testimony of his predecessors. To the anxiety of travel itself is added the anxiety of travel writing. It may, of course, be resolved by choosing to play the iconoclast rather than the rhapsodist, that is to say by denigrating what others have praised.²⁷

This argument needs a qualifier in the context of the twentieth century travel narratives due to the changed nature and functions of travel *per se* and of the writing it produced. The fear of not stepping into somebody else's footprints or, if that is impossible, the urge to produce a more original and gripping rendition of one's adventures than that of predecessors seems to have given way to a nonchalant admission of impossibility of "authentic" discovery altogether.²⁸ This, parenthetically, is a staple argument made for the demise or death of travel, and I shall discuss it in greater detail in the first chapter. With no unvisited destinations and no romantic impulses left to pursue "authenticity" and "originality," every site becomes a palimpsest, every movement - a reiteration of somebody else's motion, and every line in a travel diary - a paraphrase, a postmodern pastiche of quotes, hidden allusions and polysemic games.

The orientation of this project is to avoid pigeonholing the selected texts according to their alleged fictional or factual qualities. Instead, I will argue that most of the travel writing continuously negotiates its documentary and poetic impulses, while oscillating between the two, frequently conflicting, aspirations: to the accuracy

²⁷ Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton University Press, 1991), 12.

²⁸ For the beautiful literary rendition of the lament over lost authenticity of travel experience see a short story by Susan Sontag "Unguided Tour," in Elizabeth Hardwick, ed., *Susan Sontag Reader* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1982), 371-381.

(and originality) of the factual information on the one hand, and to the status of literary art on the other. This relationship is informed by the socio-historical context that conditions self-definition of the author and the text vis-à-vis other cultural productions. Thus the terms ‘writing’ and ‘literature’ will appear interchangeably throughout the discussion so as to disenfranchise the embedded elitism of ‘Literature’ over the presumably unsophisticated, artistically meager ‘writing.’ At the same time, the simultaneous use of both terms highlights the inherent difficulty of drawing clear-cut distinctions between physical and metaphorical movement, between literal and lyrical flight, between the self of the traveler and the self of the writer, or in Bakhtin’s terms, between author as person and author as creator.²⁹ It also emphasizes the heterogeneity of the genre instead of codifying or isolating it from other forms of expression and creativity, with which it interacts. This “democratizing” gesture is made easy in the context of my work, though, by the fact that most of the travelogues chosen here for a close reading were written by professional literati, intended and published as literary works that *a priori* establishes their literariness.³⁰ Hence, unlike travelogues produced by non-professional authors whose literary status is not immediately obvious to the reader, the artistic quality of these former texts is implied or “invested” into them by their sheer pedigree.

My own *modus operandi* here is to approach the selected travelogues with the toolkit of literary criticism – i.e. first and foremost as occurrences of language, as rhetorical and textual performances. At the same time, I start with the premise that the poetic essence of these works – narrative strategies, inter-textual links, sophisticated imagery, etc., - is coeval with their political contingency. As a scholar and himself an

²⁹ Mikhail Bakhtin, “Avtor i geroi v esteticheskoi deistvitel’nosti” [Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity] in M. Holquist and V. Liapunov, eds., *Art and Answerability* (Austin: Texas University Press, 1990), pp.4-256. More on the problem of narrator, see Chapter 2 of this work.

ardent traveler Paul Fussell puts it in his excellent anthology on the subject:

“Successful travel literature mediates between two poles: the individual physical things it describes, on the one hand, and the larger theme that it is ‘about’ on the other.”³¹ The ‘larger theme’ in which I am most interested concerns matters of identity and self-definition, whether personal or national, ideological or artistic. What follows, then, is an attempt to explore the particular ways that the stories of travel function as or help shape intellectual and artistic discourses. I will analyze the modes in which the “opinionated narrator” (the very marker of travelogues’ literariness for some) generalizes his/her road impressions beyond their immediate referentiality to something of a deeper and wider import.

An Overview of the Work

Part One establishes the conceptual and chronological frameworks for a critical readings of practices and narratives of travel. It charts the history of European travel and travelogue from antiquity to post-modernity and from pilgrims to tourists and discusses the analytical uses to which travel and its retelling are put by cultural theorists and critics. I look at the successive formation of the three major ideologies, -- or paradigms, -- that structured travelers’ pursuits over centuries: idealism, empiricism and imperialism, and on their transformation (or demise) with the advance of modernity. Of special interest – and difficulty -- for me are the moments of transition, that highlight not only the ruptures and discontinuities between the conventions that have governed different styles of travel in various historical periods, but also complex processes of cross-fertilization and continuity. By conventions I mean the traveler’s objectives and motivations, choice of itinerary, means of transportation, dress,

³¹ Paul Fussell, *The Norton Book of Travel* (New York: Norton, 1987), 126.

duration, behavior while *en route*, social relations among the co-travelers, attitudes towards the “locals”, and specific cultural practices associated with travel (diary-keeping, travel writing, drawing, photography, etc.). In more general terms, at stake here is the relationship between space, time and the traveler’s own body.³² Not only does this relationship define diverse practices of travel, but it also structures its narratives. Thus, an alternative periodization of the cultural history of travel and travelogue may focus on specific aspects of the travel experience and of its narrativisation – e.g. different modes of perception, changing foci of the traveler’s and writer’s attention (discovery of the world vs. discovery of the self), etc. – that accompany the emergence of modern subjectivity. The ever-changing chronotope of travel experience -- the spatio-temporal matrix—combined with a particular kind of traveller-narrator perpetuates the identity of each travel paradigm and form of travelogue throughout history.³³

Part Two is shifting the focus from the general history of Western travel and travel writing to the Russian context. Chapter 1 is a discussion of Russian Orthodox pilgrimage, its history, forms, itineraries, and written narratives that draws comparison between the pilgrimage tradition in Western Christianity, discussed in Part I and its Russian analogue. I seek to explain the resilience of pilgrimage as a popular practice and a venerated spiritual ideal beyond the advance of modernity and secularism in Russia through particular elements of the country’s cultural and theological discourses. In the reading of the otherwise dissimilar thinkers and critics, such as Nikolai Berdiaev, Yuri Lotman, Mikhail Epshtein, Yuri Stepanov and David Bethea, I identify the “cultural constants”, to use Yuri Stepanov’s term, that account for the

³² Judith Adler, “Origins of Sightseeing”, *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol.16 (1989):7-29; 7-8.

³³ For more on chronotope and for genre’s “objective memory” see M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, transl. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (University of Texas Press, Slavic Series no.1, 1981).

important role that Orthodox pilgrimage plays in Russian culture. Among them are the Russians' propensity for irrational longing and restlessness, their indifference to what is and their thirst for another life – i.e. their “apocalyptic consciousness” (David Bethea) or “eschatological directedness” (Nikolai Berdiaev), etc. that invest particular meaning and function into even the most seemingly pointless form of wandering, legitimizing “leaving for leaving's sake” (that in Western Europe does not become a cultural value up until the advance of Romanticism.)

To lay the ground for the subsequent discussion of Russian engagement with Europe, Chapter 1 also analyzes Russian medieval sense of the geographical space. Following Yuri Lotman's semiotic reading of Russian medieval travel accounts, I discuss the binary categories that structure medieval Russia's relationship to the outside world, focusing in particular on the convergence of spatial and ethical categories that typically describe foreign realm as morally corrupt, heretical, and dangerous in opposition to the inherently saintly, right, and welcoming domestic realm. The transition from the medieval religious consciousness to the modern secular age did not entail a complete erasure of the previous cultural memory and some of its elements can be discerned in later travel writing, like, for instance, Russia's sense of its own chosenness, suggested by these rigid moral/geographical coordinates. Evolving conceptions of home, space, foreignness, belonging, would keep resurfacing throughout the remainder of this work since they reflect Russia's changing relationship to the outside world, particularly, to Western Europe, and its efforts to define and grasp its own national identity.

From the travel reports written by the early envoys that Peter I sent abroad, which combine elements of medieval travel writing with the modern sensitivity to foreign customs and mores and an increased authorial presence within the narrative,

Chapter 2 moves on to discuss the complex transformation underwent by the Russian society in the wake of Petrine reforms and its impact on the practices of travel and travel writing. Russia's belated modernization and its self-reinvention as a modern, enlightened empire brought about by the growing exposure to western technology, culture and social norms, placed unprecedented importance on travel and travelogue as the key educational media. The period also saw the transformation of Russian travel writing into a recognized *literary* genre, the process that was heavily affected by the popularity of Western European examples of the genre in Russia. However, the *emulation* of specific Western European travelogues that accompanied the "literary transplantation" of the genre onto the Russian soil, did not and could not involve the transplantation of both the socio-cultural context that shaped the creation of these works in the West, and of the entire tradition of educational, empirical and leisure travel that has existed there for centuries but was barely familiar to the eighteenth century Russians. Resultant peculiarities of Russian literary travelogue that I discuss in Chapter 2 by way of a close reading of several major texts from the period, concern both its textual and thematic characteristics – i.e. its artistic form -- and the kind of discourses it addressed or perpetuated.

At the core of most Russian travelogues from the period is the connection between the exposure to foreign realities and the evolving sense of national self. While the eighteenth century European encounter with the "Other" generally affirmed the Enlightened Europe's cultural and technological superiority, for Russians the country's obvious cultural and technological indebtedness to the West complicated the quest for their own distinctive identity. Moreover, the very fact that the philosophical and political discourses that framed the debates over the impact of Russia's belated and incomplete arrival to modernity on its national character were in themselves mere

adaptations of European analogues (and so was the genre of travel writing, a popular medium for these debates) reflected a pressing, if frustrating, urge to find an indigenous substance to Russia's volatile national self.

Romanticism's "discovery" of the Orient added another element to Russia's difficult entanglement with the West, offering Russia a chance to test its own "Europeanness" by playing a civilizing role in Asia that has been thus far associated with Western Europe. Chapter 3 starts with the discussion of Russian textual "Orient", the specificity of Russian "Orientalism" and its relationship to the discourses of Romanticism by way of a close reading of Pushkin's famous 1835 travelogue *Journey to Arzrum*. In the guise of a typical Oriental journey, Pushkin offers a sophisticated inversion of both the conventions of the genre and of the most common Romantic clichés associated with the westerner's adventures in the Orient thereby revealing the specificity of Russian engagement with the Orient, heavily enmeshed with the country's own elusive and semi-Asian identity. The deflation of the Romantic rhetoric and the concomitant de-heroization of the Romantic traveler in the *Journey to Arzrum* signals the transition to Realism.

In examining the role of the travel writing in the rise of Russian prose fiction in the first half of the nineteenth century, Chapter 3 discusses the shifting fortunes of Russian travelogue that sought to detach itself from Western models and by the mid-nineteenth century had increasingly turned to domestic itineraries. This shift from the emulation of Western routes to the Russian interior was wrought with several difficulties for both the travelers and travel authors. Reliance on Western models of sightseeing typical of Russian travels in Europe was no longer possible, since not only the Russian countryside differed significantly from the European landscapes and lacked any infrastructure for a comfortable touring, but also the very concept of the

picturesque had yet to be applied to Russia own, yet unmarked, picturesque “sites.” With Russia’s own secular “imaginary geography” virtually undeveloped, the travelers’ appreciation of the domestic realm necessitated the creation of a home-grown landscape aesthetics, that task that increasingly fell to prose fiction. However, with the rise of other genres, literary travel writing lost some of its popularity and thus the mission of elaborating a viable connection between the national self and the national soil was taken over by the novelists, most of whom have tried their hand at travel writing at some point of their literary careers.

Chapter 4 surveys figurative conceptions of Russian domestic space elaborated by travel writers and novelists and discusses the connection between constructions of space and the metaphorical constructions of national character. It concludes with the close reading of the four major nineteenth century travelogues, Ivan Goncharov’s *Frigate “Pallas”*, (1858), Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* (1863) and Anton Chekhov’s *From Siberia and Sakhalin Island* (1893). The four text not only foreground very different itineraries, three distinct types of narrators and very different ideological stances and objectives for both the travels and their subsequent documentation. All of them reveal profound connections to the subsequent work of Russia’s three major writers and can thus be considered not only a testing ground for ideas and ideologies, but for artistic craft. They are also excellent examples of the two distinct trajectories along which the Russian tradition of travel writing was to develop in the twentieth century: travel writing as an educational, entertaining literature mostly addressed to the young audiences, and travel writing as a device of estrangement, to use the Formalist’s term, a pretext for the author’s reflections on matters of politics, ideology, society, culture, and – inevitably – his or her own national identity.

* * *

I began this section with an observation that the *post-histoire* readiness to announce an end to travel and travel writing curiously coexists with the rise of academic interest in the subject that reroutes the topic through the theories and vocabulary of various disciplines, in particular the current foci upon issues of identity, memory, time, and space. I have also briefly sketched a few generic tensions apparent in much of the relevant scholarship over the contours of the field and the difficulty of elaborating a normative, analytically functional definition of what constitutes travel and travel writing. Part of the problem is the clash of different rhetorical and methodological practices and perspectives. The changing meaning of travel and its idioms in contemporary western culture is the other one. Both of these challenges stake out the unfolding discussion as it seeks to trace the history of European travel and of the writing that it inspired. In doing so, I hope to be able to demarcate more confidently the terminological and methodological grounds of my own research, as well as to test the relationship between the generic western patterns and the peculiarities of the Russian context. At the same time, a historical perspective on the cultural significance and symbolic denotation of travel helps to explain contemporary fascination with metaphors and figures it generated, and ultimately, supports my choice of travelogue as a venue for asking bigger questions about identity, self-invention, belonging and dislocation.

In this limited space and time I by no means attempt to cover all the ground, which would be impossible. Instead, I shall engage some of the recent studies of the subject that undertake to historicize travel and travelogue from rather dissimilar disciplinary and analytical perspectives. The categories and paradigms adduced to marshal a large variety of sources in these studies are borrowed from reception theory,

structuralists, semioticians, post-colonial theory, etc. Such inter-disciplinarity caters to the complex functions of travel and travelogue in the matrix of modern Euro-American culture, yet it also attests to the problematic status of travel within the social sciences that I have flagged out earlier. Lack of disciplinary anchor that could help pin down travel as a usefully distinct sphere of social practice (before its symbolic connotations can be addressed) turns it into a term so broad as to be almost emptied of meaning. At the same time, the seemingly incongruent deconstructions that focus on economic, political, aesthetic or psychological aspects of travel are, perhaps, symptomatic of (post-)modern condition with its blurring of boundaries between all sorts of social and cultural spheres that were previously held distinct.

PART ONE : Cultural History of Travel: From Pilgrim to Tourist

Much of the scholarly discussion of travel has revolved around its role in the construction of modernity. Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubies, among others, make a convincing case for the travel being “one of the principal cultural mechanisms, even a key cause for the development of modern identity since the Renaissance.”³⁴ In their anthology on the cultural history of travel, *Voyages and Visions*, Elsner and Rubies identify three persistent motives, which throughout the last five hundred years have been determining the purposes of travel, as well as the production, reception and ideological leanings of the dominant travel narratives. In their analysis idealism, imperialism, and empiricism serve as foils to the succession of various paradigms of travel, through which the pattern of modernity takes shape. Although the emergence of each paradigm is discussed against the backdrop of specific socio-historical realities, it would be simplistic to represent Western tradition of travel and travel writing as a straightforward linear progression. Rather, Elsner and Rubies conceive of the history of travel as a series of appropriations, rejections and reconstructions of earlier cultural models. Instead of linearity they suggest talking about the dialectical relationship between the ancient ideal of travel as a transcendental, spiritually fulfilling quest on the one hand, and a modern incredulity towards the ideas of progress and moral betterment on the other. Hence, modernity does not need to mean a complete rejection of the past but rather a nostalgic desire for its perceived wholeness and authenticity or, in the very least, a longing for the *belief* in the possibility of such wholeness.

³⁴ Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubies, eds., *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), 4.

Pilgrimage

Perhaps, not the first form of travel to emerge historically, pilgrimage, nevertheless, has remained one of the most influential and enduring ones. Commonly associated with Christianity, the figure of a pilgrim is indeed central to Christian eschatology. Through the act of his/her wanderings the pilgrim is symbolically connecting the “here and now” with the “true world to come.” St Augustine famously remarked: “The city of the saints is in heaven; here on earth Christians wander as on pilgrimage through time looking for the Kingdom of eternity.”³⁵ The schism - the distance as it were - between the imperfect reality and the transcendent truth that is invariably elsewhere breeds the feeling of restlessness and homelessness that are at the hub of Christian cosmology and Christian consciousness. This allegorical spiritual dislocation induces a very real physical one that is either directed towards a tangible sacred site, or outside of the domestic realm altogether and into the sheer wilderness. In a sense, the pilgrim and the hermit, both seminally important for early Christianity, epitomize two types of travelers, perhaps, two types of consciousness as well, that have not lost their actuality up to this day.³⁶ While the pilgrim is concerned with

³⁵ St Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Gerald S. Walsh et al. (New York: Image, 1958) quoted from Zygmunt Bauman, “From Pilgrim to Tourist – A Short History of Identity” in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, eds., *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1997), 20. A passage from Hugo of St Victor’s *Didascalicon* recaps the same idea beautifully: “The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land.” [*perfectus vero cui mundus totus exilium est.*] Cited in Edward Said’s *The World, The Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), 7.

³⁶ Elsner and Rubies recount the origins of Europe’s Christian topography – the sacred sites and places where the saints were believed to have lived, preached, died, or been buried. From the fourth century on Christian bishops (of whom Saint Jerome, is perhaps the most enthusiastic proponent of pilgrimage) are starting to design these special locales and to elaborate various cults associated with them in order to map Europe’s own “sacred geography” connected to the teachings and doings of Christ and his apostles. On the one hand, this was a way of transforming the Greco-Roman pagan terrain, dotted by countless local shrines, sects, deities, and temples, into an exclusively Christian domain. On the other, it was a means to make the holiness of the Christian sites tangible and accessible for the majority of believers. While Palestine remained the major Biblical locus and the archetypal destination for a Christian pilgrimage, it was obviously too far away for most. Hence, the newly “discovered” European

reaching the destination, the hermit is intent on leaving for leaving's sake, yet both conceive of their motion primarily in terms of *inner* experience as a spiritual journey “from wisdom to virtue”.³⁷

It is noteworthy that despite the usual association of pilgrimage with Christianity, the allegory of travel as a path to spiritual fulfillment and maturation considerably antedates the emergence of Christianity. To be sure, as the rising post-Second Temple monotheism reinvented many of the earlier pagan practices in more religious terms, the concept of pilgrimage, too, was given an eschatological twist atypical of the Hellenic tradition.³⁸ The theme of a wanderer who is cast on a far away shore and has to brave the storms of life before returning home is a persistent part of the Greco-Roman lore. Odysseus is, of course, the paradigmatic voyager of this kind

shrines or martyria “brought Christianity home” both virtually and literally. Elsner and Rubies, “Introduction” to their *Voyages and Visions*, 16-18.

³⁷ It should be stressed, however, that the neatness of such binary oppositions comes at the expense of the diversity embedded in each of the contrasted phenomena. Christian pilgrimage, for instance, encompassed a wide range of locally and historically specific practices, of which more shortly.

³⁸ Another monotheistic religion to emerge from the Second-Temple Judaism alongside Christianity is Rabbinical Judaism. It might have not had such a pervasive influence on the European culture of travel as did Christianity, but should, nevertheless, be mentioned here. The transition from the Temple-centered Jewish cult to the “portable” religion focused on the Mosaic Law and its rabbinical interpretations was traumatic both for the religious structures of Judaism and for Jews as a people. The destruction of the Second Temple (70 C.E.), the expulsion from Jerusalem, and the concomitant expansion of the Diaspora created a powerful longing for the return to *Eretz Israel* and the rebuilding of the Temple. This longing for the return, for the “next year in Jerusalem!” was fundamental to the Jewish liturgy and consciousness throughout the two millennia of exile and would ultimately find its political realization in Zionism. Throughout the diaspora period individual Jews would undertake pilgrimages to Palestine in order to be buried there. The Judaic culture of pilgrimage differs significantly from the Christian analogue for obvious theological reasons. Judaism, for instance, does not have a cult of saints, does not sanctify its martyrs and strongly opposes the notion of idolatry, which is defined very broadly to include worshipping of the tombs, consecrating sites, etc. Hassidic cult of the *tzaddikim* and the tradition of visiting the graves of famous rabbis is an obvious deviation. The most important exception is the *Kotel* – the Western Wall of the destroyed Second Temple, a site of prayer and lamentation, which is the focal point of contemporary Judaism and a tangible connection with the pre-exilic era. The Temple Mount as a site of the destroyed Temples has always attracted pilgrims exiled from the land of Israel. However, the crucial difference between Christian and Jewish concepts of pilgrimage is that for the religious Jews the entire land of Israel, the symbolic Zion, is the object of veneration and the goal of pilgrimage. This, for instance, is reflected in the specific Hebrew terminology used to describe traveling or immigration to Israel up to this day – to make *aliyah* literally means “to mount, to ascend”, whereas emigration means *yerida* – “descend.” Thus, Jewish pilgrimage is ideally a one-way journey, a journey of homecoming. For more, see Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, *Booking Passage: Exile and Homecoming in the Modern Jewish Imagination* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2000).

whose troubles and tribulations on the way to Ithaca (magical charms, military feats, sexual temptations, etc.) were variously interpreted throughout the Classical Antiquity as symbolic rites of passage punctuating the *Bildung* of the hero. The Neoplatonic philosophical tradition, in particular, read the *Odyssey* as a metaphor of inner journey, of “becoming,” navigated by the divine Logos amidst the tempests and temptations of the sea.³⁹

Elsner and Rubies convincingly argue that the political and economic crisis that plagued the Roman empire in the third century C.E. generated a need for the new forms of universalism and imperialism, reflected, among other things, in the modes and ideologies of travel. Before the legal establishment of Christianity as an imperial religion by emperor Constantine in 312 C.E. provided such a universalist framework, the idea of a Greek-led spiritual revival appeared to be a likely solution for the empire’s social and political maladies.⁴⁰ Intended for elite audiences, Philostratus’ work succeeded in creating a symbolically powerful archetype of a wandering sage-cum-saint, whose routes and itineraries map his/her spiritual progress on the way to ultimate salvation, an archetype, it should be added, that would prove indispensable

³⁹ The spread of Christianity and the rise of new “Oriental” cults in the third century C.E. contributed to the popularity of this allegorical model, albeit recast in a more spiritual vein. Philostratus’ *Life of Apollonius* (3rd c. C.E.), for instance, combines the conventions of travel writing and hagiography to tell the story of a first-century sage and miracle-worker, Apollonius of Tyana. Although the actual circumstances of the sage’s travels and adventures are obscure and were most probably exaggerated by later commentators, Philostratus’ achievement lies not in the (un)intended accuracy of his account. For all its mythological overtones, *Life of Apollonius* attains persuasiveness and canonical status as a story of a real man whose life and deeds become paradigmatic the very moment they are fictionalized. The use of travel as a key structural and metaphorical element of the narrative is by no means accidental here. On the one hand, the author is able to draw from the rich Greco-Roman literary canon, which is traditionally engaged with the tales of wandering and pilgrimage, separation and reunion. On the other, Apollonius’ perpetual motion to the far-end corners of the empire and beyond parallels his spiritual ascent, which symbolically culminates with the pilgrimage to Olympia, the epicenter of Greece’s sacred geography. By venturing further than any Hellene did before him - to Western Iberia, India, or Ethiopia – Apollonius demonstrates mental daring as well as physical one. The actual territory that he covers in his incessant pilgrimage to holy sages, shrines and spiritual mentors (from whom he learns and whom he invariably surpasses in wisdom) is but a metaphor for his own spiritual and mental domain, where the span of his far-away quests reflects the span of his knowledge. Elsner and Rubies, eds., *Voyages and Visions*, 8-13.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 13.

for the ascending Christianity. Unlike Odysseus's deeply personal home-bound quest, which is explicitly literary, Apollonius' quite literal, yet fictionalized, journeys are geared towards a universalist goal, even if only achieved within the borders of the Roman empire. Both the romantic spirit of the *Odyssey* and the holiness garnered by Philostratus's sage are the two crucial elements of the later European pilgrimage model. The literary and didactic effectiveness of Philostratus' book made it an important precursor of and a rival to the early Christian tracts and sacred biographies, including the New Testament itself. The fourth century Christian theologians looked askance at the *Life of Apollonius* and justifiably so: its popularity and literalness threatened to undermine the supremacy of Christianity's own sacred narratives. Hence, continuous attempts to discredit both the holiness of Apollonius' career and Philostratus' account of it.⁴¹ As a result, while the later Christian authors employed the same rhetorical and myth-building devices in writing biographies of the saints (e.g. venturing into the dangerous and far-away places, resisting temptations, performing miracles, dying a mysterious or torturous death and re-appearing after it, etc.) the pagan source of these narratives was buried underneath the hegemonic Christian hagiographic canon and remained virtually unknown. Homer's protagonist, in contrast, came across as more morally ambivalent, his assertive worldliness and cunning patently at odds with the Christian ethos of humility. Importantly, he did not make claims for sainthood (as did Philostratus' wandering sage) and thus his saga did not compete with Christianity's own repertoire of hallowed sites and saints. Hence, as Antiquity's most celebrated literary narrative of travel, the *Odyssey* continued to fascinate Christian authors well into the Middle Ages, and especially in the early modern period, inspiring diverse creative interpretations. What these, often

⁴¹ Ibid, 11-13.

conflicting, readings had in common, was the symbolic function of the Odysseus' difficult journey as a path to inner fulfillment that recasts him as a pagan precursor to Christianity's own culture of pilgrimage alongside the less renowned Apollonius of Tyana.⁴²

From Xenophanes's "anthropological" travel notes (6th c. B.C.E.) to Herodotus's *History of the Persian Wars* (5th c. B.C.E.) to Strabo's *Geographica* (1st c. C.E.) and Pausanias' *Guide to Greece* (2nd c. C.E.), ancient travelers-cum-writers are using reportages of their voyages to claim legitimacy and authority for the historical or political ideas that they convey. As Lucian's derisive tone shows, this legitimacy was not always recognized and not always easily granted. Herodotus, for instance, is not just Antiquity's most famous traveler and historian but, perhaps, the most criticized one as well, his stories repeatedly ostracized as grossly exaggerated or altogether forged. It is ironic that most of the criticism leveled against *The Histories* echoes Herodotus own scorn towards unreliable travelers. As he attempts a cultural analysis of the origins of the Greco-Persian wars, Herodotus resorts to his extensive travel observations as the pool of evidence. He is adamant in privileging first-hand knowledge and continuously challenges the tales of his predecessors.

⁴² Homer, however, is not the only ancient forebear of the European travel fiction. Lucian's satirical spoof *A True Story* (2nd c. C.E.) presents a remarkably swaggering narrator, the like of Gulliver or Baron Munchausen, whose adventures are similarly extravagant. Traversing the celestial domain or plunging into the underworld, he exposes other travelers (including a much maligned Herodotus) as liars whose puffed up accounts have nothing to do with their pitiful exploits. He, in contrast, prides himself in admitting unabashedly that he is lying. Albeit mocking, Lucian's concern with the credibility of travel narratives is voiced from within the culture that is equally defined by ethnographic and tourist pursuits, while maintaining a strong emphasis on pilgrimage to temples, shrines, or oracles. As one of the essential, if perhaps, paradoxical features of the late Antiquity, this fusion of skepticism and idealism throws into question the hard and fast distinction between the imaginative and the experiential, the allegorical and the pragmatic in ancient travel and its recounting. The idealist perception of travel as a reinvigorating inner journey epitomized by the tradition of pilgrimage that lent itself easily to the allegorical (i.e. fictional) use, coexisted and often intersected with a long-held veneration of empirically validated experience. Elsner and Rubies, eds. *Voyages and Visions*, 10-11.

“Ethnographic” travel in Antiquity

The ethos of skepticism that animated both Herodotus and his detractors, the rise of natural history and ethnography, as well as the sheer expansion of the Greco-Roman civilization beyond the boundaries of the “known world” affected the ideological tendency of much of Antiquity’s travel and travel writing, foreshadowing the emergence of what Elsner and Rubies define as the “Ethnographic and Naturalistic” paradigm of travel. Although they trace it back to the fourteenth century, ethnographic pursuits as such are obviously a much older phenomenon. Just as the Christian model of pilgrimage grew out of the Greco-Roman myths of wandering heroes and sages, the late medieval empiricism is preceded by the ancient tradition of anthropological speculation and critical inquiry.

Numerous travel accounts produced within the Greco-Roman domain suggest a non-small degree of cultural self-confidence on the part of its travelers who show open-mindedness and curiosity when exposed to the foreign moresm their very Greekness defined and reasserted through the encounter and engagement with the “barbarian Other.” Perhaps, the major implication of these ancient explorations and of the stories written about them (besides their obvious entertaining or educational value) is the cross-cultural awareness that they stimulated. This ancient “ethnography,” however, is a far cry from the empirical precision espoused by the naturalistic tradition of later periods. The crucial difference between Antiquity’s journeys of exploration and the empirical bent of much of the late Medieval and Renaissance travel is in the formation of independent historical and naturalistic narrative forms, radically different from the conventions of pilgrimage records. Thus, while Herodotus makes sure to convey only truthful and accurate observations, his

work lacks both narrative structure and a marked authorial voice that would guide the reader along a cohesive itinerary. Amidst the assemblage of places, dates, peculiar customs and traditions, the concrete details of his journey – people, sights, incidents, etc. – lose their vividness and specificity and are merely used to confirm or debunk other travelers’ stories. The immediacy of his own engagement with the foreign is of no great concern for Herodotus, and neither is the distinctiveness of his authorial voice. This conscious self-effacement and disinterest in the human subjects observed along the way is equally characteristic of pre-Christian ethnographic journeys and pilgrimages.

The bifurcation of the two into the distinct categories of experience that required different narrative forms does not come about until the 1300s and is underlain by profound transformations within the Latin Christian Church itself. Before we can make this chronological leap into the fourteenth century C.E., it is important to trace the historical evolution of pilgrimage from the first centuries of Christianity to the late Medieval period, and to recap the essential aspects of this paradigm. One may argue that the very attempt of grasping a diverse range of spatial and symbolic practices by one cohesive model inevitably overlooks important local and historical particularities in the European tradition of pilgrimage in the urge of generalization. For instance, the relevant scholarship distinguishes between at least three variations of pilgrimage that crystallized by early 400s. One of them, the so-called “scriptural model” of visiting the Holy Land that emerged in Palestine in the fourth century C.E. was guided by the Holy Scripture – i.e. the pilgrim sought out the sites mentioned in the Bible. Another version, which becomes widespread in the fifth century was centered around Europe’s own, newly “discovered” sacred geography – the tombs of the saints, particular temples and shrines (like Santiago de Compostela or Saint

Thomas a Becket's at Canterbury Cathedral), martyria, places where there have been alleged apparitions of the Virgin Mary, etc. Finally, Celtic Christianity at roughly the same time developed its own, highly allegorical tradition that celebrated withdrawal into the wilderness and aimless wandering towards no concrete destination, for the sake of God alone.

However, the cult of these newly "discovered" material objects – e.g. relics, remnants of the cross and anything that was assumed to have had been in direct contact with the body of Christ or with the Apostles and saints – though it did provide a tangible focus for the religious yearning, could not entirely offset the symbolic centrality of the Holy Land. Jerusalem as a site of major evangelical events, Christ's Incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection, was always the single most significant destination for pilgrimages, a geographical and spiritual hub of the world.⁴³ Yet Jerusalem was clearly not part of the Latin West, and from the seventh century on it was almost unremittably governed by the Muslims. Just as medieval cartographers depicted Jerusalem as the literal navel of the universe, the western religious consciousness was haunted by the sense of its own peripheral location and by the nostalgic desire to regain the lost center. Symbolic reasons were certainly not the only propelling force behind the crusades, but they did structure the experience for the *milites Christi*, the knights and the common mob who experienced their enterprise as conceptually synonymous with pilgrimage. It was proclaimed in the name of Faith, it involved a perilous travel, and most importantly, it promised salvation – not simply an individual salvation, but a collective one, too.⁴⁴ Thus, "ascetic travel turned into

⁴³ Dorothea R. French, "Journeys to the Center of the Earth: Medieval and Renaissance Pilgrimages to Mount Calvary," in Barbara Nelson Sargent-Baur, ed., *Journeys Toward God: Pilgrimage and Crusade* (Medieval Institute Publications, 1992) .61-64; J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrimage 1099-1185* (London: Hakluyt Society 1998), .35; Elsner and Rubies, eds., *Voyages and Visions*, 22.

⁴⁴ Elsner and Rubies, eds., *Voyages and Visions*, 24.

travel for conquest” was similarly couched in terms of penitence as a meritorious and self-sacrificial act.⁴⁵ Because the ideology of crusade would retain its political and spiritual appeal over many centuries, and does, in fact, remain part of the political parlance in some parts of the world up to this day; most historians of travel tend to regard it as a separate paradigm that had set a powerful pattern for much of Europe’s subsequent contact with the “Other”. It introduced a crucial new factor into the structure of western encounters with non-European societies – that of power propped up by military force. At its core, however, the crusade bared remarkable affinity with the tenets of pilgrimage. Like pilgrims, crusaders invested their mission with a providentialist dimension, hoping that the success would bring both a worldly achievement and a spiritual gratification. More to the point, before the rise of missionaries within the failing crusade movement and the concomitant pressure to establish a dialogue with the non-Christian population, the crusaders displayed at best a surface-deep interest in the ethnographic realities of their expeditions. Therefore, the following analysis of the key features of pilgrimage pertains to crusades as well, while both are contrasted with the emerging naturalistic discourse within the thirteenth century travel writing.

Body, Space and Time in the practices and narratives of pilgrimage

At the core of this dichotomy is the role of the outside reality in structuring the narrative on the one hand, and on the other, in defining the self of the observer vis-à-vis the reader and the human or physical setup of the trip. A pilgrim is entirely preoccupied with the final destination and treats all other sites as figural rather than literal, mere functions of their ability to generate a narrative. The pursuit of an explorer, on the contrary, is essentially open-ended. While the pilgrim’s account is

⁴⁵ Elsner and Rubies, eds., *Voyages and Visions*, 22-35.

explicitly self-centered and inward bound, an explorer is a conscious and systematic seeker of an outer experience, prompted by rational motivations rather than by spiritual urge alone. For a pilgrim, the site yields meaning (and a very specific one at that) only inasmuch as it is sanctioned by the cult or the holy texts, which hold a monopoly over mapping the terrain. Since the relic is rather an allusion than a representational figuration, it simply cannot function outside of the auxiliary mythology that fixes its origins, asserts its authenticity and establishes a metonymic connection with the present experiences of a pilgrim. The pilgrim's account is invariably secondary to the ultimate authority of the "guidebook" – the Bible. An ethnographer claims authority for her/himself on the basis of alleged accuracy of empirical observations.⁴⁶

An axiom of pilgrimage discourse, the reliance on text over direct personal contact with the environment will persist in certain kinds of European travel accounts well after pilgrimage itself becomes a marginal practice. In general terms, the distinction here is between forms of knowledge that are transmitted by the physical realities of the world against those that precede the actual experience and are shaped almost entirely by an external record. In her thorough study of the origins of modern sightseeing Judith Adler locates the divide between the two ways of perception in the emergence of a new kind of subjectivity "anchored in willfully independent vision, in the cognitive subjugation of the world of "things".⁴⁷ This transformation is made possible by the scientific revolution of the late sixteenth century that resolved the question of "authoritatively" attaining and proving knowledge through privileging

⁴⁶ For a sophisticated analysis of semiotics of Christian pilgrimage and an interesting comparison of it with the representational systems of contemporary tourism see Victor and Ethel Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 197 and John Frow, "Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia", *October*, Vol. 57 (Summer 1991): 123-151.

⁴⁷ Judith Adler, "Origins of Sightseeing", *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol.16 (1989): 7-29, 8.

sight and independent empirical observation rather than text. Much of contemporary critique of tourism dismisses it as “inauthentic” form of travel precisely because the alleged lack of independent gaze reverses the relationship between the object and the marker/knowledge of it – e.g. the tourist sees what the guidebook tells him/her is worthy of notice and conceives of the reality in the terms that are prefabricated for him/her by somebody else. If “authenticity” and uniqueness of experience are to be taken as the desired objectives of travel and its defining attributes, tourism destroys authenticity by the very fact of seeking it out – the “authentic” ceases to be authentic the moment it is marked as such in tourist guides and starts attracting hordes of visitors who destroy the singularity of encountering the authentic for each other.⁴⁸ However, similar tendency of turning real space into textual, of abstracting the signified for the sake of multiple signifiers left by earlier travelers and commentators, is not exhausted by tourism or pilgrimage, but can also be discerned in accounts of lay travel. Edward Said, for instance, refers to Chateaubriand’s 1811 account of his journey to Judea as an example of using the Bible (and to a lesser extent Homer while in Greece) as a kind of proto-Baedeker that, according to Said, obfuscated and blocked out the disturbing actualities of contemporary Orient, and the examples are, of course, much more numerous than that.⁴⁹ Not only do they invite for political deconstructions of the kind Said undertakes in *Orientalism*, and throw into question the neat juxtaposition of travel and tourism, but they also lay bare structural and semantic continuities between disparate paradigms of travel that will be examined below.

⁴⁸ I shall return to the problem of authenticity and the dichotomy of travel and tourism in the final section of this chapter. For more on this, see for instance, George Van Den Abbeele, “Sightseeing: The Tourist as Theorist”, *Diacritics*, Vol. 10 No. 4 (Winter, 1980): 2-14.

⁴⁹ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York; Vintage, 1978), 85, 89.

In addition to the defining role of perception (discursive or sensual) it can be argued that the remarkable disinterest in the contingencies of the road typical of pilgrimage stems from a particular conception of time and space, as well as of the pilgrim's physical self. For the ideologues and practitioners of pilgrimage, the physicality of the body and its movement within the actual landscape threaten to undermine the allegorical essence of the journey and should thus be resisted by numbing the senses and shunning all the encounters. The dialectics of sinful flesh versus spirituality, of worldly senses versus the virtues of the soul, informs even the earliest Christian provisions regarding pilgrimage. Despite the proclaimed ideal of pilgrimage as an exercise in contemplation meant to awaken inner spirituality, medieval records and literary adaptations alike show that in reality a typical pilgrimage expedition was rather crowded, throwing in together people from all walks of life. One just needs to recall Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* (1380s-90s) to get an illustration of an extremely varied stock of personages and of a lively exchange among them. Parenthetically, traveling on horseback was not considered quite fit for pilgrimage either. It is well known that Chaucer was influenced by Boccaccio's *Decameron* and even put some of Boccaccio's tales in the mouths of his travelers, that were obviously rather remote from the ascetic purism befitting the pilgrims' mission. Characteristically, the Renaissance attempt to revive the ideal of pilgrimage and to pit it against the newly emerging secular forms of travel reaffirmed the necessity of blinding oneself to both the company of other travelers and the contingencies of the road. A 1604 book of recommendations of how to be a pilgrim maintains that one "must counterfeit, when among others, the deaf, dumb and blind man," the body thus

policed and ultimately effaced for the sake of the soul, marked off for the passersby by a special insignia – a scallop shell and a black pilgrim’s hat.⁵⁰

The persistent fear of contagion, of losing one’s mission to the bodily temptations, stems from the specific liminal position of the pilgrims who find themselves beyond the reach of the household, religious parish, rural community, etc. The attributes of liminality embodied by pilgrims are many and diverse – anonymity, invisibility, silence (the state of being a blank state), endurance of pain, danger and physical hardship, nakedness, humility, humbleness, a-sexuality (e.g. pilgrims as symbolic hermaphrodites), etc.⁵¹ The outsider status makes socially regulated conventions extraneous, and the pilgrim is dangerously left to his or her own devices. An interesting argument can be made for the pilgrims, and especially the hermits as pre-modern examples of what contemporary cultural theorists define as “disembedded” and “unencumbered” identity - an identity built *ab nihilo*, outside of the regulated conventional routine, conceived of in a vertical relation to God, rather than through horizontal social relations. Zygmunt Bauman, for one, believes that the hermits’ uncontrolled “self-construction,” for want of a less anachronistic term, made them suspect in the eyes of the Church, which persistently sought to force them into monastic orders.⁵² One can speculatively suggest that since pilgrimage was mostly a

⁵⁰ Henri de Castela, *La Guide et adresse pour ceux qui veulent faire le S. Voyage de Hierusalem* (Paris, 1604) fol.60v cited in Wes Williams, “‘Rubbing up against others’: Montaigne on Pilgrimage” in Elsner and Rubies, eds., *Voyages and Visions*, 107-8 ; Judith Adler, “Travel as Performed Art”, *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 94, No. 6. (May, 1989): 1366-1391.

⁵¹ I am referring here to Victor Turner’s well-known definition of *liminality*: “The attributes of liminality or of liminal personae (threshold people) are necessarily ambiguous since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space....Their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions.” Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969), 94-130.

⁵² Zygmunt Bauman, “From Pilgrim to Tourist – A Short History of Identity” in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, eds., *Questions of Cultural Identity*, (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1997),20-1.

collective experience structured (i.e. regulated and directed) by its very itineraries, the pilgrims did not seem dangerously defiant, although the monks were usually discouraged from embarking on these journeys. The ambivalence towards the practice of pilgrimage (as opposed to the *ideal* of it) generated frequent debates within the Church, which would dramatically culminate with the sixteenth century Humanist condemnation of the practice as an idle and pointless atavism of medieval scholasticism.

Thus, a pilgrim is a liminal figure, “always on the go, nowhere at home, always suspended mid-way, between here and there, and ultimately, between life and death.”⁵³ For a pilgrim, the past is compressed within the hallowed locale and can be reenacted at any point in present. The present itself is reduced to the transitory stop on the way to eternity, debased by the gravity of it. Time structures the space: like time, the space is straightened into a continuous and unbendable path. Although time is infinitely cumulative, it has a definite vector. It flows like a river towards the main destination that is much more important than any “here and now”: the divine grace of the afterworld. Hence, the sense of direction that time dictates is invested with moral purpose – the progress of the journey parallels the moral progress of the pilgrim. In the Christian tradition, this progress, both spiritual and physical, is always tainted by the sense of restlessness – the goal is always “not-yet-reached,” always ahead. A Freudian reading of the ethos of pilgrimage would reveal a parallel between the perpetual strive towards an ego-ideal, which most psychoanalysts believe to be the major driving force behind the development of the self, and the similar mechanism of delayed gratification that fuels the pilgrim’s perpetual forward motion. Both are

⁵³ Wes Williams, “ ‘Rubbing up against others’”, 109.

essentially futile as the distance between the unsatisfactory realities of the present and the ideal of the “elsewhere” is never to be fully bridged, at least not in this world.⁵⁴

From pilgrimage to crusades and chivalry

This futility, however, is a fundamentally modern realization. In both the pre-Christian and medieval world “futile” is spelled as “potentially attainable through penitence,” although the attainment of one’s goal had to be both difficult and deferred. After the failure of crusades and the resulting recoil from the fixation on the Holy Land, the “object of desire” that was to breed allegorical and physical ventures was transferred elsewhere, or rather, was sublimated within new paradigms of travel. What these novel cultural forms inherited from pilgrimage and crusade was the sense of restlessness and the gaping distance between the imperfect reality and the transcendent ideal. The most significant tradition to take over the idealistic thrust of the crusades (almost entirely discredited by early thirteenth century) was the chivalric quest. By transforming the religious impetus of the crusades into a romantic longing, chivalric ideal brought forth two celebrated tropes – the pursuit of the Holy Grail and the cult of courtly love. Unlike other medieval paradigms of travel examined thus far that did not leave too many travel descriptions behind despite their being wide-spread, chivalric pursuits, in contrast, were more often literary than literal.⁵⁵ Yet, this is

⁵⁴ For more on the parallels between the Freudian theory of instincts (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*) and the propelling force of pilgrimage see, for example, Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel, *The Ego-Ideal: A Psychoanalytic Essay on the Malady of the Ideal* (London: Free Association Books, 1995) or Denise Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.)

⁵⁵ It can be argued, perhaps, that the chivalric quest as a medieval forebear of Romanticism anticipated some of its figures and themes: separation from and longing for the inaccessible beloved one, emphasis on honor and valor, lofty idealism, mysticism, fascination with the exotic far-away places, solitary wandering, etc. The very term derives from the popular medieval genre of *romances*, novels in verse written in the vernacular *Romance* languages, rather than in Latin. Although a more thorough exploration of this subject is obviously beyond the scope of this paper, the point remains to be made –

exactly what marks their importance for the current discussion. On the one hand, chivalric mythology recycles most of the familiar concepts – e.g. self-discovery through the pursuit of an ideal, esoteric knowledge required to reach one’s destination, redemption from sin, etc. The necessary challenge associated with the pilgrim’s or crusader’s quest is sublimated through chivalry’s own stock themes: frustrated love on a distance to an inaccessible woman (usually a married one), or pursuit of a mysterious Grail, the exact nature and location of which vary from one chivalric *roman* to another. On the other hand, by substituting religious motives for romantic or mystical ones, the chivalric paradigm introduces reflexive protagonists into the narrative and weaves the plot around human interaction or conflict that manifestly sets apart these lay cultural productions from the competing clerical appropriations. It would be anachronistic to talk about this divide in terms of secular writing versus religious exegesis. At the same time, the focus on romantic emotions (whether or not those were allegorical expressions of religious impulses is secondary) inevitably moved the protagonist to the experiential center of the narrative and marked the shift towards a more open-ended and diverse cultural discourse.

Another important legacy of the crusades is the spread of missions; their essentially pragmatic orientation arguably signaling the crisis of traditional religious models of travel. By the time of the Fourth Crusade the idealistic dimension of the crusades was almost lost to the political and military ineptness. The missionaries shared with pilgrimages and crusades the initial religious objective, albeit articulated in rational, not allegorical terms. Unlike pilgrimage, proselytizing obviously implied

the difference between the chivalric mythology and other medieval paradigms discussed above is in the scale of diverse cultural productions that it generated, and was generated by, including the formation of new literary genres and forms – e.g. the ballads of Provençal troubadours, biographies of poets (Villon’s or Marlowe’s among the most famous ones) sagas, etc. Heavily influenced by medieval hagiography, this writing can be considered proto-Romantic inasmuch as its preoccupation with the human subject plays up the relationship between writing and self-fashioning, which is Romanticism’s critical interest.

contact with the local population and missionaries devoted much energy and resources to the ethnographic study of their potential congregation, which made them invaluable information-gatherers for a variety of purposes – historiography, diplomacy, colonial exploration, and even espionage.⁵⁶ Successful evangelizing required rhetorical and theological sophistication, an intimate knowledge of other religious systems in order to challenge them. Since the core mysteries of Christianity (the Incarnation, the Holy Ghost, etc.) could not be demonstrated visually, the search for tenable arguments in support of Christian dogmas was among the key factors behind the development of a rationalistic streak within Christian theology. Thus, the two critical aspects of evangelical travel - the dialogical engagement with the non-Christians and the advance of new forms of knowledge based on empirical observation and ethnographic inquisitiveness - position it outside of the traditional religious paradigm discussed previously. One may argue that the oxymoronic merger of essentially irrational theology with rationalism is in itself a sign of deep-seating insecurity and crisis within traditional forms of belief. At the same time, relaxing the valences of the “faith versus reason” dichotomy may also be taken as an articulation of new religious, as well as social and political concerns. These concerns pervaded long-established religious models, such as pilgrimage, and prefigured the emergence of new ideologies of travel under the sign of Empiricism.⁵⁷

Earlier I have traced the archetypes of Christian religious and ethnographic journeys to the Greco-Roman Antiquity with its coexisting cultures of allegorical idealism and scientific skepticism. We have seen so far that the metaphorical language of pilgrimage inherited from the Greeks proved more attuned to Christian religious consciousness than the pragmatic ratio of ethnography. To be sure, the history of

⁵⁶ Elsener and Rubies, eds., *Voyages and Visions*, 32.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 33.

medieval travel is not exhausted by religiously inspired visits to the tombs of famous saints, veneration of relics, or the armed *peregrinatio* of the crusaders. Following the foundation of first universities in the twelfth century (Paris, Bologna) the flow of students and academics to and from the centers of learning considerably added to the volume of European migrations and inter-cultural exchange. Merchants, pirates, ambassadors, or scholars undertook their journeys propelled by a variety of reasons, ranging from sheer curiosity, to business necessity and leisure. Their “secular” concerns notwithstanding one hesitates to define these travels within the ethnographic paradigm bent on empirical observation and narrative truthfulness. The literature of these journeys that we possess demonstrates pervasive influence of the traditional religious framework on the narrative structure of the travelogue. Within this framework, the actualities of travel are recounted *ad hoc*, imbued with allegorical meaning beyond their immediacy and tangibility for both the author and the reader. The author’s presence within the narrative is minimal, the uniqueness of his (as it is mostly a *he*) personal experience, the distinctiveness of his voice overwhelmed by customary references to the authority of earlier travelers and the religious assumptions of the day.

The rise of naturalistic and ethnographic paradigms

The ultimate relocation of the ethnographic paradigm from the idealism of pilgrimage to the rational pragmatism of scientific or ethnographic pursuits does not start until the fourteenth century and is closely connected to the rise of Empiricism. The process, however, is more gradual than can be shown within the limited scope of this chapter and it is not complete until the development of experimental and observational

methodologies in the natural sciences in the late sixteenth century.⁵⁸ The failed crusades, plagues, and the papal schism of 1378-1410 inaugurated a period of economic and military crisis that undermined traditional authorities and required a new vantage point, from which religious vision could be recaptured and solidified. The universalist premise of Empiricism that privileged observable evidence over the essentially elitist written text proved to be a viable solution. A particular heritage of the late Middle Ages, the ideal of universal transcendental truth accessible to everybody through an unmediated personal experience was at the root of what Elsner and Rubies define as the ‘Ethnographic and Naturalistic’ paradigm of travel, of which missionary travel is an early example.

Marco Polo’s Il Milione (c. 1298)

Known in English as *The Travels of Marco Polo* or *The Description of the World*, Marco Polo’s *Il Milione* is the key text that denotes the transition to this new outlook. A merchant and an occasional diplomatic envoy, Polo was helped by a ghostwriter, Rustichello di Pisa, who imbued the text with the entertaining quality of chivalric *roman*. However, the shared stylistics and the preface from Rustichello’s earlier work borrowed for *Il Milione* exhaust the similarity between the figurative tradition of Arthurian novel and Polo’s straightforward “realism.” A classical books of marvels, *Il Milione* moves beyond Herodotian tales of unseen lands and dog-headed creatures, beyond the mystical enchanted castles and fire-breathing dragons of the knightly roman, to entertain and educate the reader about the specific realities of far-away places.⁵⁹ It is exactly Polo’s preoccupation with the *natural* and *man-made* marvels of

⁵⁸ See Chapter 1 in Barbara Stafford, *Voyage Into Substance: Art, Science, Nature, and the Illustrated Travel Account, 1760-1840* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984).

the foreign lands described in ample “realistic” detail that distinguishes his account from traditional devotional journey. For Polo and his successors, ethnographic curiosity (typically combined with mercantile or political objectives) is a sufficient inducement for travel; it no longer needs to be legitimized by and expressed through the tropes of allegorical idealism. Corollary to this, the trustworthiness of the traveler increasingly depends on the reliability of knowledge conveyed, not on the moral or mystical permutations that structure his or her experience. Thus, the significance of Polo’s travel writing is that by using popular vernacular (the most customary form of Italianate French) and conventions of entertaining literary genres, it pushed the frontiers of the known for Europe’s lay audiences and presented a compelling model for future travelers and writers, most famously, for Columbus himself.

The empirical content of Polo’s account is certainly far from being entirely accurate, although it is quite remarkable in its scope. It is also frequently exposed as an archetype of European ethnocentrism that anticipates much of the later day perceptions of indigenous peoples as backward and inferior.⁶⁰ For all his adventurousness and curiosity, Marco Polo is essentially a medieval traveler who never goes beyond the safely predetermined Christian worldview and the scientific knowledge of his day and age, using them as primary foils against which he examines

⁵⁹ Later day critics and scholars raised doubts concerning Polo’s travels to *Cathay* – China, based on the paradoxical omission of what most would consider the stock curiosities of Chinese culture from his account. Polo makes no mention of the Great Wall, calligraphy, porcelain, rice paper, chopsticks, tea, etc. Only few of the supposedly Chinese personal names mentioned in *Il Milione* are plausibly Chinese. Neither is Marco himself (nor his brother Maffeo,) mentioned in either of China’s otherwise very dense chronicles. It made some historians suggest that a large part of Polo’s tales was based not on the first-hand experience but on hearsay. See, for example, Francis Wood, *Did Marco Polo Go To China?* (London: Westview Press, 1995) or David Henige, “Ventriloquists and Wandering Truths”, *Studies in Travel Writing*, no.2 (Spring 1998),164-180.

⁶⁰ The much quoted passage from Polo’s encounters with the dark-skinned people of Zanzibar is usually read as the most characteristic expression of his aggressive prejudices: “Their eyes and lips,” he says of the natives, “are so protuberant that they are a horrible sight. Anyone meeting them in another country would mistake them for devils.” [In *The Travels of Marco Polo*, trans. Terese Waugh (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1984), 175] See, for example, Frederick Turner, *Beyond Geography* (New York: Viking, 1980); Casey Blanton, *Travel Writing: The Self and The World* (New York, London: Routledge: 2002), 7-9, etc.

whatever strange and peculiar that he observes during his trips. There is yet no trace in Polo's narrative of the ideological naturalism and determined subjectivity that would be pivotal for later ethnographic accounts. The authorial "I" is overwhelmed by an array of both personal and borrowed observations, their credibility never fully established. The text itself is a disparate assemblage of derivative versions, more than 150 in all, which complicates both its literary and historical analysis. Indeed, *Il Milione* is an apt illustration to the problem of disciplinary anchorage and factual validity of travel literature flagged out in the beginning of this chapter. Despite its being by far the most detailed western account of demographic and social realities of China under the Mongols, contemporary scholars wishing to make use of Polo's work are frustrated by the text's complicated (co-) authorship and its numerous "anomalies" (see 59ff.) By virtue of his earlier literary career Rustichello's claims for competence are sustained not by the assumed precision of his account, but rather by his artistic inventiveness and the ability to disguise creative writing as fact in order to impress his readers. More to the point, the very criteria of empirical validity need to be historicized as they are intimately connected to the cultural and socio-historical imperatives of the time that governed production and reception of travel accounts. In this respect, if we are to assume that Polo did spend 17 years in China, the "curiosities" that he observed and recorded and those that he failed to notice and report, as well as the narrative forms that Rustichello uses to emplot Polo's recollections, are equally context-bound and context-revealing. Although *Il Milione* is a path-breaking travel narrative in that it does not draw from any earlier models (for lack of such) and in its rejection of allegory for the sake of ethnographical "realism," it would be anachronistic to credit Polo with the rational pursuit of empirical precision that we expect from the ethnographic studies of the post-Baconian and Lockeian era.

Polo's desire to entertain and amuse clearly prevails over both scruples of accuracy or urge to distinguish one's own observations from those of the others, let alone that the conventions of empirical validity in their contemporary meaning do not form until three hundred years later.

It is important to stress that although Polo's travelogue epitomizes the departure of the exploratory travel and its retelling from traditional religious ideologies, it does not purport to the complete breakdown of pilgrimage model. Rather, one could speak about its transformation and diversification under the impact of new scientific ideals, which were eventually to triumph over the dominant ecclesiastical discourse. The expansion of geographical and technical knowledge and the successive crises of Latin Christianity that would culminate in the Reformation catalyzed each other to inform late medieval and early Renaissance cultural productions. To explore the symbiosis of traditional idealistic objectives with the worldly thrill of experiencing the strange and the exotic, one could consider pilgrimage accounts from the fourteenth century on, which reveal ethnographic curiosity extending well beyond the hallowed cities of Rome or Jerusalem into the far reaches of the known world – Cairo, India, Mecca, etc. Similar transition towards a more realistic and human interpretation of travel characterizes chivalric novel of the period. Precise historical and geographical descriptions which adorn the plot, references to actual historical figures, and most importantly, increasing emphasis on the psychology of protagonists signal the waning of allegory as the organizing principle of chivalric narratives and the shift towards a more psychologically and empirically credible use of the topos of travel by the chivalric genre.

Demise of religious paradigm: early modern travel writing

The gradual re-orientation of both literal and literary journeys from the metaphorical quest towards a rational evangelical, scientific or commercial pursuit, from edifying allegory towards systematic empiricism that started in the fourteenth century, was reinforced by the Humanist assault on pilgrimage. With a typical anticlerical and educational pathos meant to establish the supremacy of learning (in its classical form) over the ritualistic practices of the Church, Humanist thinkers, from Erasmus to Rabelais, derided idle pilgrims who waste their time venerating relics, instead of putting their minds to the study of scriptures.⁶¹ In place of hollow idolatry of pilgrimage, Humanism put forward an agenda both pragmatic and idealistic that combined rational emphasis on educational objectives of travel with the belief in its transformative moral effects. Propped up by the nascent literary archetypes of classical Antiquity (of which the *Odyssey* is a case in point) the humanist ideal of travel formulated a new understanding of subjectivity that would determine the nexus between the traveling subject and the world of objects throughout the early modern period and beyond. Travel as a vehicle for education was to remain the dominant cultural model until the nineteenth century, its most lasting manifestation - the aristocratic tradition of the Grand Tour.

Yet the transition towards the early modern period is not exhausted by the advance of rationalism, empiricism and classical learning. Frustrated reformism of the humanists ushered in a powerful ethos of skepticism that, although, could not altogether replace pre-modern idealism and pursuit of marvels, did generate an increasing sense of disenchantment and doubt as to whether these marvels were divinely ordained. Joan-Pau Rubies illustrates the “transformation of the marvelous

⁶¹ See Wes Williams, “Rubbing up against others” in Elsner and Rubies, eds., *Voyages and Visions*, 102.

into the discovery of the futile” in his study of travel writing produced during the Spanish colonization of South America.⁶² The brutal realities of the conquest, the incongruity of the missionary aspirations with the endemic corruption of European colonists, the greed and abuse that stained many an expedition, etc. subverted the providentialist spirit of Conquista. The moribund religious discourse proved powerless to sustain other medieval paradigms of travel as well. Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* (1614), for instance, satirized the chivalric trope of a wandering knight by turning the romantic into the pathetic, and the mystical into the myopic. In a similar vein, Wes Williams reads Montaigne’s *Journal* (1580-1581)⁶³ – a record of his journey to Italy – to argue that Montaigne’s skepticism about the spiritual and didactic purposes of travel as well as his unremitting auto-reflexivity, although narrated within the collocative conventions of pilgrimage record, effectively defy its very ideological premises. Elsner and Rubies conclude that with the demise of Christian mythology, the cultural history of European travel can be represented as a dialectics between the transcendent ideal of traditional religious journey and the essentially open-ended skepticism of modernity, in which the spiritual fulfillment is not at all assured, and neither is the successful completion of one’s voyage.⁶⁴

As the sense of disappointment (or futility) enters into the realm of narrative structure of the early modern travel writing, it articulates the tenets of modernity through the changing objectives and functions of travel. Most of the elements of contemporary travelogue that will concern me in this project – intense self-introspection on the part of the narrator, boredom, misanthropy, frustration, loss of

⁶² Joan-Pau Rubies, “Futility in the New World: Narratives of Travel in Sixteenth-Century America” in Elsner and Rubies, eds., *Voyages and Visions*, 74 – 100.

⁶³ Wes Williams, “Rubbing up against others,” 101-123.

⁶⁴ Elsner and Rubies, eds., *Voyages and Visions*, 5, 45, 49, 55-6.

purpose, off-centeredness, etc. – convey a deep-seating modern nostalgia for the alleged wholeness and authenticity of the pre-modern experience. At stake here is more than the mere musings of disenchanted travelers, but a new understanding of the self, of human association, of the dialectic interplay between the sensual and the cognitive, between the self and the world. Futility and frustration are, perhaps, inevitable effects of the post-medieval consciousness that having lost the innocence of the religious vision is at the same time culturally impelled to auto-reflexivity and self-critique.

We shall shortly see that alternative modes of construing the history of travel and travelogue through the evolution of the authorial voice within its narrative structure highlight the early modern period as a critical juncture in the development of the genre, a change of focus from the observable reality to the reactions of the person seeing it, or rather, an inclusion of the traveler's feelings into the narrative alongside the observational part.⁶⁵ Within the historical outline suggested by Elsner and Rubies, the travel writing of the period is similarly characterized on the one hand, by the ever-increasing use of systematic naturalistic empirical methodologies, and on the other, by the persistent self-reflexivity of the narrator. Still another approach brings together the ontological and epistemological aspects of travel to historicize perception through senses as both constitutive of the traveler's experience/being and as a means of discerning, interpreting and internalizing the timed and spaced character of this experience. In this vein, a persuasive argument has been made by a number of scholars that the shift towards visualization of perception and the concomitant scopophilic bent of different kinds of social and signifying practices (including travel) in the late sixteenth-seventeenth century Europe was bound up with the dominant

⁶⁵ See, for example, Casey Blanton, *Travel Writing: The Self and the World*. (New York: Routledge, 2002), 11-14, etc.

epistemological discourse structured by empiricism.⁶⁶ In the post-Baconian and Lockean Europe, the argument runs, the first-hand ocular observation replaces the authority of text to become the most reliable proof of scientific legitimacy.

Bacon's essay "Of Travel" (1625) prescribed the drawing of sketches of the landscapes visited and the keeping of a detailed diary as necessary prerequisites of a successful (i.e. focused) journey. Bacon's emphasis on the didactic purposes of both rational and sensual engagement with the external world is reiterated in Locke's "Essay Concerning Human Understanding" (1690) that makes an explicit connection between the external stimuli derived from the physical environment and the development of one's intellectual capacities. The prescriptive empiricism(s) of Bacon or Locke, although often contrasted with continental rationalism, have a common origin in Cartesian cogito. Descartes' radical subjectivism that privileged rational deduction over the less reliable perception through senses pertained rather to the "stable truths" of exact sciences and metaphysics, than to the knowledge of natural sciences that required experimental methodology. His was one of the earliest systematic attempts of devising a philosophical grounding for the emergent natural sciences. At the same time, Cartesian dualism of "body" and "reason" affirmed a possibility of self-knowledge, of the inward journey towards an autonomous, observing and reasoning interior self.

Newton's path-breaking *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1687) tied together the axiomatic apparatus of mathematics and the empirically observed findings in a coherent system of verifiable scientific principles.

Systematization, the belief in the existence of objective truth, and the debate over the

⁶⁶ For more on the role of vision in the development of post-Renaissance arts and literature see, for example, Hal Foster (ed.) *Vision and Visuality* (Seattle: The New Press, 1988) especially Martin Jay's "Scopic Regimes of Modernity"; Norman Bryson, *Word and Image: French Painting of the Ancient Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), etc.

possibility of grasping it within the realm of personal experience were to be at the core of Europe's intellectual and scientific discourse in the century following Newton's scientific revolution. The unprecedented scale of geographical explorations that "widened Europe's cultural and geographical horizons" combined with the Enlightenment's confidence in the ultimate capacity of human reason to describe, measure, classify and map the newly discovered human and natural diversity produced a hugely influential paradigm of scientific travel.⁶⁷ By the beginning of the eighteenth century the cultural centrality of travel as vehicle of scientific inquiry, and of travel writers as popular mediators between the scientific pursuits and the lay European readership becomes truly unprecedented.

"Science" and "Sentiment": the Rise of Modern Travel

The eighteenth century is chosen as a point of departure or otherwise highlighted in a few studies of travel writing for yet another reason. Alongside the scientific breakthrough and the rise of empirical philosophy (and to a non small degree as a response to it) a new set of cultural imperatives that takes hold in this period builds on the neoclassical interest in the human nature and its emotional expressions and by the second part of the century lays the groundwork for Romantic subjectivity and cultural relativism. In her study of European colonial exploration of Africa and Latin America in the eighteenth century, Mary Louis Pratt identifies two distinct models of travelogues - the specialized descriptive texts (botanical or zoological classifications, ethnographic observations, etc.) and the ego-centered narratives of travel, increasingly popular from the 1760s on, that treated foreign realities as mere props for the author's self-reflexivity. The authorial "I", either self-consciously effaced or accentuated, sets

⁶⁷ Barbara Stafford, *Voyage Into Substance: Art, Science, Nature, and the Illustrated Travel Account, 1760-1840* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984), 18.

the two kinds of writing distinctly apart. “The experiential un-heroes” of scientific travelogues purposefully absent themselves from their accounts for the sake of impartiality and validity, which are invested into the text through the authority of scientific precision, not through the immediacy of somebody’s lived and felt experience. Sentimental protagonists, in contrast, fashion themselves after the stock characters developed by the so-called survival literature, first person stories of troubles and tribulations befalling a lonely, typically male, voyager – e.g. shipwrecks, captivities, castaways, etc.⁶⁸

The genre that was formed in the 1400s following the first wave of geographical explorations and has remained popular ever since, produced a plethora of low-brow renditions, which need not concern us here. A classical example of survival literature is, of course, Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* that exploits its plot conventions to design a utopian project based on the political and philosophical ideals of the time (Rousseau’s “noble savage,” critique of slavery, juxtaposition of nature vs. society, innocence of pre-modern life vs. corruptions of industrial civilization, etc.) The story line that isolates the survivor on a desert island, among the savages or in the midst of wilderness invites for a monological narrative that collapses outer reality into the inner world of the narrator and makes a point out of self-reflexivity. Beyond its obvious entertaining intent, survival literature in more than one ways is a variety of *Bildungsroman* and, hence, the misery of the protagonist eventually translates into maturation. A far-away dangerous voyage, captivity, a sequence of challenges and tests of the hero’s courage, wisdom and virtue, and a difficult journey home are all, of course, elements of one of the most ancient and persistent of literary plots, the proto-structure of which can be traced to folklore and mythology of most world cultures.

⁶⁸ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), especially chapters 3, 4 and 5.

Vladimir Propp's classical study in morphology of fairy tales examines this pattern in countless narratives and variations: venture – dangerous exploits – the learning of lesson/reward – return home; and I have previously flagged it in the stories of travel from Antiquity's *Odyssey*, to medieval pilgrimages, crusades, and chivalric quests.⁶⁹ As I hope to suggest further in this work, however, the linearity and the redemptive closure of this narrative - e.g. moral or intellectual metamorphosis of the protagonist and his/her confidence in eventual return – are broken down in most modernist travel writing (not so with tourism, on which more later) as moral lessons are relativized or rendered ambivalent at best, and the homecoming not infrequently is either unwanted or altogether impossible.

The two paradigms of travel writing discussed by Pratt and the discourses of science and sentiment that engendered them are, of course, as much complimentary as they are typically juxtaposed, for they encode different aspects of the cultural values and sensibilities upheld by Europe's emerging urban mass societies of the time. The pragmatic, analytical language of scientific travelogue embodies the impersonal bureaucratic machinery and ultimately, argues Pratt, betrays Europe's expansionist ambitions mediated through the classificatory apparatuses of natural science. The experiential narrators of the other type of travelogues and the highly figurative and idiosyncratic language that they employ point toward the private sphere –“home of desire, sex, spirituality, and the Individual.”⁷⁰ This sentimentalist narrative with its self-dramatizing hero stands, however, not for domesticity *per se*, but rather for the spirit of individualism, commerce and private enterprise that, too, are integral to Europe's colonizing efforts in Africa, Asia and South America. Submissiveness, passivity, vulnerability, and endurance that are the themes of survival literature and

⁶⁹ Vladimir Propp, *Morfologija skazki* (Morphology of the folktale). Leningrad: “Academia”, 1928.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 78.

that were taken over by sentimentalist narratives of colonial expeditions in the new world, helped sanitize European conquest by downplaying its aggressive, interventionist side and amplifying the dangers and perils haunting the innocent explorer in a colonial frontier zone.

One may take an issue with Pratt's disproportionate reliance on Foucault and with her highly jargonized ("politically correct") vocabulary, ironically, not dissimilar from the Euro-centric "highly generalized literary conventions" that she accuses of having produced and "othered" the colonial subject. The overuse of homonymic constructions like "seen/scene," "eye/I," "site/sight," etc. and the usual repertoire of *discourse*, *gaze*, or *hegemony* breed self-referentiality of the sort that she herself is eager to expose in the colonial travel writing. Nevertheless, Pratt's study challenges one to critically rethink the interplay between politics and poetics in travel writing, as it shows the historically bound modes of creative, literary expression to be heavily enmeshed in ideological contexts of the day, where *ideology* is broadly taken to encompass political, cultural and scientific forms of collective self-understanding and self-representation.

The ideological dimension of *Imperial Eyes* is reiterated in Larry Wolff's well-known study, which develops a Saidian argument about the "imaginative geography" of Enlightenment travel to the eastern part of Europe as an important source of Euro-centric knowledge about the "backward" and "semi-Enlightened" peoples of the east. According to Wolff, the discourse about the region structured by the sizable body of travel accounts written at the time introduces the division into west and east (instead of the earlier north vs. south division) and ultimately "invents" eastern part of Europe as a homogeneous entity, a buffer zone between the civilized west and the Asiatic

barbarity.⁷¹ Although Wolff can be criticized for anachronistically projecting contemporary divisions onto the eighteenth century and selecting his sources accordingly, his work is an important illustration to the multiple arenas on which European travel writing was generating perceptions, meanings and attitudes about “the rest of the world” and mapping them concentrically in dialectical opposition to the “center.”

The juxtaposition of center versus periphery is certainly one of the key tropes of modern travel writing and will be pivotal for the subsequent discussion. Critical (political) deconstructions of travelogues as discursive occurrences, and semiotic analysis of travel writing as a complex symbolic system alike interrogate this dichotomy to identify its structural and ideological connotations, and the interconnectedness of the two. Roland Barthes reflects on the importance of “centeredness” for Western metaphysics in his seminal (anti)travel book *Empire of Signs* as he compares the striking emptiness of the emperor’s palace in Tokyo with the city centers in Europe, “which are always *full*,” for in the West the center is a symbolic “site of truth.”⁷² The binary of central/peripheral is found to be variously expressed through other pairs of totalizing opposites: Western/Oriental, modern/traditional, sacred/profane, historical/a-historical, developed/backward, urban/rural, civilized/barbaric, rational/spontaneous, synthetic/authentic, mechanical/organic, etc.⁷³ The moment of travel, of bridging the two halves, fixes

⁷¹ Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford University Press 1994) and “Voltaire’s Public and the Idea of Eastern Europe: Toward a Literary Sociology of Continental Division”, *Slavic Review* 54 (1995): 932-942.

⁷² Roland Barthes, *Empire of Signs* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1982), 30.

⁷³ As I argue further in this work, Russian travel writing shows that cohesive symbolic geography implied by these dichotomies is made more complex by the country’s own ambivalent position of a non-Western empire that figures prominently as a “half-Asiatic” “barbarian” object of several orientaling discourses produced in the western part of the continent (and more recently, in Central Europe.) At the same time, it has itself produced multiple “peripheries,” each imbued with specific

their otherwise unstable meaning and produces a holistic hierarchical geography, which is navigated by broader societal, historical and cultural exigencies, as we have earlier seen, for example, with the crusaders' efforts to re-conquer Jerusalem as a symbolic nub of the Christian world. The same mechanism, which is at work in travel outside of Europe, can also be found in the famed Grand Tour. What colonial explorations and the writing they occasioned are to Europe's construction of the periphery(ies), the Grand Tour is to the affirmation of Europe (its particular regions and sites) as culturally and historically cohesive center. Both the centripetal and centrifugal travel vectors point from within at the contours of European modern identity, which is asserted through encounters with the "Other", and against Europe's own pre-modern past.

Modernity's "Other," is of course, a vast subject in and of itself that will keep resurfacing in the remainder of this work. The apparent contradictions in the diverse constructions of "otherness" reflect ambiguities of modernity's concepts of itself, just as they do the diversity of idiosyncratic encounters in the contact zones of European travel within and outside of the continent. Hayden White implies this very heterogeneity of motives when he describes post-Renaissance European fetishizing of "the natives" as simultaneously savage and noble, "as monstrous forms of humanity and quintessential objects of desire."⁷⁴ This heady mixture of fascination, repulsion, sexual desire, curiosity, disdain, etc. towards the encountered *difference* fuels seemingly incompatible impulses towards the "native" people: to enlighten or to

functions and symbolisms (Caucasus, Siberia, the Baltic states, etc.) that do not lend themselves as easily to the neat reading of "peripheral-ness" as inferiority and backwardness. For more on the subject see the discussion "Extempore: Orientalism and Russia," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 1 (2002): 691-728, that includes articles by Adeeb Khalid, "Russian History and the Debate over Orientalism"; Nathaniel Knight, "On Russian Orientalism. A Response to Adeeb Khalid"; and Maria Todorova's "Does Russian Orientalism Have a Russian Soul? A Contribution to the Debate between Nathaniel Knight and Adeeb Khalid." Further references in Chapter 4 of this work.

⁷⁴ Hayden White, "The Noble Savage as Fetish," in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978), 194.

exterminate, to possess and/or to imitate, which percolate into numerous travel accounts forming a solid set of topoi. Moreover, the “natives” need not to be exotic aboriginals: for an inter-continental aristocratic traveler on a “picturesque tour” European peasantry represents the lost innocence of the pre-industrial world allegedly devoid of self-awareness, self-criticism and calculation.

The Grand Tour

There is, as Dennis Porter has convincingly argued, a relationship of complementarity between the eighteenth century “voyages of global circumnavigation that mapped and described unknown lands and people” and the tradition of the Grand Tour that, too, represented a journey undertaken “to the center of a self-confident cultural tradition for the purpose of self-cultivation and reaffirmation of the common civilized heritage.”⁷⁵ The practice of sending young sons of aristocracy and wealthy gentry abroad on an extensive educational journey first appeared in Britain in the seventeenth century. Its immediate cultural antecedents were the earlier practices of *peregrinatio academica* and the *Kavelierstour*. The Tour that could last from several months to several years commonly included a sojourn in the biggest European cities, such as Paris, Geneva, Vienna, a study in one of the German universities, and extensive travel across Italy and sometimes Greece. The itinerary, that obviously varied depending on the wealth and proclivities of the young traveler, nevertheless reflected the main objectives of the Grand Tour, which by way of the cross-cultural intermingling was meant to impart on the young members of the elite a veneer of cosmopolitan wordliness and courtly sophistication. In his *Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* Laurence Sterne deftly summarized the purpose of such journey as follows:

⁷⁵ Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 19.

...to learn the languages, the laws and customs, and understand the governments and interest of other nations, - to acquire an urbanity and confidence of behavior, and fit the mind more easily for conversation and discourse;...by showing us new objects, or old ones in new lights, to reform our judgments – by tasting perpetually the varieties of nature, to know what is *good* –and by observing the address and arts of man to conceive what is *sincere* – and by seeing the difference of so many various humors and manners – to look into ourselves and form our own.⁷⁶

As a prerogative of the social elite (up until the mid-eighteenth century, when the practice began to be increasingly adopted by the families of lesser social standing) and a form of travel explicitly geared towards education and the acquisition of cultural capital, the Grand Tour had served as a true “rite of passage” for the off-springs of powerful families in Britain and increasingly elsewhere in Northern Europe, thereby embodying the idea of travel as an attribute of social status, a prerequisite for social mobility and an instrument in social reproduction.⁷⁷

For the young noblemen on Tour the appeal of Europe’s great capitals laid in the fashions and manners of the high society, a chance to master a foreign language, and to forge important political and commercial contacts. Exposure to the cultural artifacts of antiquity and the Renaissance, of which the primary scene was Italy, reflected the period’s heightened interest in Classicism as a moral, educational and aesthetic ideal. The Grand Tour has inherited from the centuries of religious pilgrimage the well-established “infrastructure” of coaches, routes, hostels, and professional guides as well as the map of destinations.⁷⁸ Although the shrines and religious objects earlier venerated by the pilgrims have lost much of their religious significance in the more secular day and age, the young Protestant nobles on tour did

⁷⁶ Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (London: Penguin Classics, 2005), 12-13.

⁷⁷ Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys*, 35.

⁷⁸ For more on that, see Judith Adler, “Travel as Performed Art”, *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 94, No. 6. (May, 1989): 1366-1391.

visit them, albeit more out of curiosity and a desire to debunk the superstitions associated with them. In this sense, the Grand Tour can be considered to be the earliest expression of secular sightseeing and we shall return to some of its structural and ideological features in the discussion of modern mass tourism.

Collecting, rather than worship sustained the touring nobles' quest for marvels, spurred by the fashion for "curiosity cabinets" in the seventeenth-eighteenth century Europe⁷⁹ Young gentlemen of the post-reformation Britain traveling across Italy and taking pleasure in the famed art collections in the Flanders and Holland took an avid interest in acquiring some of the artworks for the private collections and galleries at home. As Edward Chaney has convincingly argued in his thorough study of the Anglo-Italian cultural relations since the sixteenth century, the Grand Tour had had a pivotal role in the appearance of the phenomenon of art connoisseurs on the one hand, and the professionalization of art dealing on the other.⁸⁰

The importance of Italy as a pan-ultimate destination of the Grand Tour suggests that the intellectual self-improvement of the young traveler was necessarily complemented by the aesthetical refinement. The knowledge acquired through the mastery of foreign languages, university study, instructions of the knowledgeable guides and interactions with fellow travelers fulfilled the Humanist idea of travel for education. However, whereas the Renaissance aristocratic travelers went abroad exclusively for "discourse": "conversing with eminent men, assimilating classical

⁷⁹ Margaret Hodgen, "Collections of Customs: Modes of Classification and Description" in *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964); James Bunn, "The Aesthetics of British Mercantilism", *New Literary History* (1980)11:303-22; Barbara Shapiro, "History and Natural History in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England: An Essay on the Relationship between Humanism and Science", in Barbara Shapiro and Robert Frank, eds., *English Scientific Virtuosi in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, 1979), 3-55, etc.

⁸⁰ Edward Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour: Anglo-Italian Cultural Relations since the Renaissance* (London. Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1998), 203-214.

texts appropriate to particular sites, and not least, speaking eloquently upon [their] return”, the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries saw an explicit shift towards the primacy of objective and accurate vision, of an “eye” over the hearsay and authority of the text.⁸¹ This post-Baconian and post-Lockian visualization of perception that grew out of the newly developing empirical experimental methodologies in the natural sciences not only rendered the Grand Tour a mode of didactic, investigative travel, but also introduced the aesthetical into the economy of looking that by the turn of the nineteenth century and the outset of Romanticism would become the key element in the art of travel.

As we have seen earlier, the tradition of pilgrimage and the broad economic and social infrastructure that facilitated incessant peregrinations of the masses of people across the continent have been detrimental in mapping Christendom as a shared religious, cultural and political domain. The emergence of the Grand Tour coincides with the rise of European consciousness and a growing interest in foreign cultures and societies. The European space that emerges through the travel notes of the Grand Tourists contains its center(s) and periphery (ies) and is mapped by diverse political ideologies. The critical philosophy of Enlightenment directed the travelers’ search of the forms of political and social organization most conducive to the human welfare. Curiosity, that had been considered a vice by the medieval pilgrims, was now the chief virtue of a traveler in the pursuit of objective truth.⁸² No longer restricted by the traditional Christian outlook that dismissed the mundane and the worldly as corrupt and inappropriate, the travelers who took on the road in the seventeenth-

⁸¹ Judith Adler, “Origins of Sightseeing,” *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 16, no.1 (1989): 8; John Frow, “Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia”, *October*, Vol. 57. (Summer, 1991): 123-151, 142-143.

⁸² Judith Adler, “Travel as Performed Art” *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 94, No. 6. (May, 1989): 1366-1391,1374; Donald B. Howard, *Writers and Pilgrims: Medieval Pilgrimage Narratives and Their Posterity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), 23.

eighteenth centuries concerned themselves with the concrete features of the foreign lands they visited, from the political organization to the most trivial details of the everyday customs and mores. The keeping of a travel diary, sometimes in a form of fictive dated letters becomes a regular way of recording one's travel impressions while maintaining their focus and immediacy.⁸³ Common letter-writing is also closely associated with the Grand Tour, since the young aristocratic travelers usually depended on the financial resources of their parents and had to solicit continuing financial support of their families by reassuring them that they did not fail the expectations of the family by neglecting the educational purposes of their journey. Both the travel diaries and the extensive correspondence inspired by the Grand Tour helped to establish travel not only as a subject worth writing about but the one immensely *en vogue* with the audiences. In order for travel notes to become a recognized literary genre in western Europe, it took the attention of most of the prominent cultural and intellectual personae of the period, from Addison, Swift, Defoe, Pope, Boswell and Sterne to Montesquieu, Diderot and Voltaire, to name just a few. As we shall see in the next chapter, the translation and dissemination of the works of Sterne, Dupaty and Smollett in Russia were indispensable to the immense popularity of the genre in the country in the eighteenth century and beyond. To all these writers and thinkers travel, real or imagined, offered a critical outlet for the political, social and philosophical commentary, a way to obfuscate the overt referentiality behind the smokescreen of allegory and imagination.⁸⁴

⁸³ John Frow, "Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia", 143.

⁸⁴ A 1770 essay on travel literature emphasizes the co-existence of the functional and entertaining aspects in the narrative, a marker of its acceptance as a literary genre: "A travel book in which the subjects are of general importance and adequately presented is one of the most interesting and informing literary products. In such a book you recognize the well-balanced mixture of *utile* and *dulce*; it entertains and stimulates fantasy without having to take refuge in a novel like fiction; its presents to us a plethora of useful information without the boredom of a systematic treaty." Quoted in Hagen

The two models of travelogue identified by Mary Louis Pratt, mentioned earlier - the specialized descriptive texts and the ego-centered narratives of travel, reflect a precarious balance between science and sentiment that is at the core of the eighteenth century's cultural and philosophical matrix. Parenthetically, the narrators' propensity to self-examination and heightened reflexivity typical of the later travel journals of the Grand Tour (i.e. James Boswell's 1760s *Journals*) is not only an offshoot of the eighteenth century discourse of the sensitive self, but a product of the Protestant confessional ethos of self-examination and self-accounting. While Sterne's sentimental traveler Yorick proclaimed "receptivity to feelings" to be the ultimate objective of travel and travel writing, others like Smollett and Dupaty, were more concerned with the discovery and description of others, rather than with the display and examination of one's own sensitive self. Instead of contrasting the two approaches I shall emphasize the entanglement between the self and the world that for the first time becomes the concern of the traveler-cum-writer during the period under consideration. The emergence of the narrative consciousness that reflects on the difference between the traveler in the narrative and the teller of the tale is not a mere function of the contradictory impulses and passions that prompted the adventures of the explorers, Grand "Tourists" and the like – e.g. curiosity, personal enlightenment, emancipation, emotional and aesthetical refinement, hedonism, pursuit of sexual pleasures, etc. that the travelers felt compelled to ponder.⁸⁵ Such medley of interests and pursuits underlies most journeys, but the Grand Tour's lofty program of self-improvement made accounting of one's own failures and moral shortcomings especially pressing. More importantly, the traveler's preoccupation with the self

Schulz-Forberg, *London -Berlin: Authenticity, Modernity, and the Metropolis in Urban Travel Writing from 1851 to 1939* (Brussels, Belgium ; New York : P.I.E.-P. Lang, 2006), 93.

⁸⁵ See Chloe Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour: Travel Writing and Imaginative Geography, 1600-1830* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999.)

attests to the birth of travelogue as a *literary* genre, alongside confessional autobiographical writing, epistolary novel, and other narrative forms of which the traveling authors are increasingly aware.

Romanticism

The cultural self-doubt that surfaces in some of the best examples of the eighteenth century travel writing and that challenges the Enlightenment belief in Europe as an apex of progress and civilization is certainly a marker of the profound influence of Rousseaudian critical thinking. But it is also a reaction to the muddle and confusion of the massive colonial conquests that engaged the leading European powers at the time. Romanticism was the first cultural discourse to build a comprehensive philosophical and aesthetic system on modernity's disenchanted self-reflexivity and to reject the rationalism of Enlightenment in the name of Feeling. By the end of the eighteenth century the classical ideal of travel for education that inspired the Grand Tour came to be increasingly challenged by the professionalization of scientific travel on the one hand, and on the other by the mounting critique of the Grand Tour as too unadventurous, stale and ineffective.⁸⁶ At the same time, although the tradition gradually came to encompass members of the emerging wealthy bourgeoisie and even women, it continued to stir lively public exchange as to the usefulness and appropriateness of travel as such. Continuing European expansion brought in its wake the rise of systematic natural and social sciences, which in turn led to the spread of scientific expeditions, the most famous of which are Alexander von Humboldt's travels in America (1814-19) and Charles Darwin's famed voyage of the Beagle around the globe (1831-36), etc. The information-gathering focus of the erudite travel

⁸⁶ Michael T. Bravo, "Precision and Curiosity in Scientific Travel: James Rennell and the Orientalist Geography of the New Imperial Age (1760-1830)" in Elsner and Rubies, eds., *Voyages and Visions*, 167.

notes *a la* Smollett, Diderot, Gibbon or Young did not disappear altogether and later generations of travel authors (a much-traveled highly educated polyglot Richard Burton being a perfect example) often competed with the professional scholars in the range and scope of their knowledge.⁸⁷ However, in the relationship between the self and the world within the late eighteenth-century travel narrative self-reflection starts to play an increasingly central role and so does the preoccupation with the emotional and sensual intensity and evocativeness of the traveling experience that are typical of Boswell and Sterne. By the outset of the romantic period, travel is increasingly conceived of as a matter of self-discovery and auto-reflexivity just as well as the discovery of others.⁸⁸

The emerging romantic sensibility was anticipated by the ideology of the picturesque, the popularity of which in the 1780s Britain had led to the spread of “the picturesque tours” that directly challenged the tradition of the Grand Tour. It added another dimension to the travel experience traditionally understood through its educational or moral objectives – that of aesthetical pleasure. Emerging in the wake of the industrial revolution, the fashion for the picturesque and the veneration of the “wild” nature and the yet untouched countryside was clearly a reaction to the growth of industrial city. As an aesthetic ideal, it traveled from the works of Kant, Hegel and Schiller who laid the groundwork for modern philosophy of art with the concepts of “aesthetic experience,” and “symbol” to the academies of painting and aristocratic salons that developed the concept of a landscape, of nature as spectacle. Edmund Burke’s discussion of the “sublime” in his 1757 *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin*

⁸⁷ In *Orientalism* Edward Said argues that Richard Barton: “seems to have taken a special sort of infantile pleasure in demonstrating that he knew more than any professional scholar, that he had acquired many more details than they had, that he could handle the material with more wit and tact and freshness than they.” Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York; Vintage, 1978), 194.

⁸⁸ Casey Blanton, *Travel Writing: The Self and the World*, 14-17.

of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful put forward a new ideology for the pursuits of a solitary traveler. The term “picturesque” was first introduced by Reverend William Gilpin in his 1748 “Dialogue upon the Gardens ...at Stowe” and his later work *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape: with a Poem on Landscape Painting* (1792). In it Gilpin described the gratification of sightseeing that thrills and overwhelms the receptive traveler with the “high delight” of natural beauty “beyond the power of thought.”⁸⁹ Instead of the classical ruins and sites of antiquity the picturesque “tourists” sought out the irregular, natural and wild, be it rural landscapes, or bucolic scenes involving peasants that defied the classical canons of beauty. Picturesque travel outside of the conventional itineraries of the Grand Tour promoted the quest for the “pure gaze” at the tableau of the world and the pleasure thereof as a self-contained travel agenda.

It bears repeating, however, that although the history of travel ideologies and practices discussed here is extrapolated upon a linear historical progression, it would be erroneous to conceive of diverse travel paradigms, ideologies and styles as independent of each other, that appear, flourish and wane away without a trace only to be succeeded by new forms and practices. Rather, to quote Judith Adler, the history of travel is best presented as a history of “coexisting and competitive, as well as blossoming, declining, and recurring, styles whose temporal boundaries inevitably blur.”⁹⁰ My interest here is the moments of transition and discursive change that highlight the ruptures and continuities between diverse and often coexisting and reemerging styles of travel. Gilpin’s reflections on the value of picturesque travel that focuses on the emotional, irrational receptivity of the aroused individual psyche to the particular kinds of natural scenes or “pictures” would certainly be recognized today as

⁸⁹ Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys*, 125-6.

⁹⁰ Judith Adler, “Travel as Performed Art”, 1372.

typical of the cultural discourse of Romanticism. The self-congratulating subjectivity of Romanticism had been prefigured by the self-absorbed Sentimentalist narrator preoccupied with the accumulation of visual and sensual experiences through travel. A closer look at the Romantic conception of travel reveals other imports and influences as well.

In the realm of arts, and especially poetry, Romanticism generated a well known repertoire of themes and characters: e.g. romantic love and death being necessarily tragic and heroic; the relationship with the unenlightened, uncomprehending, and often hostile mob as an indispensable, but redeeming mission of the poet's art, flight from repressive authority, rebellion, wanderlust, etc. In an attempt to blur the boundaries between the man-made, simulated art and non-artistic reality, between art and its creator, Romanticism set out to poeticize life, only to produce a romantic legend of a Poet: a solitary prophet, a dissenter, an unrequited lover who suffers from the disproportion between his desires and abilities and the restricting circumstances.⁹¹ As I have mentioned in passing in the earlier discussion of chivalric quest, Romanticism had inherited its major themes - quest, exile, and impossible love - from the medieval Christian romance. Hegel famously argued that Romanticism is continuous with Christianity inasmuch as it, too, regards the essence of human condition as the infinite imprisoned within the finite.⁹² The fruitless pursuits of the romantic ego that "leaves for leaving's sake" to recall Baudelaire's famous lines, enfold within the same conceptual context, albeit secularized, as the longings of medieval pilgrims and hermits. The destination for a restless romantic is

⁹¹ Svetlana Boym, *Death in Quotation Marks: Cultural Myths of the Modern Poet* (Cambridge Mass.. London: Harvard University Press, 1991),

⁹² John Durham Peters, "Exile, Nomadism, and Diaspora: The Stakes of Mobility in the Western Canon" in Hamid Naficy, ed., *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place* (London and New York: Routledge/AFI Film Readers, 1999), 17-37, 29.

hardly ever attainable not because of its geographical, spatial remoteness, but because it increasingly symbolizes a search for the absolute, a political or aesthetical utopia located elsewhere or, as in the nascent ideologies of European “organic” nationalisms, in the homeland’s glorious (pre-modern) past. “With the disappearance of God,” argues John Durham Peters in his discussion of romantic figurations of displacement and wondering, “a central fact that romanticism confronts and contributes to, many romantics start to look more anxiously for homelands on earth”, an ontological yearning that found practical expression with the rise of European nationalisms.⁹³

The archetypal Romantic hero is, of course, Lord Byron. His many peregrinations, often explicitly scandalous and provocative, have worked to create a personal legend of a solitary rebel and insatiable lover who crosses the borders and defies the boundaries – the stifling puritan norms of the polite society, who leaves with no intention of return in search of novel experiences and a freer mode of being. This Byronic legend has remained highly durable and attractive for many travelers and tourists, real and fictional, from Flaubert to Paul Theroux and the characters of Michel Houellebecq’s fiction. Byron’s quest, however, is both personal and political, where the libertarian cause translates into a revolt against the oppressive patriarchy, and the restlessness of the individual impressionable psyche is equally fulfilled through public, political concerns and through private sensual experiences. And how could it be otherwise in the post-1789 Europe that is caught in the whirlwind of history - the Napoleonic wars, the Carbonari in Italy, the Greek war of independence, the Revolution of 1830 and the Restoration, etc. For all the hedonism and sexual

⁹³ Ibid. Byron opens his famous *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* with a typically Romantic confession: “L’univers est une espece de livre, don’t on n’a lu que la premiere page quand on n’a vu que son pays. J’en ai feuillete un assez grand nombre, que j’ai trouve egalement mauvaises. Cet examen ne m’a point ete infructueux. Je haissais ma patrie. Toutes les impertinences des peuples divers parmi lesquels j’ai vecy, m’ont reconcilie avec elle. Quand je n’aurais tire d’autre benefice de mes voyages que celui-la, je n’en regretterais ni les frais ni les fatigues. (*Le Cosmopolite*)

libertarianism of the young aristocrats on the Grand Tour, they still conceived of their travel experience as a form of apprenticeship that would later allow them to succeed in the civilized social order of their home societies. The Romantic traveler, on the contrary, takes a flight from the repressive parental and social authority, and transgresses whatever norms and taboos of the existing social order to assert the preeminence and value of the free individual over the society.⁹⁴ Therein lies the power of the Romantic egotism with its critical interest in the uniqueness and self-expression of the individual, and the particular attitude to life and art that sought a perfect aesthetic organization of existence.⁹⁵

It is not accidental, that although Byron died for the Greek cause in the Greek War of Independence against the Ottoman Turks, he was fascinated with Turkey (a passion that is evident in his private diaries, letters and his *Don Juan*) and even, as his wife, Annabella, and Isaac Disraeli later asserted, toyed with the idea, of converting to Islam. But it was not Islam as such, certainly not Islam versus Christianity that attracted him, but the idea of defiance implied in such a gesture. In part preoccupied with the cultural self-doubt *a la* Rousseau, and in part enthralled by the norms and laws of a foreign society in which he enjoyed a hospitable reception and diverse entertainments, Byron romanticized the “Orient” he found in the Eastern Mediterranean as an embodiment of difference, a palpable *alternative* to the familiar societies of Europe that offered him a radically novel experience: a vast and vacant space of different temporality with deeper roots in antiquity, “a longer day and a

⁹⁴ Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys*, 132.

⁹⁵ Svetlana Boym, *Death in Quotation Marks: Cultural Myths of the Modern Poet* (London and Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 4-6.

slower pace of life”, a different kind of man that seemed more spontaneous, “authentic” and freer than a civilized European, etc.⁹⁶

Byron’s self-imposed exile, which is inseparable from his artistic persona, has worked to establish a connection between artistic creativity and displacement, that romanticized estrangement (understood as freedom bought at the cost of communal abjuration) as a necessary prerequisite for developing original personal aesthetics, or, in Michael Siedel’s terms, as an “enabling” fiction of art.⁹⁷ In her study of travel as a category of contemporary cultural criticism, Caren Kaplan shows the influence of the Romantic formations of exile on the concept’s subsequent career and usage that inspired both real “lived” experiences of displacement and the production of *style* that emulated the effects of exile.⁹⁸ Exile that gained cultural and ideological currency through the literary and literal exiles of the Romantics embodies the master-tropes of Euro-American modernisms: alienation, solitude, nostalgia, and restlessness: the undefined longing for the Baudelairian “n’importe où hors du monde.” In other words, concludes Dean MacCannel, it expresses the propensity of the occidental moderns “to look elsewhere for markers of reality and authenticity” while celebrating alienation and distance.⁹⁹ The quest for “innocence”, for the holistic domain of being uncontaminated by modernity’s skepticism, sense of futility and relativism, constitutes

⁹⁶ Petr Vail, “Bosfor Time: Byron and Brodsky in Istanbul” in *Genius Loci* (Moscow: Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 2000), 303 – 343; 315.

⁹⁷ Michael Siedel, *Exile and the Narrative Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), ix – xiv.

⁹⁸ Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 33-49, 40.

⁹⁹ “For moderns, reality and authenticity are thought to be elsewhere: in other historical periods, in other cultures, in purer, simpler life styles. In other words, the concern of moderns for “naturalness,” the nostalgia and their search for authenticity are not merely causal and somewhat decadent, though harmless, attachments to the souvenirs of destroyed cultures and dead epochs. They are also components of the conquering spirit of modernity – the grounds of its unifying consciousness.” Dean Maccannel, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (London, Berkley, and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 3.

the central aporia of modern travel and travelogue. The concept of “authenticity” that informs the dialectics of modernity and its discontents is extensively elaborated in much of contemporary scholarship of travel and tourism as it dovetails with crucial epistemological (and ontological) questions concerning the nature of representation, the manufacturing of historical memory, stylization of traditions, commodification of experiences, etc, that will be discussed in greater detail in the last section of this chapter.

Yearning for authenticity is also one of the key structural components of the modern phenomenon of nostalgia. The original meaning of the term “nostalgia” (*nostos* - return home; *algos* – painful condition) reduced its application to those long separated from their homelands – travelers, merchants, sailors, soldiers, etc. – and to whom a special medical cure had to be applied to heal them in case the real return was impossible. Gradually, however, nostalgia came to mean the yearning for the *temps perdu*, not the *patria*, but the *past*.¹⁰⁰ As such, it does not only reflect an idiosyncrasy of individual psychology, but is an essential attribute of modern consciousness that cherishes the myth of a Golden Age, of a more “authentic” way of being associated with the traditional societies, of a slower pace of life, untouched by the sweeping forces of modernization and progress. From the nineteenth century on, this nostalgia becomes an integral part of the appeal of the exotic, seeking “to recover the possibility of this total “experience”, this concrete apprehension of others that is [...] typical of traditional communities but has been [...] eliminated from our own.”¹⁰¹ It has become a common place in much of the scholarship on modern European and

¹⁰⁰ John Durham Peters, “Exile, Nomadism and Diaspora: The Stakes of Mobility in Western Canon,” 30.

¹⁰¹ Chris Bongie, *Exotic Memories, Literature, Colonialism, and the 'Fin de siecle'* (Stanford University Press, 1991), 9. Quoted in David Scott, *Semiologies of Travel: From Gautier to Baudrillard* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 2.

North American travel writing to expose the strategies of *temporalisation* employed by the traveling authors - i.e. practices of depicting foreign places as stages of the linear evolutionary development towards civilization and progress. Propped by the Western mythologies of history, the discourse of nostalgia inspires the traveler's quest for the immediate experience of another time and underlies occidental constructions of foreign societies as either the past of one's own homeland or one's own utopian future.¹⁰²

The "otherness" of the "uncivilized" non-European countries (for the most part, the Islamic Middle and Near East) attracted European travelers since, roughly, Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798, reflecting the vogue of the "Orient" in the European, and especially French, literature, art and music.¹⁰³ From Lord Byron to Francois Rene Chateaubriand, Eugene Delacroix, Robert Southey, Gerard Nerval, Theophile Gautier, Isaac Disraeli, Richard Burton, Alphonse de Lamartine, Victor Hugo, and Gustave Flaubert, voyages to Palestine, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, etc. inspired paintings, letter-writing, and other forms of travel documents that reflect the travelers' quest for the personal, *original* aesthetics of the strange and the exotic. The travelogues of these journeys predictably have long been of particular interest for the scholars of post-colonial vein who read them with Said at hand as examples of euro-centrism and colonial "othering." To be sure, this "othering" was not necessarily

¹⁰² Debbie Lisle, *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 209-218; Judith Adler, "Travel as Performed Art", 1375. The role of the futurist utopia was variously played by different countries at different historical junctures. For the travelers from the rest of the continent the eighteenth century Britain represented the apex of civilization and was often visited as a model for the proper political and social organization towards which the less advanced societies should be striving. As Paul Hollander argues in his study of the twentieth century political pilgrimage, to the impressionable "fellow travelers" the post-1917 Soviet Russia offered an example of an implemented utopia, of a "future that works." See Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Western Intellectuals in Search of the Good Society* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1998).

¹⁰³ Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys*, 164.

negatively-charged, and the travel accounts of the British and French travelers antithetically contrasted the “Orient” with Europe’s own superficiality, cultural smugness, and hypocrisy.¹⁰⁴ However, the political dimension of these texts is evidently a vast subject in and of itself that has precipitated a large volume of scholarly discussion. What interests me here is the influence of the Romantic paradigm on the development of travel and travel writing.

The Romantic use of travel certainly owes much to the neo-classical interest in mankind, although for the Romantics the passion for individual figuration and self-fashioning clearly prevails over didactic objectives of the Grand Tour. The Romantics traveled to visualize their knowledge of the foreign lands, not to verify it. While their external quest collapses into the incessant journey of introspection and self-discovery, Romantic travelogues describe the outside reality observed on a trip in conjunction with - and as a mirror of - of the travelers’ soul or consciousness. Romanticism endows nature with significance that transcends its mere materiality – i.e. nature stimulates and arouses the psyche, offering “sights” and “pictures” that prompt the travelers to decode its hidden “meanings” and “signs.” By asserting the inner self to be the main objective and beneficiary of the journey, the Romantic traveler enhances the weight of every occurrence and first-hand experience accumulated during the journey as a source of sensual stimulation and creative inspiration.¹⁰⁵ In the process, explains Andreas Schönle, “nature undergoes a process of thorough semiotization”:

¹⁰⁴ For lack of space I am not expanding on the differences between the British and the French, German, Italian, etc. attitudes towards the “Orient” that were enmeshed with the country’s own colonial or imperial; histories in these countries. For more on the subject, see Edward Said’s discussion of the British attitude of imperial surveying and the French imperial nostalgia in his *Orientalism*.

¹⁰⁵ Andreas Schönle, *Authenticity and Fiction in the Russian Literary Journey, 1790-1840* (London and Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 42- 71.

objects and phenomenon acquire an additional layer of signification, an ontological status as bearers of signs, messages, and symbols.¹⁰⁶

The grounding tropes of Romanticism are worth recapping here once more. Besides the wide range of nationally-specific varieties, Romanticism as a generic philosophical and cultural phenomenon takes in diverse and even contradictory elements. The figurations of a Romantic hero (and traveler), for instance, are context-specific, and often mutually exclusive, encompassing idealism, melancholy, rebelliousness, heroism, world-weariness, cynicism, narcissism, propensity for self-destruction, arrogance, and misanthropy. Byronic peregrinations beyond the confines of the bourgeois Europe and the scandalous exploits that accompanied his sojourn in the Mediterranean worked to establish the figure of a Romantic wanderer as a demoralizer and libertine, a determined transgressor of the established behavioral protocol. Dennis Porter analyzes Flaubert's travels in the Near East (1849-51) as an example of travel as transgression, in which the pursuit of novel sensual experiences came dangerously close to sadism, voyeurism, and abuse.¹⁰⁷ She points out the importance of the near-obsessive scopic drive in Flaubert's travel letters that appropriates and denudes the objects of his domineering gaze not exclusively for pleasure's sake, but as a vital source of his aesthetic inspiration. Importantly, unlike the late eighteenth century pursuers of the picturesque, Flaubert does not shun the ugly, the deformed and the grotesque, savoring even the most repellent detail of the poverty, decess or the physical decay he observes as a raw material for his own creativity. The role of the eyesight in the economy of Romantic Oriental experience anticipates later figurations of *flaneurs* and tourists, who, too, "favor and promote a

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 51.

¹⁰⁷ Dennis Porter, "The Perverse Traveler: Flaubert in the Orient" in Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys*, 164-183.

distance between the individual and the Other” and through fleeting and discontinuous and fragmented engagement with the human reality of the “elsewhere” cast the Other as “the object of aesthetic, not moral evaluation; as a matter of taste, not responsibility.”¹⁰⁸ The mi-nineteenth century *flaneurs*, urban street-walkers, consciously distinguished themselves both from real “heroic travelers” and the tourists in that they were on the look for the obscure, “dark corners” inhabited by the underworld of the city – prostitutes, criminals and the dispossessed. And just like the Romantic travelers to the Orient, *flaneurs* sought out the “authentic” sensual experience through the unexpected chance encounters that would later animate their art. The gaze of the *flaneur* that turned the misery and the ugliness of the lowlife into a spectacle and a potential source of artistic inspiration worked to detach the actualities of human existence in all its pain and gruesomeness from the empathy and understanding of the neutral and curious observer.¹⁰⁹

Reworking Rousseaudian political and aesthetical philosophy, Romanticism channeled its metaphysical discontent with the self and society into the exploration of the distant and the “uncivilized” realms. Thereby, foreign travel as a source of novel experiences (for experience’s sake) and a means of inventing a personal aesthetics set in motion a rhetorical and symbolic juxtaposition of the *ennui* of the bourgeois Europe and the exoticism of the places, which are yet “uncontaminated” by occidental social and cultural conventions. Within this binary, travel not only expresses the Romantic quest for sensory elation achieved through the transcendence of the familiar, but a deep-seating melancholy inflecting the modern consciousness, an urge, in Susan

¹⁰⁸ Zygmunt Bauman, “From Pilgrim to Tourist”. Quoted in Eeva Jokinen and Soile Veijola, “The Disoriented Tourist: The Figuration of the Tourist in Contemporary Cultural Critique” in Chris Rojek and John Urry, eds., *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory* (London: Routledge, 1997), 25.

¹⁰⁹ See Carol Crawshaw and John Urry, “Tourism and the Photographic Eye”, in Chris Rojek and John Urry, eds., *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory* (London: Routledge, 1997), 177, 179.

Sontag's deft formulation, "[to act] out the longing and dismay."¹¹⁰ Within the Romantic cultural matrix, solitary travel was perceived as a cure for the spleen of the sedentary city life, a motive that persists until this very day. In his *Either/Or* Kierkegaard makes just such a connection between the escapist promise of travel and the pervasive boredom and weariness typical of the modern condition:

One is weary of living in the country and moves to the city; one is weary of one's own native land and goes abroad; one is europamude [weary of Europe] and goes to America, etc. one indulges in the fanatical hope of an endless journey from star to star.¹¹¹

Years later, when the romantic, idealistic aura of the exotic places have lost much of its appeal, a post-Romantic Charles Baudelaire captures the same spirit in his famous *poeme en prose* "N'importe où hors de monde":

Life is a hospital in which every patient is possessed by the desire to change his bed. This one would prefer to suffer in front of the stove, and that one believes he would get well if her were placed by the widow.

It seems to me that I should always be happier elsewhere than where I happen to be, and this *question of moving* is one that I am constantly talking over with my soul. [italics mine]¹¹²

It hardly matters that *le poet maudit* was not much of an avid traveler himself, since his elegiac longing for being elsewhere seems to have had more of a literary rather than literal impulse behind it. His journeys were few and hardly voluntary, prompted

¹¹⁰ "The romantics construe the self as essentially a traveler – a questing, homeless self whose standards derive from, whose citizenship is of, a place that does not exist at all or yet, or no longer exists; one consciously understood as an ideal, opposed to something real. It is understood that the journey is unending, and the destination, therefore, negotiable. To travel becomes the very condition of modern consciousness, of a modern view of the world- the acting out of longing or dismay." Susan Sontag, "Model Destinations", *Times Literary Supplement* (June 22, 1984), 699-700.

¹¹¹ Soren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987), 291

¹¹² "Cette vie est un hopital où chaque malade est possédé du désir de changer de lit. Celui-ci voudrait souffrir en face du poele, et celui-la croit qu'il guérirait à coté de la fenetre. Il me semble que je serais toujours bein là où je ne suis pas, et cette question de déménagement est une que je discute sans cesse avec mon ame." In Charles Baudelaire *Le Spleen de Paris/Petits Poemes en Prose* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006), 220-1.

by practical considerations rather than by the desire to explore the “out-there.” Baudelaire, however, is no ordinary escapist.¹¹³ His consciously nurtured bohemian world-weariness in the midst of the “deathly idyll” of Parisian crowds belongs to another day an age, the beginnings of Symbolism in the French literature, his preferred traveling persona – a *flaneur*.¹¹⁴ Yet at the same time, the coupling of melancholy with the frustrated wanderlust and escapism with death that he captures in “N’importe où hors de monde” clearly has a root in the Romantic poetics and remains one of the most persistent topoi of modernism. That is why Baudelaire’s *question de déménagement* (question of changing places) is key to the unfolding discussion inasmuch as it is couched here in essentially modernist terms that came to punctuate much of the twentieth century travel writing and thinking.

By the mid-nineteenth century, Romanticism’s idea of travel as a cure from the malaise, frustrations and “non-authenticity” of the routine life had come full circle as the authenticity of the travel experience itself began to cause doubt. The crucial marker of the Romantic journey is its originality. Indeed, the term itself does not appear until the Romantic period. While the pilgrims, travelers on the Grand Tour and the late eighteenth century English pursuers of the “picturesque” traveled on the beaten track, visiting the sights that have been pre-defined for them (i.e. semiotically flagged as sights) and reacting to them “appropriately” (i.e. in a pre-defined way) Romantic travelers asserted their individuality and unabashed subjectivity in both the choice of destination and the range of emotional responses that these sights solicited. However, as Chloe Chard shows in her study of the Grand Tour mentioned earlier, by

¹¹³ Both his two-year retreat to India and the final flight to Brussels have less than romantic motivations behind them – fleeing from the excesses of the bohemian life or from the financial pressures. The Indian trip was conceived of by Baudelaire’s parents anxious to salvage him from the excesses of the bohemian life. The 1864 move to Belgium was largely caused by increasing financial difficulties.

¹¹⁴ See Walter Benjamin, “Baudelaire, or the Streets of Paris” in Peter Demetz, ed., *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writing* (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), 156-8.

the late-eighteenth century the travel discourse had already become so clichéd and the conventional “sights” so heavily infrastructured and pre-signified as to challenge the writers to seek less worn-out forms of conveying their impressions.¹¹⁵ To be sure, Romanticism orientation towards the sublime and the absolute that invited exaltation, hyperbola or bathos, made the search for an original voice especially pressing. Even more importantly, Romanticism coincided with the birth of mass culture and mass tourism and hence the persisting urge to differentiate one’s own motives for traveling from those of the “hordes of unsophisticated *tourists*.” The latter, in a crucial difference from the Romantic solitary wanderer, left no cultural traces, save for the inscriptions they left on monuments, columns and ruins, and thus failed to convert their travel experience into art. For Romantic travelers, the very presence of tourists and their graffiti within the sight is a sign of the belatedness of their own arrival that leads to the fear of reproducing somebody’s else clichéd gesture, of stepping into somebody else’s footprints, of “reproducing an *idée reçue*.” Flaubert’s frustration with the ubiquity of tourists and their traces that threatened to invade his own journey brings the point home: “Stones that have interested so many, that so many men have come to see, are a pleasure to look at. How many bourgeois eyes have looked up there! Everyone has his little word to say and then left.”¹¹⁶ For the Romantic narcissistic ego, the arrival of the tourist undermines the heroic pathos of having discovered a magnificent sight, of “having come so far,” and bares the impossibility of

¹¹⁵ See also Chloe Chard, “From the Sublime to the Ridiculous: The Anxieties of Sightseeing” in Hartmut berghoff, Barbara Korte, Ralf Schneider and Christopher Harvie, eds., *The Making of Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of the British Experience, 1600-2000* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).47-68.

¹¹⁶ Gustave Flaubert, *Notes de Voyage en Orient*, 590. Quoted from Dennis Porter, “The Perverse Traveler: Flaubert in the Orient” in Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys*, 183.

possessing an “untouched”, “authentic” experience or sight: an ultimate lesson in humility and “one’s own insignificance.”¹¹⁷

Tourism

--We're not tourists, we're travelers,
 --Oh. What's the difference?
 --Tourists are people who think about going home the minute they arrive, whereas travelers may not come back at all.

~ Bernardo Bertolucci ¹¹⁸

My dreams are run-of-the-mill. Like all of the inhabitants of western Europe, I want to *travel*. There are problems with that, of course: the language barrier, poorly organized public transport, the risk of being robbed or conned. To put it more bluntly, what I really want, basically, is to be a *tourist*.

~ Michel Houellebecq¹¹⁹

It’s very important to understand what is happening to travel and tourism, and to all the present-day variations of the Grand Tour, because only by examining them can one see why people get on donkeys and rise across Ethiopia, or hitchhike to India, or go slowly down the Ganges, or simply disappear in Brazil.

~ Paul Theroux¹²⁰

Romanticism occupies such a prominent place in the current discussion of the evolution of travel practices because it had restructured the relationship between the self and the world around the self-congratulating subjectivity. As elements of a symbolic order and of a certain cultural discourse some of the grounding tropes of Romanticism continued to inform subsequent styles and ideologies of travel and travel

¹¹⁷ Dennis Porter, “The Perverse Traveler: Flaubert in the Orient” in Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys*, 183.

¹¹⁸ *Sheltering Sky*, prod. and dir Bernardo Bertolucci, 2 hr.18 min., Warner Bros. Pictures, 1990.

¹¹⁹ Michel Houellebecq, *Platform*. Transl. Frank Wynne (London: William Heinemann, 2002), 27.

¹²⁰ Paul Theroux, “Stranger on a Train: The Pleasures of Railways” in *Sunrise with Seamonsters: A Paul Theroux Reader*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1985) 126-35, 134-135.

writing, either directly or *by rule of contraries* well beyond the end of the Romantic period.¹²¹ Romanticism liberated the idea of travel from all the *rational* “purposes” that justified it earlier: e.g. piety, duty, education, moral-betterment, information-gathering, etc. Just as the early nineteenth century thinkers were pioneering the notion of “art for art’s sake”, Romanticism proclaimed travel to be an end in and of itself, an expression of irrational wanderlust (e.g. the true travelers, asserts Baudelaire in his poem “Le Voyage” leave for leaving’s sake, “*partent pour partir*”.) Romantic orientation towards aesthetic appreciation of the carefully chosen and thoroughly semiotized sights laid the foundations for the modern tourism, which is similarly informed by oculacentrism of modern western culture that propels the urge of sightseeing.¹²² Perhaps more importantly, as I have shown in the earlier discussion of the Romantic figurations of travel, Romanticism has created a tenacious (and explicitly elitist) iconography structured by the fierce juxtaposition between the

¹²¹ See, for example, Roland Barthes’s essay “The *Blue Guide*” that draws explicit parallels between the traditional picturesque gaze that registers not the “unspectacular” and the human, on the one hand, and the ideology of the twentieth century guided tour on the other: “The *Blue Guide* hardly knows the existence of the scenery except under the guise of the picturesque. The picturesque is found anytime the ground is uneven. We find again here the bourgeois promoting of the mountains, this old Alpine myth (since it dates back to the nineteenth century) which Gide rightly associated with Helvetico-Protestant morality and which has always functioned as a hybrid compound of the cult of nature and of Puritanism (regeneration through clean air, moral ideas at the sights of mountain-tops, summit-climbing as civic virtue, etc.) Among the views elevated by the *Blue Guide* to aesthetic existence, we rarely find plains (redeemed only when they can be described as fertile), never plateaux. Only mountains, gorges, defiles and torrents can have access to the pantheon of travel, inasmuch, probably, as they seem to encourage a morality of effort and solitude.” In Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. by Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 74-77, 74.

¹²² Robert Chi, “Toward a New Tourism; Albert Wedt and Becoming Attractions” in *Cultural Critique*, No. 37 (Autumn, 1997): 61-105; 63. In his discussion of the Romantic travel Cerhard Stilz emphasizes the continuity between the economy of Romantic travel and later practices of mass tourism: “[M]any of the landscapes and architectural sights highlighted and aestheticized in this fashion have become prime tourist attractions in the twentieth century. Up to the present day, the sights discerned as ‘heroic’ by the romantic notion of the sublime are still able to activate and rehearse the tourist’s desire for terror and its sublimation in the judicial comfort of safe and civilized travel arrangements.” Gerhard Stilz, “Heroic Travellers – Romantic Landscapes: The Colonial Sublime in Indian, Australian, and American Art and Literature” in Hartmut Berghoff, Barbara Korte, Ralf Schneider and Christopher Harvi, eds., *The Making of Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of the British Experience, 1600-2000* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 85-107:104. Hartmut Berghoff, Barbara Korte, Ralf Schneider and Christopher Harvie, eds., *The Making of Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of the British Experience, 1600-2000* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 47-68.

solitary travel on the un-trodden paths that turned the objects of gaze into the very stuff of high-art on the one hand, and on the other, the vulgar mass *tourism* that lacked the originality, creativity and “authenticity” of the former. Grotesque description of the uncomprehending “mob” or “crowd” are staples in the self-fashioning of the Romantic poet, rebel and traveler. What is more interesting is the place of this binary of the high-art versus mass culture, aesthetical sophistication versus consumerism in the phenomenology of tourism.

Another way of contrasting travel and tourism is suggested by the etymology of the terms. The English noun “travel” is derived from the French “travail”, which means “work”, but also “trouble” and “torment”.¹²³ The word “tour-ist” that gained wide currency in the beginning of the nineteenth century was originally derived from the Latin “tornus” -- a pair of compasses or any other tools describing a circle.¹²⁴ The semantic difference presents travel as a form of active and often strenuous work and adventure, while tourism represents leisure and passivity -- a simulated and “staged” experience. Daniel Boorstin, the author of the seminal essay on the subject, “From Traveler to Tourist: The Lost Art of Travel”, explains the difference:

The traveler ...was working at something; the tourist was a pleasure-seeker. The traveler was active; he went strenuously in search of people, of adventure, of experience. The tourist is passive; he (sic!) expects interesting things to happen to him. He goes “sight-seeing”[...]. He expects everything to be done to him and for him. The foreign travel ceased to be an activity - an experience, an undertaking – and instead became a commodity.¹²⁵

¹²³ The French noun “travail”, explains Daniel Boorstin, seems to have been derived from the popular Latin term “trepalium”, which referred to a three-staked torture device. Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 85.

¹²⁴ Sanna Turoma argues that the word “tourist” first appears in English literature as early as 1799, in William Wordsworth’s poem “The Brothers”: “These Tourists, heaven preserve us! Needs must live / A profitable life: some glance along, / Rapid and gay, as if the earth were air, / And they were butterflies to wheel about / Long as the summer lasted...” (Wordsworth William. *Poems*. V. I. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 402; Sanna Turoma, “Poet kak odinokii turist: Brodsky, Venezia i putevye zametki” [A Poet as Lone Tourist: Brodsky, Venice and Travel Notes], *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie* no. 67 (2004).

¹²⁵ Ibid. Robert Byron (1905-1941) an accomplished traveler himself, makes the same point when he defines travel as a “quest for an organic harmony between all matter and all activity, whose discovery is

The advent of modern tourism is intrinsically linked to the technological progress that made long-distance travel both more accessible (by railroads, steamers, etc.) and less physically tolling than earlier forms of travel such as horse-back and coaches, thereby opening up opportunities for the rising middle classes to travel fast and far across Europe and North America. The historical context of the birth of mass tourism is crucial for the unfolding discussion inasmuch as the cultural and economic implications of European industrialization and attendant bureaucratization of social relations inform both the modernist and post-modernist critiques of tourism and travel. This is why I am not tracing the history of travel throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries consecutively as I have done with earlier periods, but instead, consider the period as a whole, exploring the continuities and ruptures between modernist and post-modernist sensibilities. The key aspect in writing a cultural history of travel and in the culturally and economically fixed juxtaposition between travel and tourism lies in the transformation of the travel experience from a prerogative of the selected few, to a universal, *mass* experience. Dean MacCannel explains, offering an apt summation of this chapter's extended historical expose:

[...] self-discovery through a complex and sometimes arduous search for an Absolute Other is a basic theme of our civilization, a theme supporting an enormous literature: Odysseus, Aeneas, the Diaspora, Chaucer, Christopher Columbus, *Pilgrim's Progress*, Gulliver, Jules Verne, Western ethnography, Mao's Long March. This theme does not just thread its way through our literature and our history. It grows and develops, arriving at a kind of a final flowering in modernity. What begins as the proper activity of a *hero* (Alexander the Great), develops into a goal of a socially organized *group* (the crusaders), into the mark of status of an entire social *class* (the Grand Tour of

the purpose of the [travelers'] lives." For a true voyageur, argues Byron, travel is a form of "spiritual necessity," which "ranks with the more serious forms of endeavor": "Admittedly there are other ways of making the world's acquaintance. But the traveler is a slave to his senses: his grasp of a fact can only be complete when reinforced by sensory evidence; he can know the world, in fact, only when he sees, hears, and smells it." Robert Byron, *First Russia, Then Tibet* (1933). Quoted in Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 90-91.

the British “gentleman”), eventually becoming universal experience (the tourist).¹²⁶

The pioneer of the modern tourist industry, Thomas Cook (1808-1892), marketed highly controlled “- packaged” guided tours that spared tourists the inconveniences and perils of life on the road by providing guides, hotel rooms, food, protection, etc. at a price of taking over the initiative and minimizing hazards – i.e. adventurousness of the experience. Today’s tourists who travel by plane are “spared” the very essence of travel itself – having a sense of movement through space. They do not experience the gradual progression through a landscape that makes palpable the differences between visited places, and implies both an investment of certain physical effort and personal engagement with the human realities of foreign lands. Instead, neutral airport spaces -- - uniform transit zones that precede and follow the trip -- subtract the physicality of space from the economy of travel (replacing it with time), transforming the sense of arrival and departure experienced by travel on train, on horseback or by ship. When reading the twentieth century travelogues in the remainder of this work, we shall see how the means of transportation and the mode of arrival shape the author’s perception of the place and carry an additional symbolic meaning (i.e. Brodsky’s flying in to Istanbul by plane in his famous “Flight from Byzantium”, an explicit debunking of Yeats’ 1828 “Sailing to Byzantium”, etc.)

The essence of the tourist adventure, its effortlessness, controllability and predictability is pointed out by Zygmunt Bauman, who stressed that “[t]he tourists want to immerse themselves in a strange and bizarre element, on condition, though, that it will not stick to their skin and thus can be shaken off whenever they wish.”¹²⁷

In his neo-Weberian analysis of contemporary mass culture, George Ritzer has coined

¹²⁶ Dean, MacCannel, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 5.

¹²⁷ Zygmunt Bauman, “From Pilgrim to Tourist”, 29.

the term “McDonaldization”, connoting a rationalization and standardization of modern experience increasingly geared toward ensuring “predictability from one place to another.”¹²⁸ According to Paul Theroux, a traveler and travel author himself, increasing global homogenization has turned contemporary traveling and tourism into a comfortable and secure version of being at home: “Spain is Home-Plus-Sunshine; India is Home-Plus-Servants; Africa is Home-Plus-Elephants-and-Lions; Ecuador is Home-Plus-Volcanoes,” etc.¹²⁹ In Michelangelo Antonioni’s famous film *Profession: Reporter*, Jack Nicholson’s character, David Locke, discusses travel with a fellow globetrotter, on business in Africa, registering the same sense of disappointment at the disappearance of the “exotic” and the traveler’s waning chances to be surprised by the unfamiliar:

--How about Ubugbene? I bet you’ve never been to Ubugbene.
 --No.
 --Terrible place. Airports, taxi, hotel. They are all the same in the end.
 --I do not agree. It’s us who remain the same. We translate every experience into the same old codes. We just condition ourselves.
 --We’re creatures of habit, that’s what you mean?
 --Something like that.

If traveling is no longer an encounter with genuine difference and no longer the transformative experience it once allegedly was, then why travel? What are the new objectives of travel pursued by contemporary tourists and their “sophisticated” antagonists, - travelers? Is travel even possible today, or have we all collectively fallen into the condition of tourists -- as Levi-Strauss, Fussell and Boorstin have argued, -- with no promise of escape? Is the anxiety over the rise of tourism and the end of *travel* all that new at all?

¹²⁸ George Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society* (Thousand Oaks and London: Pine Forge Press 1993), 83

¹²⁹ Paul Theroux, “Stranger on a Train: The Pleasures of Railways” (1976), in Paul Theroux, *Sunrise with Seamonsters: A Paul Theroux Reader* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1985), 126-35, 133.

Immediately after the first groups of tourists were sent on one of Cook's tours across the continent, critics lampooned the innovation as a travesty of *real* travel, - attacks Cook dismissed as "sheer snobbery."¹³⁰ Throughout the nineteenth century the very word "tourist" had a pejorative meaning, not unlike the contemporary word "tripper."¹³¹ In his seminal study of tourism and travel, James Buzard argues that the phenomenon of tourism did not acquire its derogatory connotations gradually, through the accumulated critique of its detractors. Rather, organized mass tourism was initially conceived of as a widely accessible alternative to genuine travel, -- an ersatz travel, a turn from the "authentic" experience toward sanitized, prefabricated and superficial leisure, - an opinion that has not changed much since.¹³² Indeed, availability of privilege through the simulation of upward mobility continues to be both the source of anxiety for the critics of tourism, - lay and academic alike, - and one of tourism's most enduring appeals for its many consumers. In what follows I shall argue that the staunch dichotomy of travel versus tourism, in which the latter is identified with low-brow popular culture and the former is lamented as "near extinct" (bringing us back to the Derrida's article from which I started this work), reflects on the key dilemmas of modernism: the alleged loss of authentic, individual cultural experience to the democratization of cultural experiences and facilitated social mobility.¹³³ In a sense, much of the critique of tourism (and attendant celebration of

¹³⁰ Paul Fussell, *Abroad*, 87-91.

¹³¹ Alan Hodge, ed., *Varieties of Travel: A Selection of Articles from History Today* (Edinburgh : Oliver & Boyd, 1967), 3.

¹³² James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature and the Ways to Culture, 1800-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 18.

¹³³ Tobias Doring, "Traveling in Transience: The Semiotics of Necro-Tourism" in Hartmut Berghoff et al. , eds., *The Making of Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of the British Experience, 1600 – 2000*, (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 249- 266, 250.

“sophisticated travel”) is an expression of modernity’s anxiety and fear of being overrun by its omnipresent “Other” -- the ever-expanding mass culture.¹³⁴

A character in Murray Bail’s novel expresses the characteristic sentiment towards the ubiquity of tourists:

[Tourists]’ve made a mess of everything. Nothing is real anymore. They obscure anything that was there. They stand around, *droves* of them, clicking with their blasted cameras. Most of them don’t know what they are gawking at... I usually go to places where there are no tourists – places that haven’t been *spoilt*. But it’s getting to the stage now where even the size of a city or a country is no longer a defense. You know how *mobs* pour in and stand around taking up room, and asking the most ludicrous basic questions. They’ve ruined a place like Venice. It’s their prerogative, but the authenticity of a culture soon becomes hard to locate. The local people themselves become altered. And of course the prices go up.¹³⁵ (*italics mine*)

Note the characteristic phrasing. Tourists are often spoken of in plural with the use of animal imagery, - e.g. “flocks”, “crowds”, “swarms”, “droves”, “hordes”, “busloads of”, “mob”, “locust”, “sheep”, etc., betraying the elitist underpinnings of the discourse on travel and the common anxieties of modernity associated with the rise of mass culture. In his essay devoted to the symbolic system of guided tours, “*The Blue Guide*”, Roland Barthes relates this form of travel to nineteenth-century picturesque tours inasmuch as they, too, functioned as a “labor-saving adjustment, the easy substitute for the morally uplifting work.”¹³⁶ The proliferation of negative terms that describe the tourist as a bogus traveler, -- a *faux voyageur*, -- points to tourism’s

¹³⁴ Andreas Huyssen: “[Modernism constitutes itself] through a conscious strategy of exclusion, an anxiety of contamination by its other: an increasingly consuming and engulfing mass culture.” In Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p.vii quoted in Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel*, 57.

¹³⁵ Murray Bail, *Homesickness* (Melbourne and London: Macmillan, 1980), 81-82 cited in John Frow, “Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia”, *October*, Vol. 57 (Summer 1991): 123-151, 145.

¹³⁶ Barthes’s definition certainly engages the Romantic mythology that contrasts the labor-intense authentic travel, with its promise of spiritual and moral elation with the passive pleasure-seeking of the bourgeois guided tours. .” Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, 74.

alleged inauthenticity as the locus of the problem.¹³⁷ Not only is the experience itself contrived and mass-produced by the institutional force, but the tourist's relationship to the sight is believed to be inauthentic as well.

The question of "authenticity", one of modernity's key anxieties, inevitably takes one back to Benjamin's seminal essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction". Benjamin's discussion of "the aura" suggests that our sense of authenticity is both created by the mechanical reproducibility of art and, at the same time, hopelessly corrupted by the proliferation of copies and duplicates of the "original."¹³⁸ What is relevant to the current discussion is the role of technology and the media in creating and disseminating not only the *effects* of "aura" but authenticity itself, as Benjamin hints at in his article.

Recent scholarship on the semiotics of tourism draws on Benjaminian analysis of authenticity - to differentiate between a sight and a marker within the economy of a tourist attraction.¹³⁹ The concept of a sight eludes naturalistic definition; it can be anything and everything: "Napoleon's hat, moon rocks, Grant's tomb, even entire nation-states."¹⁴⁰ What becomes a "sight" is predicated, in the words of Stephen Greenblatt, on the symbolic power of the place to generate and transform cultural contacts into novel and often unexpected forms, thereby accumulating its own history

¹³⁷ Jean Didier Urbain, "Semiotiques compares du touriste et du voyageur," *Semiotica*, vol.58, No.3/4 (1986):269.

¹³⁸ Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1965), 243 n2.

¹³⁹ See, for example, Dean MacCannel, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999); Jonathan Culler, "The Semiotics of Tourism," *American Journal of Semiotics* 1 (1981); Jean Didier Urbain, "Semiotiques compares du touriste et du voyageur," *Semiotica*, vol.58, No.3/4 (1986); Robert Chi, "Towards a New Tourism: Albert Wendt and Becoming Attractions", *Cultural Critique*, No. 37 (Autumn, 1997):61-105; John Frow, "Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia", *October*, Vol. 57 (Summer 1991): 123-151; Georges Van Den Abbeele, "Sightseers: The Tourist as Theorist", *Diacritics*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Winter, 1980): 2-14, etc.

¹⁴⁰ Dean MacCannel, *The Tourist*, 41

of representations.¹⁴¹ The sight itself is a repository of such representations and can be read as a multi-layered text, the meaning of which shifts with each new inscription. The marker is an element of discourse, a representation that defines a sight as such and can employ any medium: guidebooks, advertisement, plaques, postcards and other souvenir products, photographs, informational tablets, travel writing, art and film, etc. There seems to exist a collective consensus over which sights are worth sightseeing. The sight retains its marker and constitutes a tourist attraction through a twofold process of sight sacralization and ritualization of sightseeing, both of which rest on a complex web of institutional and cultural mechanisms.¹⁴² At the core of both processes, as Roland Barthes pointed out, is *repetition*, - the reaffirmation or “enshrinement”, - of the sight through repeated “marking” and consumption.

In his study of the social construction of tourist sights, Chris Rojek makes an explicit connection between the marking of tourist attractions and the privileging of the visual typical of modern culture.¹⁴³ “The conquest of the world as picture” that Heidegger famously asserted to be the fundamental event of the modern age was facilitated by technological progress, the birth of photography and cinema and a swelling media presence.¹⁴⁴ Rojek shows how the construction of tourist attractions

¹⁴¹ “[Representations of a sight] are a set of images and image-making devices that are accumulated, ‘banked,’ as it were, in books, archives, collections, cultural store-houses, until such time as these representations are called upon to generate new representations. The images that matter (...) are those that achieve reproductive power, maintaining and multiplying themselves by transforming cultural contacts into novel and often unexpected forms.” Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvellous Possessions. The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 6. Quoted in Hagen Schulz – Forberg, *London – Berlin. Authenticity, Modernity, and the Metropolis in Urban Travel Writing from 1851 to 1939* (Brussels, Belgium ; New York : P.I.E.-P. Lang, 2006), 41.

¹⁴² Dean MacCanel, *The Tourist*, 42-48.

¹⁴³ Chris Rojek, “Indexing, Dragging and the Social Construction of Tourist Sights” in Chris Rojek and John Urry, eds., *Touring Cultures*, (New York: Routledge, 1997), 52-74.

¹⁴⁴ Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1977), 134. Quoted in Chris Rojek and John Urry, eds., *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory*, 5.

involves the conscious or unconscious “dragging” of diverse elements from various sources of representation (“files”), including cinema, advertising, art, photography, etc, where those signs (“markers”) that enjoy wider media circulation often eclipse less familiar and popularized ones. A grotesque example brings the point home: the *Schindler’s List* tour that has operated in Krakow since 1994:

Tour guides frame the history of the area in terms of set-pieces from the film. For example, in the course of the tour one is shown the spot ‘where they caught the boy who ran away and shot him and he just dropped down.’ ...Cinematic events are dragged on to the physical landscape and the physical landscape is then reinterpreted in terms of the cinematic events. Because electronically generated images are so pre-eminent in framing our perception of territory and history, the tourist generally has little resistance to this version of ‘reality.’ In this respect, the *Schindler’s List* tour also illustrates the unconscious dragging process. ...Most tourists have ‘seen’ Kazimierz before actually being there through the images and narratives of Spielberg’s film. A reserve of sights in the mind of the tourist precedes the physical exploration of the sight.¹⁴⁵

Obviously, by extrapolating imaginary places from the screen onto the physical reality of the space, the tourist is often oblivious to or ignorant of the historical reality of the sight that inspired the film in the first place. Rojek’s example is a good illustration of the capacity of the place to attract several, - oftentimes competing -- markers that speak to different groups of visitors and that imply a different modality of visit (heritage tour visit, pilgrimage, picaresque sightseeing, etc.) for each of them.

If tourism is democratized travel, then it comes as no surprise that from its early years it developed in close tandem with photography – a practice that “democratizes all experiences by translating them into images.”¹⁴⁶ Photography

¹⁴⁵ Chris Rojek, “Indexing, Dragging and Social Construction”, 54.

¹⁴⁶ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin Books, 1977), 7. Peter D. Osborne fleshes out Sontag’s point: “The immediate application of photography to the depiction of travel is explained by the fact that it was, on the one hand, a crystallization of three hundred years of culture and science preoccupied with space and mobility and, on the other, the expression of its own time – the epoch of capitalist globalization, the construction of a new middle-class identity and the dramatic speeding-up of transportation and communication. Photography was a representational tool refined in the service of

allows the tourist to take over the competencies of “high-brow” forms of travel – to document and authenticate objective reality on the one hand, and on the other, to aesthetically frame the observed object for private consumption and appreciation.¹⁴⁷ At the same time, tourist photo-taking practices lend themselves all too easily to the same accusations routinely leveled against vocational tourism, – its superficiality, narcissism, inability to engage with the external reality, and deeply internalized insecurity.

An inseparable media of tourism’s culture and economy, photography both precedes and follows the vacation, giving it a meaning and structure on several levels. First of all, it confers on vocational tourism a semblance of productive activity by turning it into a “friendly imitation of work” that regulates the experience: “stop, take a photograph, and move on.”¹⁴⁸ Once the trip is over, photographs, alongside souvenirs and postcards, give shape to the memories of the trip. They authenticate and illustrate the very fact of the journey by offering “undisputable evidence that the trip was made, that the program was carried out, that fun was had.”¹⁴⁹ It also offers tourists an appearance of participation in the reality they observe, however staged and superficial their participation is. The gaze, further estranged by the camera lens, gets in the way of the full-fledged, all-encompassing sensory experience. Sightseeing, especially when accompanied by extensive picture-taking, reduces the scope of the tourist’s impressions to all that is photogenic - the striking, the unusual, the sharp - while excluding the mundane and the “trivial” and losing sight of the

these processes. It was also the perfect product of its economic culture - a commodity in its own right. Peter D. Osborne, *Traveling Light: Photography, Travel and Visual Culture* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 9.

¹⁴⁷ John Frow, “Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia”, 144.

¹⁴⁸ Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, 10.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 9.

“underpinnings” of whatever gets photographed.¹⁵⁰ One wonders, following the character in Albert Wendt’s novel *Ola* (1991), “what kind of reality [the tourists armed with cameras] are seeing through these instruments, what it is like looking at everything in terms of setting a shot?”¹⁵¹

It is not only sensory perception that is disturbed by photo-taking argues Paul Theroux, an avid traveler who makes a special point of not owing a camera. “Ignoring cameras is [...] good for the eyes”, his fellow traveler explains, because if you take a picture of things “you do not really see them.”¹⁵² Ignoring cameras is also good for your narrative skills:

Once, when I was in Italy, I saw about three dozen doves spill out of the eaves of an old cathedral. It was lovely, that sort of thing that makes people say *if only I had a camera!* I did not have a camera with me and have spent the past two-and-a-half years trying to find the words to express that sudden deluge of white doves. This is a good exercise – especially good because I still cannot express it. [...] No camera is like no hands, a feat of skill. And if you know that sooner or later you will have to explain it all, without benefits of slides or album, to your large family, then as soon as you see something you start searching the view for clues and rummaging through your lexical baggage for the right phrases. Otherwise, what’s the use? And when you see something like a galloping giraffe, which you cannot capture on film you are thrown back on the English language like a cowboy’s grizzled sidekick against a cactus. You hope for the sake of posterity and spectators that you can rise unscratched with a blossom.¹⁵³

The juxtaposition between different modes of perception and different techniques of preserving and conveying one’s travel impressions perpetuates the juxtaposition

¹⁵⁰ Dorothea Lange quoted in Andrea Liss, *Trespassing Through Shadows: Memory, Photography, and the Holocaust*, (Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 1998), xiv. In this sense, the tourist’s highly focused gaze that knows exactly what it is looking for is not dissimilar from the pilgrim’s selective sight that always expects the idea (the ‘marker’) of the sacred sight to correspond to reality.

¹⁵¹ Albert Wendt, *Ola* (Auckland: Penguin,1991), 208. Quoted in Robert Chi, “Toward a New Tourism: Albert Wendt and Becoming Attractions,” 89.

¹⁵² Paul Theroux, “The Cerebral Snapshot” in Paul Theroux, *Sunrise with Seamonsters: A Paul Theroux Reader* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1985), 15-17.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, 15-17.

between travel as a discourse-oriented high-brow formation bent on producing knowledge and aesthetically-valuable renditions of his or her experiences and tourists, allegedly incapable of doing it. Travelers, “write travel diaries” and make sketches or drawings in their notepads, while tourists, “write postcards” and obsessively take photos.

The question of what it is that the tourists actually see through the lens of their cameras is especially charged in the context of tourism in poorer, less-developed countries, where tourists’ cameras often capture extreme poverty, decay and disease as essential attributes of the “exotic.” As Susan Sontag and Michel Foucault have asserted, there are, certainly, important ethical implications in the use of lens media and in the distanced, non-participatory, voyeuristic camera gaze that turns reality into a spectacle.¹⁵⁴ The asymmetrical relationship of power and control between the photographer and the photographed creep into the picture and construct the object through such influences as the particular position of the lens, the choice of lighting, composition, inclusion/exclusion from the frame. Given a particular camera angle, the mode of viewing the picture may express the relationship of domination between the photographic eye and the object of the gaze.¹⁵⁵ Photography, stresses Sontag, always implies a certain degree of violation; it turns things and people photographed into objects that can be symbolically possessed, -- doubly so if the tourist inserts him or herself into the sight by taking an “in front of” picture. At the same time, photography is essentially an “art of non-intervention”, as the photographer is interested in the status quo remaining unchanged (at least for the duration of taking a shot):

¹⁵⁴ Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge* (London: Tavistock, 1972) and *The Birth of the Clinic* (London: Tavistock, 1976); Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2002); Cornelia Brink, “Secular Icons: Looking at Photographs from Nazi Concentration Camps”, *History and Memory* 1, vol. 12 (spring-summer 2002): 135- 150, etc.

¹⁵⁵ Carol Crawshaw and John Urry, “Tourism and the Photographic Eye”, 183.

Like sexual voyeurism, [the act of photographing] is a way of at least tacitly, often explicitly, encouraging whatever is going on to keep on happening. To take a picture is to have an interest in things as they are [...], to be in complicity with whatever makes the subject interesting, worth photographing - including, when that is the interest, another person's pain or misfortune.¹⁵⁶

The tourist's narcissism, then, is manifold and heavily enmeshed with insecurity.

Played out through the compulsive taking of pictures "in front of" and "inside of" the sight, obtrusiveness of course, has a common place in the discourse of tourism. It can be considered an extension of the tourist's urge to confirm the actuality of the journey and the concordance of the personal experience with the reputation of the place: "the scenery was really that beautiful", "the hotel did have a pool", "we really could ride a camel there", etc. It is also, quite bluntly, a proof of the tourist's very existence, his or her desire to leave a mark and to visually appropriate the sight by inserting him – or herself into it. Such behavior is vulgar and imposing in the eyes of the high-brow critics, but all too human. The taking of pictures, Susan Sontag has convincingly argued, gives people "an imaginary possession of a past that is unreal," helps them "to take possession of space in which they are insecure", making the foreign and the strange familiar and safe.¹⁵⁷ In a sense, picture taking is similar to the practice of leaving graffiti and inscriptions on antique ruins that so irritated Flaubert during his Oriental peregrinations and which, parenthetically, is not the exclusive prerogative of tourists. Lord Byron, for example, had a fondness for incising his name on columns and ruins as well. Joseph Brodsky's splenetic description of the Japanese, those proverbial photo-crazy tourists, explains the significance of this gesture:

I don't even leave behind photographs taken "in front of" wall, let alone a set of walls themselves. In this sense, I am inferior even to the almost proverbial Japanese. (There is nothing more appalling to me than to think about the family album of the average Japanese: smiling and stocky, he/she/both against

¹⁵⁶ Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, 12.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 9.

a backdrop of everything vertical the world contains – statues, fountains, cathedrals, towers, mosques, ancient temples, etc, Least of all, I presume, Buddhas and pagodas.) *Cogito ergo sum* gives way to *Kodak ergo sum*, just as *cogito* in its day triumphed over “I create.”¹⁵⁸

While tourists are attracted to the sight by the markers it possesses, the pictures they take once at the sight – the act of repetition Barthes talked about – are instrumental in perpetuating the semiotic status of the place as a tourist attraction. In the absence of the mediation of a marker, the sight ceases to be a sight. The difference between sight and marker suggests different forms of behavior in the attitudes of travelers and tourists – ultimately, a difference between sight-involvement and marker-involvement. Tourist is typically conceived of as superficial and inauthentic precisely because tourists are guided by the clichés, -- the markers -- that mediate or “stage” their experience of the sight. Real travelers produce markers by writing travelogues about their journeys. The distinction here is between inhabiting or acceding to the presence within the sight, and gliding past its surface. Photography, (which captures the surface of things, is a perfect metaphor for the latter. In the words of Zygmunt Bauman, the tourist “is everywhere he (sic!) goes *in*, but nowhere *of* the place he is in.”¹⁵⁹ The marker, while constitutive of the sight, destroys “authenticity” and prevents an undifferentiated immediacy of perception on the part of the visitor. The problem continues to reproduce itself as long as the tourist obsessively seeks out the authenticity and immediacy their very presence destroys.

Van Den Abbeele reads “tourist” as an essentially self-hating figure who avoids other tourists and rarely considers him- or herself to be one. French scholar Jean-Didier Urbain believes such denial leads to a profound malaise because of “the internalization of the distinction between the uncomprehending mass – the idiot on

¹⁵⁸ Joseph Brodsky, “Flight From Byzantium.” Translated by Alan Myers and Joseph Brodsky. *Less Than One: Selected Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux: 1986): 393-446, 399.

¹⁵⁹ Zygmunt Bauman, “From Pilgrim to Tourist – or a Short History of Identity”, 29.

tour – and the heroic traveler who belongs to the golden age of travel that can never be regained.”¹⁶⁰ Once again, we are talking here not about actualities but rather the discourses of different forms of travel, - i.e. the ways of constructing and interpreting knowledge about and ascribing meaning to specific practices. Both the professed parvenu tourist and the sophisticated “gentleman traveler” are, of course, representative figures of particular cultural matrices, -- products of cultural imagination first and furthestmost. What is more important than the actual validity and truth of specific discursive claims is their hold on popular imagination, the contexts in which these discourses are invoked, the uses to which they are put, and the forms of rationality and power they legitimize.

The tourist’s aversion to other tourists is also partially rooted in the carnivalesque, make-belief, nature of tourism itself that nurtures fantasies of upper mobility by tempting tourists to try on attributes of a life style – if only for the duration of a trip – that would have normally been associated with a higher social standing (e.g. pool, hotel service, shopping, entertainment, etc.). Obviously, tourism and travel in the Third World and encounters with the “locals”, is in itself a sure way to experience feelings of economic superiority and potency. The alluring fantasy of putting on an “aristocratic” persona for a holiday was recognized by the first entrepreneurs in the tourist industry and has remained highly durable ever since.¹⁶¹ As a “vulgar” replication of the elitist travel experience, tourism, argues Paul Fussell, always seeks to pass for real travel:

¹⁶⁰ Jean-Didier Urbain “*L’idiot du voyage: Histoires des touristes* (Paris, 1991), 25-6, quoted in Diane P. Koenker, “Travel to Work, Travel to Play: on Russian Tourism, Travel and Leisure”, 657.

¹⁶¹ In his study of Cook’s tours, Edmund Swinglehurst writes: “The first tourists to use the services of Cook’s tourist agency “felt something of the gloss of their social superiors descended on their shoulders and, as many of them were the teachers, doctors, and clergy, who served the upper classes, they reasonably hoped that in the course of time the closing of the cultural gap would lead to the bridging of the social gap as well.” *Cook’s Tours: The Story of Popular Travel* (Faraday Close: Littlehampton Book Services 1982), 34.

What distinguishes the tourist is motives, few of which are ever openly revealed: to raise social status at home and to allay social anxiety; to realize fantasies of erotic freedom; and most important, to derive secret pleasure from posing momentarily as a member of a social class superior to one's own, to play the role of the "shopper" and spender whose life becomes significant and exciting only when one is exercising power by choosing what to buy.¹⁶²

Touristic shame, self-contempt, or in more neutral terms, urge of dissociation, then, is rooted on the one hand, in a "a denial and repression of the mass availability of privilege, and on the other, in the perceived inauthenticity of touristic experience."¹⁶³ In his analysis of the semiotics of sightseeing, Van Den Abbeele describes foreign tourists in France who use their guidebooks to locate an "authentic" Parisian *boulangerie* (for tourists shun other tourists and want to appropriate "authenticity" all for themselves.) Inevitably, however, by virtue of being marked, the *boulangerie* begins to attract droves of tourists and loses its authenticity both for the locals who flee the by now-overcrowded place and for the tourists themselves who find no "local atmosphere" there anymore. Frustration leads to the marking of more and more sights,

¹⁶² Paul Fussell, *Abroad*, 42.

¹⁶³ John Frow, "Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia," 147.

Interestingly enough, tourist's aversion to other tourist is recognized today by producers of tour guides, tourist sites and guidebooks, that seek to present certain venues or tourist practices as "authentic", "uncontaminated by tourists." An "alternative" guidebook for Vilnius, titled *NAKED Vilnius (un-tourist guide)* bluntly states its objectives: "The world is so overrun by tourists these days that nobody wants to be one. Nobody wants to stroll around on tourist trails; no one wants to eat the tourist food or see the popular tourist destinations, nobody wants to talk like a tourist or behave like a tourist. Nobody wants to be the guy with a map rushing to photograph the 20 architectural masterpieces only to never come back there again. Nobody yearns for the standard experiences. Nobody wants to share the same memories. Nobody wants a tourist guide. That's why we published NAKED." Idre Speciunaite and Vykintas Bartkus, *NAKED Vilnius (un-tourist guide)* (Vilnius: INCITY, 2007). The non-standard "experiences" suggested by the authors, such as participating in street-fairs, visiting artistic squats and listening to the echo in the medieval dungeons of the Vilnius castle are all, of course, potentially susceptible to commercialization the very moment they make it into a guidebook, turning into regular tourist venues, albeit with a "alternative", sub-culture edge to them. Consider, for example, Budapest's famous *romkocsmák* [ruin pub], such as *Szimpla kert*, *Siraly*, or *West Balkan*, that kicked off as a popular low-key student venue in run-down buildings and yards in the inner-city, with randomly assembled furniture and plastic cups for cheap drinks. As the popularity of these pubs grew, with some of them (*Szimpla kert* and *Szoda*) included in *Jewish Budapest* and *Walks* guide books, the owners committed to a conscious stylization of these places with graffiti, bath tubs-turned-loveseats, etc. so they now bring more profit, economic analysts say, than the lease of a renovated building constructed on their spot would have. Needless to say, that the public drawn to *romkocsmák* nowadays consists predominantly of expatriates and tourists as the locals moved to cheaper and less crowded venues.

which does not, however, help tourists to capture the elusive sense of authenticity.

Thus tourism operates “less to palliate than to exacerbate alienation, as the tourist in his insatiable desire for immediacy and authenticity finds himself (sic!) enmeshed in the very web of mediacy and inauthenticity, from which he is trying so hard to flee.”¹⁶⁴

The proliferation of semiotic “markers” generated both for and by tourists themselves is at the core of modernity’s nostalgia for the purer, simpler mode of being prior to the advance of capitalism, large-scale industrialization and urbanization. Under the burden of representations (rapidly turning into clichés) produced by earlier generations of travelers and travel writers, late twentieth century holidaymakers are hard pressed to narrate their travel impressions in terms that would be uniquely their own. Although the anxiety of influence has been the affliction of travel writers since the late eighteenth century, engendered by the concept of originality that formed at the time, by the end of the twentieth century the realization of the genre’s perceived exhaustion often prompted travel writers to employ self-irony, parody, pastiche, multiple coding, dialogical relationship with the reader, deliberate exposure of the creative devices, and other elements of post-modern (auto-reflexive) poetics in order to wrestle their voices out of the polyphony of previous accounts. The most prolific and widely-read of contemporary travel authors, including Paul Theroux, Robert Kaplan, Shirley Hazzard, Bruce Chatwin, Jan Morris, and Ronald Wright, - reinvent the genre by synthesizing documentary journalism and political commentary, anthropology, and cultural criticism with a confessional mode of narrative that records the traveler’s impressions of the experiences of the journey.

¹⁶⁴ “Current visitors to Paris may find it fashionable, for example, to ignore famous sights such as the Eiffel Tower or the Louvre in order to find the “real” French life in little known parts of the city. As such a movement begins to take place though, the sights of that “real” or “authentic” Paris become themselves just another tourist attraction and therefore just as inauthentic.” Georges Van Den Abbeele, “Sightseers: The Tourist as Theorist”, 7

In her 1976 short story “Unguided Tour”, Susan Sontag talks about the near impossibility of having a genuine, “original” travel experience and lists the worn-out expressions and tropes of the tourist discourse, the common-speak of tourists: “nice”, “it won’t be here for long”, “they said”, “this spot”, “cameras”, “advice”, “let’s”, “lingering”, “buying”, “ruined”, “satiety”, “pleasures”, “tip”, “the locals”, etc. Loathing what Boorstin calls the “tautology of every modern experience” and having worn and exhausted all other appellations and clichés of travel, Sontag’s characters are left with no travel identity to claim:

I’m perfectly all right. I beg you don’t buy the catalogue. Or the post-card size reproductions. Or the sailor sweater.
 Don’t be angry. But did you tip Monsieur Rene?
 Say to yourself fifty times a day: I am not a connoisseur, I am not a romantic wanderer, I am not a pilgrim.
 You say it.
 “A permanent part of mankind’s spiritual goods.”
 Translate that for me. I forgot my phrase book.¹⁶⁵

This crisis of strong referentials that seems to have blurred the boundaries between the spheres of existence previously held distinct is corollary to the general sense of decline of the “real thing”. Real travelers, real “locals,” real sights are either gone already or are about to be destroyed. The sole remaining purpose of contemporary travel/tourism, then, is “to see everything before it disappears”:

I took a trip to see the beautiful things. Change of scenery. Change of heart.
 And do you know?
 What?
 They’re still there.
 Ah, but they won’t be there for long.
 I know. That’s why I went. To say goodbye. Whenever I travel, it’s always to say goodbye.¹⁶⁶

Bryan Turner identifies four main facets of modern nostalgia: 1) it mourns the disappearance of genuine human relationships and associations; 2) it is disoriented by

¹⁶⁵ Susan Sontag, “Unguided Tour” (1976) in Elizabeth Hardwick, ed., *Susan Sontag Reader* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1982), 371-381;374.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 371.

the waning of religious consciousness and concomitant loss of moral certainty and personal wholeness; 3)it nurtures the sense of historical decline and laments the passing of the Golden Age; 4)it is frustrated by the loss of authenticity and emotional spontaneity of a simpler but more genuine, “auratic” way of life.¹⁶⁷ All of these elements are key to the understanding of modern tourism and travel. As we have seen earlier, the longing for the Golden Age of real travel has a common place in the writings of both travelers, like Theroux and Levi-Strauss, and cultural critics of tourism and travel, like Boorstin and Fussel. A well-known passage from *Tristes Tropiques* captures the sentiment well:

I should have liked to live in the age of *real* travel, when the spectacle on offer had not yet been blemished, contaminated and confounded; then I could have seen Lahore not as I saw it, but as it appeared to Bernier, Tavernier, Manucci... There’s no end, of course, to such conjectures. When was the right moment to see India? At what period would the study of the Brazilian savage have yielded the purest satisfaction and the savage himself been at his peak?”¹⁶⁸

At the same time, modern nostalgia is fundamentally self-conscious of its own futility. Having lost the positivism of traditional religious consciousness, modernity has made a cultural necessity out of auto-reflexivity and doubt. Hence, modern discourses of nostalgia that are staked out by the two fundamental impulses of modernity – the utopian longing for the more harmonious past on the one hand, and incredulity towards its own myths on the other – “are enamored of distance, not of the referent itself.”¹⁶⁹ Paul Theroux shows how the romantization of the bygone era of “real travel”, when the world was innocent and ripe for discoveries derives from every

¹⁶⁷ Bryan Turner, “A Note on Nostalgia,” *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 4 no. 1 (1987), 147, 150-1.

¹⁶⁸ Claude Levi-Strauss’ *Tristes Tropiques*, 44-5.

¹⁶⁹ Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1984), 145.

traveler's wish to "see his route as pure, unique, and impossible for anyone else to recover." Not only is it ridiculous to think, he argues, that the world "has been exhausted of interest", but the desire to experience the different, the exhilarating, the unknown is only made stronger by contemporary proliferation of "easy", mock-travel (i.e. tourism):

The argument runs: In that period [fifty or sixty years ago] the going was good. These older travelers look at the younger ones with pity and seem to say: "Why bother to go?"

It is a ridiculous conceit to think that this enormous world has been exhausted of interest. There are still scarcely visited places and there are exhilarating ways of reaching them. You can fly to Merida in Yucatan from New York and spend an interesting week among the ruins, and come back to people saying, "It's not what it was" – every pre-war tourist acting like Quetzalcoatl, the Plumed Serpent. But there is a better way to go, as a stranger on a train, via Peachtree Station in Georgia and New Orleans to Nuevo Laredo and Mexico City. [...] For the bold and even not-so-bold (there has never been a time in history when the faint-hearted traveler could get so far) the going is still good.

170

Levi-Strauss characteristically concludes his reflections on the Golden Age of *real* travel with the realization that any backward movement would also deprive him of the ability to adequately comprehend the reality of the past. Nostalgia is a "sadness without an object", a longing for repetition that is all too aware of the inauthenticity of all repetition:

[It] is always ideological: the past it seeks has never existed except as narrative, and hence, always absent, that past threatens to reproduce itself as a felt lack. Hostile to history and its invisible origins, and yet longing for an impossibly pure context of lived experience at a place of origin, nostalgia wears a distinctly utopian face, a face that turns towards a future-past, a past which has only ideological reality.¹⁷¹

Heritage-tourism, one the booming forms of contemporary tourist industry may essentially be regarded as an attempt of catering for this overriding nostalgia by

¹⁷⁰ Paul Theroux, "Stranger on a Train: The Pleasures of Railways", 130.

¹⁷¹ Susan Stewart, *On Longing*, pp. 44, 23.

manufacturing its object: a consumable narrative of the past. I single out this form of tourism out of many other (recreational, ecological, sex tourism, etc.) precisely because it complicates the neat distinction between travel and tourists practice by raising important questions about the agents of sight-marking, institutionalization of sight-seeing, stylization of traditions, political implications of tourism, the audiences' reception, etc. The latter is certainly one of the least studied questions, that is often overlooked by the sweeping generalizations about tourist's passivity, superficiality and suggestibility.

In lieu of conclusion

Despite the wide range of existing forms and styles of tourism (heritage, ecological, recreational, extreme, sex, etc.), the phenomenon seems to possess a set of enduring characteristics that distinguish it from "sophisticated travel". Following the inventory of touristic clichés compiled by Sontag, it seems useful to recap the key tropes of the discourse of tourism:

Vulgarity

Non-authenticity

Parvenu, middle class

Wide availability

Gender equality

Self-hatred

Hedonism

Leisure

Predictability

Comfort

Consumption

Passivity

Ideological conformism

Collective condition

Pre-fabricated, mass-produced experience

Pre-scripted, simulated “sights” and destinations (Boorstin’s “pseudo-places”)

Superficiality

Controllability of adventure

Obsession with photography

The definition of travel, however, seems more problematic: context-bound, historically specific, and intrinsically vulnerable to “politically-correct” deconstructions as unabashedly elitist, chauvinistic, etc. A simple inversion of tourism’s attributes (e.g. non-authenticity vs. authenticity; ideological conformism vs. rebelliousness, fun-seeking vs. creativity, etc.) will not make a definition of travel more comprehensible, but rather will expose the porous boundaries between travel and tourism as *experiential* categories. As Sanna Turoma perceptively notices in her discussion of the nineteenth century “cultural pilgrimages” to Venice inspired by Byron’s sojourn in the city, although the cultural narratives attached to some destinations (Venice being a quintessential example of a European tourist city and simultaneously an embodiment of “high culture”) are perceived as utterly incongruous with any form of collective tourist experience, they have nevertheless been produced by “exiles, writers, artists” who visited Venice as *tourists*, including Byron himself.

¹⁷² Paul Theroux explicitly compares the luxurious Grand Tour, that seems, (historically at least) to belong to the era of travel and has always been romanticized as an epitome of travel by subsequent generations and contemporary vocational tourism with its easy, comfortable ways of “gaining experiences/knowledge”:

¹⁷² Susana Turoma, “Poet kak odinokii turist”, 12.

What was the Grand Tour but a gold-plated package tour, giving the illusion of gaining experience and seeing the world? In this sort of travel you take the society with you: your language, your food, your styles of hotel and service. It is, of course, the prerogative of rich nations – America, western Europe, and Japan.¹⁷³

The dichotomy of tourism versus travel, thus, seems more ideological than practical, owing much of its tenacity to the wishful thinking of narcissistic tourists/travellers who use it to construct their own identity *ad negotia*.

Since I have mentioned Byron and other famous romantic exiles it is worth stressing that an analogous dichotomy as the one discussed earlier would juxtapose tourism and another high-culture symbolic formation – exile. It gained additional symbolic currency in the course of the twentieth century, wrought with expulsions, resettlements and forced displacements of individuals and entire groups of people on the scale unimaginable before. The current academic fascination with the issues of memory, time, and space, has generated a manifest output of critical writing on exile, making the subject an academic common place of sorts. If it is “compelling to think about”, as Edward Said famously remarked, it is precisely because exile embodies the master tropes of modernism, that affect much of the twentieth century art and thought: i.e. alienation, estrangement, longing, restlessness, and displacement¹⁷⁴ As a powerful metaphor of modern consciousness, post-Romantic condition of exile invites for theoretical reflections on the relationship between nation, identity and location¹⁷⁵ In examining the various deployments of “exile” in contemporary critical theory and

¹⁷³ Paul Theroux, “Stranger on a Train”, 131.

¹⁷⁴ Edward Said, “Reflections on Exile” in Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 173-86, 173.

¹⁷⁵ Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 1996), 117 – 122, Hamid Naficy, “Framing Exile: From Homeland to Homepage” in Hamid Naficy, ed., *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place* (New York: Routledge/AFI Film Readers, 1999), 1-13.

across the wide range of disciplines, from history to literary criticism, to anthropology, sociology, media studies and psychoanalysis, one is struck by the sweeping thematic diversity that is being inscribed into the term. It is no longer enough, they seem to suggest, to think of exilic experience as predicated on the spatial displacement, on the physical inaccessibility of home. While the idea of “home” itself has been increasingly under erasure on the part of postmodern critical theorists, the condition of exile is universalized and diffused to the extent that most of the social, political and economic and cultural issues of today appear to produce their own “exiles”: from one’s body, gender, self-hood, culture, community, etc.

Would that mean that the exilic discourse is necessarily rendered obsolete by the postmodernist deconstructions of home/identity and that contemporary western mobility has effectively turned us all, however differently, into easily adapting nomads, indifferent to roots and cultural anchors? Obviously, theoretical readings of exile that uncritically conflate various kinds of displacements and estrangements in the name of the perennially suffering postmodern/post-colonial/subaltern/artistic etc. subject, obscure what Said called the “unbearable historicity” of exilic condition. However, exile continues to be an idiom readily available for both description of the actual experience and the general attitude of mind as long as the political authorities maintain the power to expel and to settle. Even beyond the historical conditions that give birth to the concepts of exile and nomadism they possess a remarkable capacity to evolve and nearly merge, marking the moment of continuity, rather than rupture, between the modernist and postmodernist discourses of identity. Thus, exile can be conscious of the impossibility of home, of existential homelessness - “unhousedness” in George Steiner’s terms – just as well as for the “at-homeness in the world”, the

cosmopolitan feeling of being at home anywhere.¹⁷⁶ Ultimately, both nomads and exiles move in a post-structuralist theoretical landscape, pass the ruined houses of criticism, historiography and intellectual certitude. The traces of affiliation – language, culture and myths of origin - no longer lead them back to “authenticity” and “roots”, but as Iain Chambers deftly put it, “linger on as ... voices, memories, and murmurs that are mixed in with other stories, episodes, encounters”¹⁷⁷

Just as the supposedly extinguished figuration of a “traveler” that haunts contemporary discourse of tourism as its experiential and conceptual antidote, the notion of exile, too, seems to be tourism’s opposite in the modern experience of displacement:

Exile implies coercion, tourism celebrates choice. Exile connotes the estrangement of the individual from an original community; tourism claims community on a global scale. Exile plays a role in Western culture’s narratives of political formation and cultural identity stretching back to the Hellenic era. Tourism heralds postmodernism; it is a product of the rise of the consumer culture, leisure and technological innovation. Culturally, exile is implicated in modernist high-art formations while tourism signifies the very obverse position as the mark of everything commercial and superficial.¹⁷⁸

Caren Kaplan deconstructs the various political, economic and cultural discourses that lend the trope of exile its potency while exposing the *making* of exile as an elitist, aesthetic (not experiential) and a-historical category and an ideology of artistic production. What brings exile to the forefront of public consciousness and accounts for the symbolic potential of the term to designate the generic experience of dispossession, uprootedness and forced relocation is the capacity of literary and intellectual exiles to “live a footprint”, to conceive of their experience in both

¹⁷⁶ George Steiner, “Our Homeland, the Text,” in George Steiner, *No Passion Spent: Essays 1978-1998* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 304-327, 326.

¹⁷⁷ Ian Chambers. *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*. (London: Routledge, 1994), 5.

¹⁷⁸ Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*. (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 1996), 27.

individual and communal terms, as both idiosyncratic and historically and culturally situated. “Although they are statistically the most insignificant and unreliable witnesses,” writes an exiled writer Dubravka Ugrešić, “writers are those who leave their footprints”, speaking in the name of the much more numerous, but voice-less others, migrants, *Gastarbeiter*, refugees and *les sans papiers*.¹⁷⁹

This “voicelessness” that places a historically and socially-lived experience on the fringes of “sophisticated” cultural interest seems to structure the above mentioned dichotomies of tourism versus travel and tourism versus exile. One of the most entrenched perceptions of the binary of tourism/travel describes tourism as a practice “incapable of producing serious knowledge,” but rather oriented towards “consumption” and “appropriation” of it.¹⁸⁰ For Fussell and Boorstin, who mourn the loss of the art of travel and the concomitant decline of sophisticated travel writing under the swell of its vulgar imitations, travel and travel writing are implicated in high art formations: it’s not enough to travel to be a traveler; one needs to leave a literary travelogue of the journey. It is obvious, then, that the opposition between such dichotomies as simulacrum versus authenticity, and consumption versus production of knowledge and aesthetics (e.g. “travelers write travelogues; tourists write postcards”) that structures the dichotomy of travel versus tourism expresses the relation between modernity and its Other – the increasingly engulfing mass culture. Thus, despite the assertions of cultural theorists like Fussell and Boorstin who lament the death of travel, both spatial and textual practices of “sophisticated” travel continue to operate as powerful *symbolic* categories. One of the most prominent cultural theorists of

¹⁷⁹ Dubravka Ugrešić “The Writer in Exile” in *Thank You for Not Reading: Essays on Literary Trivia*. Trans. C.Hawkesworth (Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 2003), 217. Quoted in Darko Suvin, “Exile as Mass Outrage and Intellectual Mission: Miseries and Splendors of Forced Displacement.” (Public Talk at Colleigum Budapest, June 2007).

¹⁸⁰ James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 65.

tourism, Dean MacCannel explains why the dichotomy of travel/tourism is likely to endure:

The dialectic of authenticity is at the heart of the development of all modern social structure. It is manifest in concerns for ecology and front, in attacks on what is phony, pseudo, tacky, in bad taste, mere show, tawdry and gaudy. These concerns conserve a solidarity at the level of total society, a collective agreement that reality and truth exist somewhere in society, and that we ought to be trying to find them and refine them.¹⁸¹

As far as real travelers - and not arm-chair travelers-theorists – are concerned, far from extinguishing the desire to travel in an old-fashioned, “clumsy” and difficult way, tourism has given it a new impetus, reinforcing as well interest in travel literature:

The interest in travel today, which is passionate, arises out of the fact that there is a form of travel prevalent that is now very easy – people want to find an antidote for the immobility that mass tourism has produced; people want to believe that somewhere, somehow, it is still very dangerous, bizarre, anxiety-making and exotic to travel, that one can still make discoveries in a glorious solitary way. Mock-travel has produced a huge interest in clumsy, old-fashioned travel with its disgusting food and miseries and long nights. It also has given rise to lively interest in travel literature and the affirmation that the world is still large and strange and, thank God, full of empty places that are nothing like home.¹⁸²

* * *

This chapter has traced the historical evolution of travel and travel writing from antiquity to modernity and post-modernity through the succession of cultural paradigms and attendant travel styles and through the exploration of the social worlds of travel’s ideologues and practitioners. By bringing together social history, literary history and cultural theory I sought to holograph travel as a sphere of social practice, an expression of dominant cultural, ideological and economic narratives, a focus of

¹⁸¹ Dean MacCannel, *The Tourist: A New Theory of Leisure Class* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999), 155.

¹⁸² Paul Theroux, “Stranger on a Train”, 135.

much of post-contemporary critical theory, and a powerful symbolic category. Such historically-accountable reading of travel and travelogue offers critical insights into the formation of modern identity and the study of modernity's contradictory impulses and anxieties.

Following Elsner and Rubies I looked at the historical trajectories of the three major ideologies that informed travelers' desires and quests: idealism (both religious and secular), empiricism and imperialism, through which the pattern of modernity took shape. While some critics equate the moral bankruptcy of these ideologies with the ultimate death of travel, others seize on tourism and its relationship with the ideal of "sophisticated travel" as another metaphor for (post)modern condition.

The linear historical outline presented above is certainly not the only possible way of narrating the evolution of travel. The story is indeed too complex to be grasped by one cohesive model, and alternative perspectives and chronologies bring to light overlooked aspects of the construction of travel experience. Literary critics and historians, like Dennis Porter and Casey Blanton, for instance, discuss the rise of the authoritative, introspecting authorial voice as a paradigmatic marker of modernity. For Blanton, for example, the road to modernity is signified by the changing role of subjectivity and the shifting of attention from the observation of external reality to the inner self, and ultimately from experience to its interpretation and recording of "personal reactions."¹⁸³ Blanton structures her study of the history of travelogue around the changing narratorial persona and his/her evolving desires and travel

¹⁸³ Daniel Boorstin deftly expresses the essence of this transition as well as the futility of postmodern search for difference and authenticity: "Formerly, [travel] books brought us information about the conduct of life in foreign courts, about burial rites and marriage customs, about the strange ways of beggars, craftsmen, tavern hosts, and shopkeepers. Most travel literature long remained on the pattern of Marco Polo. Since the mid-nineteenth century, however, and especially in the twentieth century, travel books have increasingly become a record not of new information but of personal "reactions." From "Life in Italy," they become "the American in Italy." People go to see what they already know is there. The only thing to record, the only possible source of surprise, is their own reaction." *The Image*, 116.

objectives. Her inventory of different figurations of travelers echoes the famous passage in Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*: "vain travelers" (Grand Tour); Victorian women travelers; "splenetic" travelers (e.g. V.S. Naipaul), "lying travelers" (e.g. Bruce Chatwin), and more recently "travelers as exiles", etc. In retrospect, it seems that the diverse personifications of travelers revolve between the two poles – idealism on the one hand, and skepticism and frustration on the other

Zygmunt Bauman oft-quoted essay demonstrates how these and other figurations of travelers can be put to theoretical use. In "From Pilgrim to Tourist" Bauman introduces five types of traveler – pilgrim, stroller (*flaneur*), player, vagabond and tourist, of which the former epitomizes secular modernity and the latter jointly make up for a metaphor of post-modernity. Each type is structured by a particular type of consciousness, particular mode of experiencing time, space and others, etc.. Bauman develops Weberian interpretation of Protestantism as an example of *inner-worldly pilgrimage* – i.e. a specific consciousness that remakes the world in the likeness of the pilgrim's preferred realm, the desert, so that the actual act of leaving is unnecessary. Bauman makes a case for the Protestant experience as an allegory of contemporary western identity, that defamiliarizes the domestic and estranges the outside world, making it empty, cold and essentially stripped of particularity and significance. He analyses Protestant discourse of environment, concluding that

[t]his is the kind of language in which one speaks of the desert: of nothingness waiting to become something, if only for a while; of meaningless waiting to be given meaning, if only a passing one; of the space without contours, ready to accept any contour offered, if only until other contours are offered... of the land of the perpetual beginning; of the place-no-place whose name and identity is not-yet. In such a land, the trails are blazed by the destination of the pilgrim, and there are few other tracks to reckon with.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ Zygmunt Bauman, "From Pilgrim to Tourist – A Short History of Identity" in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, eds., *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1997), 21.

Besides its sheer rhetorical eloquence, “that may or may not be reckoned with,” Bauman’s argument is valuable for this work as it illustrates the lasting cultural significance of pilgrimage (as an ideology, experience and a type of consciousness) that, historical transformations notwithstanding, has profoundly affected (post)modern western identity. The four remaining types put together, argues Bauman, reflect post-modernity’s major attributes: the inauthenticity and fragmentation of being, loss of genuine lasting forms of human association, frustrated yearning for difference, etc.:

[The stroller, the vagabond, the tourist and the player] all favor and promote a distance between the individual and the Other and cast the Other primarily as the Object of aesthetic, moral evaluation; as a matter of taste, not responsibility.¹⁸⁵

Judith Adler, Chirs Rojek and John Urry, among others, focus on the ever-changing relationships between different modes of perception and travel that punctuate the historical evolution of travel/tourist experience. They trace the history of travel from the negation of all senses in favor of “authority of the text “ prescribed to the pilgrims, to the privileging of the visual typical of picturesque tours and Romantic peregrinations; to the importance of gaze, touch, and smell in modern urban travel and *flanerie*, to (post)modern tourism that again sacrificed sensual perception to the meditation of the camera lens, etc.

By broadening the chronological scope of this historical overview I sought to sketch the great variety of travel ideologies that frequently overlapped in their historical emergence and cross-fertilized each other over time, while also paying special attention to the transformation of the cultural foundations behind the modes and purposes of travel and travel writing. Although some of these travel practices and

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 25.

styles are extinct, they remain part of cultural memory and are frequently evoked and given new interpretations to by later generations of travelers and travel writers. The ever-changing chronotope of travel experience – particular assumptions about the temporal (*chronos*) and spatial (*topos*) relationships within the narrative – combined with the particular kind of literary personage, is a crucial vehicle for cultural memory that carries information about the identity of each travel paradigm and the evolution of travelogue as a distinct literary genre.¹⁸⁶ In the next chapter that turns to the history of Russian travel and travel writing, I shall explore these semiotic processes within a radically different historical and cultural context, with markedly different norms and rules that shape the categories of time, space, place, body, identity, and literary imagination.

¹⁸⁶ This is what M. Bakhtin defined as the “genre’s objective memory” [«объективная память жанра»]: the inner form and structure that perpetuates its “identity” of the genre [«литературный жанр по самой своей природе отражает наиболее устойчивые, «вековечные» традиции литературы»] M. Bakhtin, *Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo* [Dostoevsky’s Poetics] (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literature, 1972), 205.

PART TWO: The Evolution of Russian Travel and Travel Writing

CHAPTER 1: Travel, Travelogue, Space and Place in Medieval Russian culture

Earlier I have discussed travel and tourism (and the relationship between the two) historically, as pivotal makers and markers of the modern condition. The different approaches to the evolution of travel and the development of the cultural practices and productions associated with it (e.g. travelogue, photography, consumption, etc.) outlined in the previous chapter highlight the continuities and ruptures between the historically-specific cultural models that shape both the experience of travel and its cultural representations. Travel/tourism in modernity and post-modernity is structured by the dialectical relationship between the older ideal of travel as a quest for the spiritual fulfillment, knowledge, sensual stimulation, artistic inspiration, etc., and the (post)modern skepticism about the ideas of progress and moral betterment. Having looked at the brief history of “Western” (i.e. European and North American) travel and travelogue, I shall now explore the peculiarities of Russian culture in order to lay out a broader socio-historical context for the close reading of the texts I have selected.

Pilgrimage

Beginning with the adaptation of Christianity in 988, pilgrimage [паломничество or богомолье] quickly becomes one of the key spiritual practices in medieval Rus'. Kiev, Moscow, Great Novgorod, Vladimir, Suzdal', the islands of Valaam and Solovki with their monasteries, as well as hundreds of smaller shrines, chapels, “holy” hermitages, caves, and lakes attracted constant flow of visitors throughout the entire year, but especially around the religious holidays. Given the significance of specific Saints' days in the Orthodox calendar and a wealth of cults associated with the sites

where the Saints were believed to have lived, preached or to have been buried, the tradition and practice of Orthodox pilgrimage can be viewed as a particular interaction between the sacred calendar time and the consecrated space/terrain on which this temporal practice unfolded. Outside of the Russian lands proper, the main destination of the Christian journey was certainly Palestine and Jerusalem, although the routes of the pilgrimage extended as far as the Italian city of Bari (where the pilgrims venerated the relics of St. Nicholas of Myra), Khilindar Monastery on Mount Athos, and, of course, Tsar'grad (Constantinople) that was the usual stopping point for the pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem. Besides its symbolic significance as the original seat of Eastern Christianity and home to many relics and shrines venerated by the pilgrims, Tsar'grad was an important site for much of the commercial and diplomatic travel from Rus' until the Turkish conquest of the city in the 15th century. Princess Olga, who traveled to Tsar'grad in 954 and then again in 957 "to study the Christian faith at its source" is often regarded as the first Russian pilgrim to Byzantium, although her first journey was made before her conversion to Christianity.¹⁸⁷ The interplay of pragmatic (diplomatic, political, commercial, etc.) and religious rationales that historians attribute to Olga's appearance in Tsar'grad underlies many of the subsequent journeys, especially those carried out by high Church hierarchs, who went to Byzantium not only to visit Hagia Sophia and its many relics or to study Christian liturgy from, but also in order to solicit support from the Patriarchs in Constantinople in domestic/internal struggles for power and legitimacy (e.g. Archbishop Antony of Novgorod (1200), Metropolitan Pimen of Moscow (1389), etc.)¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ Historians are debating the exact date and place of Olga's baptism. Her first appearance in Byzantium certainly had as much to do with her interest in Christianity as it did with her political and diplomatic goals.

¹⁸⁸ See Gail D. Lenhoff Vroon, *The Making of the Medieval Russian Journey*, (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1978); John Glad, *Russia Abroad: Writers, History, Politics* (Washington D.C. and

Life and Pilgrimage of Daniil, Abbot of the Russian Land (1106-1008?)

One of the earliest written reports of an Orthodox pilgrimage, although, perhaps, a somewhat atypical one, is the early twelfth century *khozhenie* of abbot Daniil.¹⁸⁹ It follows Daniil's journey to Palestine in a manner of a guidebook, with ample space devoted to the discussion of the religious significance of places and relics visited and of the miraculous legends associated with them (stories of apparitions, healings, etc.) On his return from the Holy Land abbot Daniil also visited Tsar'grad. Daniil's account, sophisticated in the range and depth of its narrative and rather personal for his day and age, chronicles a journey both physical (lengthy, dangerous, fascinating) and mental. Daniil's use of the apocryphal narratives in describing the sacred places is archetypal of the genre and underlies Western European pilgrim accounts as it does the Russian (and also Byzantine) ones.¹⁹⁰ I have dwelled earlier on the evolution of perception in the experience of travel that throughout the development of both the practice itself and its literary renditions configures, among other things, the authority (reliability and "worth") of the narrator as the observer and the teller of the tale. In this respect, the fundamental break between the medieval travel and travelogue designed within the traditional religious framework and the early modern ethnographic journeys heavily influenced by the dominant epistemological discourse of empiricism is marked by the shift from the "ear" to the "eye" - i.e. towards the immediacy of the

Tenafly, NJ: Hermitage and Birchbark Press, 1999), 34-40; I.V. Mokletsova, "Palomnicheskaya traditsia v russkoi kul'ture (iz istorii dokhovnogo opyta)" ["The pilgrimage tradition in Russian culture (from the history of the spiritual experience)] in *Vestnik MGU*, vol. 19: Linguistics and Intercultural communication, no.1 (2001), 64-75.

¹⁸⁹ O. Belobrova et al., eds., *Abbot Daniil, Zhitie i khozhenie Daniila igumena Russkoi Zemli* (Life and Pilgrimage of Daniil, Abbot of the Russian Land). (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Olega Obyshko, 2007.)

¹⁹⁰ See Theofanis Stavrou, P.A. and Peter Weisensel, *Russian Travelers to the Christian East from the Twelve to the Twentieth Century* (Columbus, OH: Slavica Pub, 1986); N.I. Prokofieva, ed., *Kniga Khozhenii: zapiski russkikh puteshestvennikov XII-XV vv* [The Books of Perigrinations: Accounts of Russian Travelers, XII-XV cc.] (Moscow: 1984).

visual perception that replaces medieval centering on the generic canon of written text(s).¹⁹¹ In the stories of the pilgrims, veneration and worship of a shrine or a sacred object was conceived of as a matter of consuming devotional narratives to which these objects were thought to be linked and thus reaffirming them, rather than producing one's own narratives that described these objects' concrete physical properties as perceived by the pilgrim.¹⁹² Thus, the previous record accumulated by generations of earlier pilgrims, however allegorical and imprecise it may often be, is ultimately more privileged epistemologically than the appearances of the world as seen by a singular traveler, and imbues even the most idiosyncratic and literal of accounts with the particular type of figural ideality.

Daniil's *khozhdenie* [хождение] - the customary name for the medieval Russian reports of pilgrimages – is remarkable inasmuch as it differs from most of the accounts in the personal and lively style of its storyline. Again, the biblical precedents that inspired specific precautions that guided Western Christian pilgrimages and their written descriptions also informed the canonical structure of medieval Russian *khozhdenie* and mostly survived until this day. The late twentieth century abbot Ioanne of the Mount Sinai defines pilgrimage as “reverent temper, unknown wisdom, prudence that speaks of itself, concealed life, unseen goal, hidden design, wish for humility...beginning of the divine love, refusal of vanity, the depth of silence.”¹⁹³ Self-transcendence and disregard for matters profane as means of achieving the

¹⁹¹ See, for example, Hal Foster, ed., *Vision and Visuality* (Seattle: The New Press, 1988) especially Martin Jay's “Scopic Regimes of Modernity”; Norman Bryson, *Word and Image: French Painting of the Ancient Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), Judith Adler, “Origins of Sightseeing,” *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 16, no.1 (1989): 8; John Frow, “Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia”, *October*, Vol. 57. (Summer, 1991): 123-151, 142-143, etc.

¹⁹² Andreas Schönle, *Authenticity and Fiction in the Russian Literary Journey, 1780-1840* (London and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 1.

¹⁹³ Abbot Ioanne of the Mount Sinai, (Moscow: 1991). Quoted in I.V. Mokletsova, “Palomnicheskaya traditsia v russkoi kul'ture (iz istorii dokhovnogo opyta)” [“The pilgrimage tradition in Russian culture (from the history of the spiritual experience)”, 69.

necessary introspective concentration and spiritual elevation are explicit in the deliberate absenting of the narrator in all his/her bodily physicality (i.e. hunger, fatigue, etc.) from the narrative. Customary references to one's own sinfulness and worthlessness at the sight of the glory of G-d revealed to the "undeserving" pilgrim are very much part of the canon. So much more interesting then are the deviations from the prescribed model, accounts of pilgrimages like those of Daniil, Stefan of Novgorod (1348-1349), Ignaty of Smolensk (1389), Monk Zosima (1418-1422), etc. Stefan of Novgorod who traveled to Byzantium in the mid-fourteenth century left a detailed description of the Tsar'grad holy sites and is rather personal in tone. Ignaty of Smolensk kept a travel diary that traced the journey to Tsar'grad that he undertook in 1389 as a secretary of Metropolitan Pimen. Monk Zosima's early fifteenth century peregrinations covered all of the holy places, including Salonika and Mount Athos. In clear deviation from the tradition of *khozhdenie* and to the delight of his lay audience, Zosima describes the hardships and perils of his undertaking (physical exhaustion, loss of money at the hands of the pirates, etc.), while stressing his own perseverance and courage, etc. Where other traveling pilgrims fail to as much as hint at the actual itinerary of their journey, let alone ponder the mundane actualities of the endeavor (i.e. encounters with the locals, places of rest, kinds of foods, etc.), Daniil spends no little time in his work recounting the many trials he encountered on his way, providing a fair share of landscape descriptions and evocations of the many strange and wondrous sights he encounters on his way.

At the turn of the twentieth century the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society founded in 1882 sponsored the re-publication of the large body of literature dedicated to pilgrimage. The republished voluminous collection included accounts that covered the history of pilgrimage over 600 years (1100s – 1700s), as well as edicts and

writings of the Church fathers that sought to regulate the constantly increasing flow of pilgrims to the Holy Land and other foreign and domestic destinations. As early as the eleventh century, confronted with the swell in the numbers of pilgrimages to Palestine, the Church voiced concern over the excessive zeal of some of the pilgrims encouraging most to stay home. Anxious about the trivialization of the sacred practice, the Church sought on the one hand, to strictly prescribe the appropriate mode of the Orthodox journey, while on the other, to affirm the great responsibility and sacrifice that such undertaking entailed.

The physical hardships were essential to the experience, which was often regarded as a form of penitence: exhaustion, semi-starvation and self-disciplining restraint from any (potentially disturbing) contacts with the fellow travelers or the local people all worked to cure the spiritual idleness and to strengthen the faith. Typically, the pilgrims had to leave on foot in groups of 10 to 15 people, taking with them the little provisions of dry bread crust, tea and sugar that they could share among themselves without having to rely on the kindness of strangers for the food-stuffs (which was not always observed, and in particularly lengthy journey, simply impossible.) They found shelter in barns, crowded quarters of large peasant families, frugal lodgings run for this purpose by the Church, etc. The priests often discouraged the prospective pilgrims wishing to embark on a lengthy journey maintaining that those who do not know the way inside of themselves would get lost wondering in the outside world as the sacred places and relics are better felt “from within” than in their external, physical incarnation.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 70.

'Liminality' and 'wandering' as cultural constants; history of Russian tradition of pilgrimage

The duality of inner versus outer experiences, the ideal versus its worldly, profane realization, is at the core of the semiotic structure of pilgrimage, this archetype of voyage. In his encyclopedic study of Russia's cultural history, Yuri Stepanov speaks about wanderers [странники] and pilgrims [паломники] as two of the constants of Russian culture.¹⁹⁵ While the pilgrims travel towards a particular destination, and usually return home after their journey is accomplished, the pursuit of wanderers/stranniki is essentially boundless and unlimited in either its time scope or the length of the route. Essentially, it is a literal implementation of the Biblical emphasis on the temporary and transient character of the earthly reality that is transcended by the motion of the soul and the body in search of the eternal and true world-to-come (Jews. 13:14) Berdiaev's much quoted "all Russians are wanderers in search of God's truth" marks the point where the meanings of these two "constants" converge to assert restlessness, escapism, and "messianic sensibility" as the key elements of Russian consciousness and the propelling forces behind both wandering and pilgrimage.¹⁹⁶ In *The Russian Idea* Nikolai Berdiaev (1874-1948) talks about wandering as a specifically Russian phenomenon unknown, as he argues, in the West. The passage is worth quoting at length as it talks about a particular "eschatological directedness" of Russian consciousness, of Russians as "people of the end" [«народ

¹⁹⁵ Yurii, Stepanov, *Konstanty: Slovar' Russkoy Kul'tury* [The Constants: Dictionary of Russian Culture] (Moscow: Akademicheskii proekt, 2004), 183- 210.

¹⁹⁶ Nikolai Berdiaev, *Russkaia ideaia*. [Russian Idea] (Paris: YMCA, 1946), 10, 199. Quoted in English from David Bethea's *The Shape of Apocalypse in Modern Russian Fiction* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), 12, 27-8.

конца»] in the terms that are critical for the present discussion, and to which I shall be returning later in this work¹⁹⁷:

Russians always thirst for another life, another world; they always experience displeasure at what *is*. There belongs to the structure of the Russian soul an eschatological directedness. <...> The wanderer walks the boundless Russian land and never settles down, never becomes attached to anything. The wanderer searches for the truth, for the Kingdom of Heaven; he is directed into the distance. The wanderer has no abiding earthly city, but is directed towards the City-to-Come [«град грядущий»]. <...> [There is] an inability to be at ease with anything finite, the directedness toward what is infinite. But this is also an eschatological directedness, an expectation that there will be an end to all that is finite, that a final truth will be revealed, that in the future some sort of extraordinary occurrence will take place. I would call it a messianic sensibility, to an equal degree characteristic of those [coming] from the people [*narod/narod*] and of those of higher culture. Russians are, to a greater or lesser extent, consciously or unconsciously, chiliasts. Westerners are much more sedentary, more attached to the perfected forms of civilization; they value their present and are more concerned with the successful management of the earth.¹⁹⁸

My references to Berdiaev certainly need a qualifier. My further purpose here is not to evaluate the validity of his argument or to present an in-depth examination of Russian Orthodoxy, which would be both impossible and beyond my competence, but rather to explore the area in which the cultural and theological “constants” converge to produce what David Bethea calls “apocalyptic consciousness.” Admittedly given to generalizations, which in the very least, need to be historically contextualized,

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 19 and also in Nikolai Berdiaev, “O Rossii i russkoi filosofskoi kulture” [On Russia and Russian Philosophical Culture] (Paris: YMKA Press, 1996), 11.

¹⁹⁸ «У русских всегда есть жажда иной жизни, иного мира, всегда есть недовольство тем, что есть. Эсхатологическая устремленность принадлежит к структуре русской души. Странничество – очень характерное русское явление, в такой степени незнакомое Западу. Странник ходит по необъятной русской земле, никогда не оседает и ни к чему не прикрепляется. Странник ищет правды, ищет Царства Божьего, он устремлен вдаль. Странник не имеет на земле своего пребывающего града, он устремлен к Граду Грядущему. [...] Есть не только физическое, но и духовное странничество. Оно есть невозможность успокоиться ни на чем конечном, устремленность к бесконечному. Но это и есть эсхатологическая устремленность, есть ожидание, что всему конечному наступит конец, что окончательная правда откроется, что в грядущем будет какое-то необычайное явление. Я назвал это мессианской чувствительностью, одинаково свойственной людям из народа и людям высшей культуры. Западные люди гораздо более оседлые, более прикреплены к усовершенствованным формам своей цивилизации, более дорожат своим настоящим, более обращены к благоустройству земли.» Nikolay Berdiaev, *Russkaia idea*, 199.

Berdiaev nevertheless, engages these “constants” or tropes that are present within Russian social thought since very early on, becoming especially prominent in the times of great transformations and turmoil: the Mongol invasion (1240-1480), the Great Schism (1660s), Petrine reforms (early 1700s), etc.¹⁹⁹ By the nineteenth century the idea of a particular “eschatological bend” of Russian culture figures prominently in both the country’s political and ideological discourses and of course, in the emerging tradition of Russian prose fiction.

Leaving for leaving’s sake, wanderers are liminal figures *par excellence* that live outside of the realm of either the organized community, or the dominion of the Church parish. The unstructured ad hoc manner of their incessant traveling has always oscillated between the lofty and the grotesque. On the one hand, we have the traditional Russian association of stranniki as the “holy people” [божьи люди] that through their misery and self-deprivation take it upon themselves to redeem the sinfulness of the world. Like the “holy fools” [юродивые], who are traditionally venerated as innocent souls with a gift for prophesy and who were frequently wandering around as well, wanderers [странники] receive alms and sometimes shelter: helping them is regarded as an important Christian duty. At the same time, as people without domicile and permanent occupation, wanderers/stranniki are also suspect in the eyes of the peasant communities and city dwellers alike: they are often seen as idlers and fakes, their phony piety masking their “social parasitism.” At the same time, even despite the chronic shortages of labor, peasant communities customarily did not prevent prospective pilgrims [паломники] from undertaking their journeys.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹ David Bethea, *The Shape of Apocalypse*, 13, 3-61.

²⁰⁰ I.V. Mokletsova, “Palomnicheskaya tradizia”, 70.

Russian émigré writer Nadezhda Lokhvitzkaya (1872-1952) better known as Teffy, writes about the spirit of restlessness that propels Russian wanderers and vagabonds in her essay «Воля» [*Volya*] that can be roughly translated as “Free Spirit.”

²⁰¹It is not the mere love of travel that prompts thousands of vagabonds to leave their home and to embark on endless wanderings, she muses:

Get such vagabond a ticket and send him with money and comfort to some wonderful Russian place, to the Caucasus or to the Crimea. He will jump out of the carriage somewhere around Kursk, spend all the money on alcohol and start off on foot [up north,] to Archangelsk. Why?

--They say one can get tar cheaply there.

--What do you need this tar for?

--Just so, just said it for saying sake.

The point is not the tar, the point is to move, to move no matter where, to follow one's nose [идти куда глаза глядят.]

This is the aim of the Russian soul - to follow one's nose. ²⁰²

Etymologically, the word *странник/strannik* - wanderer – can be derived from a cluster of related words some of which have opposite meaning: *сторона/storona* [side, part], *страна/strana* [country, land], *сторонник/storonnik* [supporter, confederate], *storonni* [detached, uninvolved], *посторонний/postoronni* [adj. alien, n. outsider], *странный/stranny* [strange, bizarre], etc. Stepanov traces the auto antonymy [энантиосемия in Russian – i.e. merger of opposite meanings] of the concept to the semantics of archaic rituals that involved collectivities of people. ²⁰³

²⁰¹ Yet *volya* is not exactly synonymous with either the English “freedom” or the French *liberté*. Teffy explains: freedom is a legal condition of a citizen that has not transgressed his country's laws; while *volya* is a *sentiment*, intrinsic to Russian pre-1917 national consciousness. Teffy, *Teffy: Biblioteka Mirovoy Novelly* (Moscow: Zvonitza MG, 1999), 324-329.

²⁰² «Купите такому бродяге билет, отправьте его с деньгами и комфортом в чудесное русское место, на Кавказ, в Крым, так он выпрыгнет из вагона где-нибудь в Курске, деньги проплет и пойдет пешком в Архангельск. Зачем?

-- Да там, говорят, деготь дешево продают.

-- А на что тебе деготь?

-- Да так, к слову пришлось.

-- Дело не в дегте, а в том, что надо идти. Идти, куда глаза глядят.

Вот она, цель русской души. Куда глаза глядят.» Ibid, 326.

²⁰³ Yuri Stepanov, *Konstanty*, p.185. One may also explore the semantic relationship between the word *скиталец* [wanderer/*skitaletz*] or *скитание* [*skitanie*/peregrination] and *скит* [skit/ hermitage].

Another term, which is closely related to both the Russian *strannik* and *polomnik* and lacks a distinct English analogue is *калика перекатная - переходная* /*kalika perekatnaya-perekhozhaya*. The complex etymology of this term has a double thrust. On the one hand, it can be traced to the Greek [*xals, kos*] and Latin [*calx, calis, cis*] words that mean 1) limestone 2) heel (part of the foot that steps on the stones of the road). In Latin, this root produced a range of words, among them *caliga* [boot], *alcanzar* [to reach; originally: to reach the destination]. At the same time, it is consonant with the Russian word *калека/kaleka* [cripple] and might also derive from it, since the cripple and the feeble minded have been traditionally likely to become vagabonds. A reverse etymology is also possible, from “cripple, kaleka” to “drifter, kalika”, but in either case the terms and the phenomena that they denote are obviously closely related. Finally, another meaning of the word *kalika* is again auto-antonymic – “the giver of alms”, i.e. it can mean the opposite of itself under a different context.

The variation of the same root is *калита/kalita*, obsolete, yet familiar to cotemporary Russian-speakers as the nickname of the fourteenth century Moscow prince Ivan Kalita, that means both “the purse of the benefactor” and “the beggar’s bag.”²⁰⁴ Hence, the history and etymology of these terms reveals a complex cluster of ideas embedded in the Russian concepts of pilgrimage and wandering that includes vagabondism, begging, but also charity and generosity; misery, physical infirmity, wretchedness of the body, but also perseverance, and spiritual strength.

Parenthetically, in his eighteenth century rather amusing essays on etymology, Vasily Tradiakovsky argues that the Russian word for Scythians - *скифы/skiphy* - derives from the same root *skit/skim*: and expressed the essential restlessness and free spirit of the Scythians, these semi-mythological forbears of the Russian people.

²⁰⁴ Historians talk about the massive construction works initiated by the prince that contributed to the rising importance of Muscovy. His wealth, accumulated through skillful politics and taxation helps to explain the mocking nickname “moneybag.” At the same time, the legends tell about the small leather purse full of silver coins that Ivan carried with him at all times, generously giving alms to the poor and the lame.

In Western Christianity, as we have seen earlier, the tension between the highly metaphorical, edifying ideal of pilgrimage and its literal practice was seized on by the Humanist thinkers. Their anti-clerical critique of pilgrimage discarded it as an example of empty ritualistic scholasticism with little spiritual or, most importantly, educational value. The Humanists' emphasis on rationalism and classical learning not only brought about profound transformations in the practice and ideology of pilgrimage and the writing that it generated. It also laid the groundwork for the emergence of distinct new paradigm of travel, that was idealistic inasmuch as it, too, sought out spiritual elevation and moral betterment, but used rational tools to achieve it, most importantly, education in its classical form.

There were, of course, additional socio-economic causes behind the change of attitudes towards all kinds of "liminal" people (pilgrims, vagabonds, beggars, etc. – the differences among them were often quite insubstantial) that becomes evident by the fifteenth century. Medieval Europe showed a non-small degree of tolerance towards the outcasts that had not yet been marginalized and shunned off from the "proper" populace. Charity was widely spread, initiated by urban councils and wealthy monasteries. Urban beggars were organized in a sort of guild, with the elected head, who could discuss with the authorities all matters related to charity and the raising of alms. Individual acts of charity were also common, with pilgrims routinely sheltered and fed in an expectation that their prayers on behalf of the benefactors would be "heard better." Medieval novellas typically describe naïve and hospitable hosts taking in a wandering beggar or a pilgrim hoping to solicit his/her prayers and divine protection. Here again one can sense that the real piety of the wandering worshipper is often suspect or mocked. With the victory of Protestantism in England and the Netherlands in the fifteenth century, begging and idle wandering could hardly

be accommodated by the Protestant doctrine with its emphasis on productive labor and active service to God. At the same time, the economic crisis that plagued many Catholic countries in the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries affected much of the charity associations, forcing hundreds of “professional” drifters to seek employment. The development of the wage labor offered gainful employment even to those who were not part of either the professional urban guild or the peasant community. No longer tolerated or idealized, the wandering crowds were increasingly seen as a nuisance – a wasted source of cheap labor, and a breeding ground for crime. Thus, beginning with late middle ages a definite fault-line of social conventions, ideas of propriety and respectability separated the “proper” society from the “deviants” – those who could not or would not fit in.²⁰⁵

None of these transformations had analogues in Russia and hence the history of Russian Orthodox journey is quite different from its Western European analogue. The difference stems from the peculiarity of Russia’s socio-historical development and from the particular features of Russian Orthodox Christianity. In the fifteenth century, the fall of Byzantium and the fragmentation of the golden horde cut the country off the major trade routes, weakening its external commercial and diplomatic relations. Travelers and pilgrims who often sailed with commercial ships or joined the caravans of merchants were now much fewer in numbers, preferring easier accessible domestic destinations to the foreign ones. Serfdom made free travel difficult if not impossible for the millions of peasants, traditionally numerous among the peregrinating folk. But the flow of pilgrims traveling to religious sights at home or abroad never dried up entirely, becoming larger as soon as the economic and political conditions allowed it. For instance, the end of the Russian-Turkish war of 1828-1829

²⁰⁵ Andrei Chernyshov, “Nischie, brodiagi i razboiniki” [Beggars, Vagabonds and Robbers] in *World History* Svetlana Ismailova, ed., (Moscow: Avanta+, 1994), 310-311.

and the opening of the Russian Orthodox Mission in Jerusalem in 1848 triggered massive influx of visitors to the Holy Land throughout the second part of the nineteenth century. At the same time, while the popularity of pilgrimage to the Holy Land among Russia's social elite was on the rise, the tradition of Catholic pilgrimage to Palestine was already moribund by the time of Napoleonic wars.²⁰⁶

Local destinations, too, attracted no smaller crowds, that grew as the development of railroads in the nineteenth century made traveling more expedient. For instance, at the turn of the twentieth century around 20,000 Orthodox pilgrims visited the monasteries on the islands of Solovki, as many as 300, 000 flocked to Sarov in 1903 to attend the feast celebrating St. Seraphim of Sarov, etc.²⁰⁷ To be sure, beginning with the spread of affordable mass travel – tourism – in the nineteenth century makes it rather difficult to draw a fast-and-hard distinction between pilgrims and tourists. The profane and religious purposes of the trip could have coexisted affecting the modality of the experience and the way in which it was later recounted. Critical, too, is the socio-cultural background of the traveler that influences the form and practice of pilgrimage as well as the degree of adherence to the strict canonical prescriptions recommended for pilgrims by the Church.

The Soviet anti-religious campaign that led to massive repressions against the Church, the destruction or desecration of thousands of monasteries, shrines and sacred relics seemed to have entirely wiped out the tradition of Russian Orthodox pilgrimage. Travel abroad was out of question and many local sites lay in ruins. Visits to those few still remaining could entail serious repercussions on the part of the authorities. Nevertheless, the tradition was carried on, albeit at the personal risk of the few

²⁰⁶ Naomi Shepherd, *The Zealous Intruders: The Western Rediscovery of Palestine* (London: Collins, 1987), 13.

²⁰⁷ I.V. Mokletsova, "Palomnicheskaya traditsia", 73.

believers who dared undertake the journey. The danger and the necessary courage associated with such clandestine pilgrimages had suffused the practice with the symbolic significance of political defiance, resistance and perseverance of faith that was perhaps closer now to the canonical conception of pilgrimage than it had ever been before when the tradition was unhindered by the governmental interference. With the fall of communism and the restitution of Church property, both domestic and foreign pilgrimage became possible again, although the later is hardly available to the average believer. Massive baptisms of the late 1980s–90s brought about the popularization of many of the Church rituals and practices among the newly converted, albeit quite frequently took a form of a fad, mock piety, unsupported by any real knowledge of either the religious canon or even the basic biblical texts. A characteristic feature of contemporary Russian foreign travel is the blurring of boundaries between the categories of pilgrimage and tourism caused by the wavering of authentic religiosity (that, among other things, implies detailed knowledge of the textual tradition) and the simultaneous popularization of external, superficial manifestations of religious observance and piety.²⁰⁸

It is noteworthy, that despite the general course of secularization and modernization, the idea(l) of pilgrimage as an archetype of a Russian journey has proved more resilient than the practice itself. The source of this resilience lies in the very texture of Russian Orthodoxy that unlike the Western European Christian theologies did not have its own Renaissance and Reformation. Barely touched by the ethos of Rationalism, Russia's political and cultural discourse is structured by a

²⁰⁸ Tatiana Tolstaya describes this very confusion, both semantic and cultural, when she writes about contemporary Russian pilgrims in Israel in her short story "Tourists and Pilgrims." Tatiana Tolstaya, "Turisty i polomniki" [Tourists and pilgrims] in *Reka Okkervil* [*The River Okkervi': Collected Stories*] (Moscow: Podkova, 2004), 373-390. An ignorant Russian Orthodox tourist acting as a pilgrim is a stock character in much of contemporary Israeli fiction, that often draws from the real experiences of the Russian-speaking Israeli guides who accompany Russian groups around the Christian holy sights of Jerusalem.

different (mis)balance between rationality and sentiment, law and tradition, universality and particularism, than that of Western European societies. Berdiaev's discussion of "the wandering Russian soul" that spatially – i.e. through incessant escapist motion of leaving, breaking away, withdrawing from, etc. – realizes its messianic fever, is staked out by the explicit juxtaposition between the earthly, positivistic orientation of the Western Christian civilization and the eschatological "directedness" of the Russian culture:

Russians are, to a greater or lesser extent, consciously or unconsciously, chiliasts. Westerners are much more sedentary, more attached to the perfected forms of civilization; they value their present and are more concerned with the successful management of the earth.²⁰⁹

This generalization has at its core the common opposition of Eastern and Western Christian traditions, in which mysticism, irrationality, love of pompous decorum, etc. typical of Eastern Christianity are contrasted with the sober and practical ethos of various branches of Western Christianity, especially Protestantism, that through the tradition of sermons (barely developed in Russia) offers a concrete and practical ethical system. The forms of cult and culture that originated within the Western Christian denominations, argues cultural critic Mikhail Epstein, are structured by "the positive sense of the presence of God, [by the] totality of earthly entities, such as society, state, family, production, art."²¹⁰ Eastern Church, on the contrary, is divorced from earthly objectivity and draws nearer nothingness, timelessness, and infinity "through its identification of life's higher meaning in the rejection of any and all positivities."²¹¹ The absolute and totalistic exigency put on the individual believer in

²⁰⁹ N. Berdiaev, *Russkaia Ideia*, 199.

²¹⁰ Mikhail Epstein "The Origins of Russian Postmodernism" in Ellen E. Berry and Anesa Miller – Pogacar, eds., *Re-Entering the Sign: Articulating New Russian Culture*. (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1995),25-47.

an Orthodox religious tradition translates into a very distinct cultural discourse, which invests value in moral duties, not rights, and celebrates the life of spirit as opposed to the daily grind. Hence, lack of focus and alienation from the worldly matters, obsession with moral and ethical dilemmas, acute sense of chosenness, otherness, of unique spirituality obscure to foreigners (*l'ame slave*, etc.), apocalyptic and messianic motives, the pathos of negation and destruction rather than affirmation, preoccupation with the human psyche and soul at the verge of moral or psychological breakdown, etc.²¹²

Specific quasi-spiritual practices, such as exorcism, asceticism, strict dietary restrictions (fasts), self-immolations, penance, *anchoretism* (Greek: “withdrawal,” “retreat” e.g. hermits) wandering and pilgrimage could be retained almost intact within the Russian Orthodox tradition precisely because they express its irrational and maximalist core through the essentialist juxtaposition of the sinful body versus the eternal soul, of the imperfect and ephemeral “here and now” and “the world to come” that could only be attained through negating the bodily temptations and through redeeming suffering. While the fifteenth century Reformation rerouted Western Christian Church, simplifying and rationalizing its parochial, “medieval” ritualism, Eastern Christianity has not undergone a similar transformation, neither institutionally nor theologically, remaining highly ornate and mystical. Beginning with the 1660s schism within the Russian Church and especially with the Petrine reforms of early 1700s it also experienced a gradual loss of prestige and socio-political significance, its congregational and parish communal life remaining largely underdeveloped. Where

²¹¹ Ibid, 34.

²¹² For more on this see David Bethea’s *The Shape of Apocalypse in Modern Russian Fiction* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989) and Mikhail Epstein, *Postmodern v Rossii : Literatura i Teoriya [Postmodernity in Russia: Literature and Theory]* (Moscow: R. Elenin Publishing House, 2000).

the Western Church has traditionally played an important function in mediating between the low and high cultures and sustaining a sense of social cohesiveness and nationhood, the Russian Orthodox priesthood had been socially and culturally set apart from both the educated elites and the masses of people. Its educational system based on the on the Latinate learning of the counter-Reformation and a set of social limitations instituted by the series of reforms initiated by Peter the Great in 1721, effectively turned the clergy into a self-closed marginalized caste. At the same time, the failure to translate the scriptures and the liturgy from the Church Old Slavonic into the vernacular Russian seriously undermined the Church's sermonizing and didactic potential and its mediating role in introducing the national language and culture to the illiterate dialect-speaking folk.²¹³

This humiliating marginal, socio-political (and economic) position of the Russian Orthodox Church in the post-Petrine Russia helps explain the flourishing of the mystical tradition of "hesychasm." Borrowed from Byzantium in the fifteenth century, "hesychasm" is often compared to the psychophysical techniques of Eastern religious traditions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and partially Jewish Cabbala, the comparison rejected as superficial by the Orthodox Church itself. The purpose of hesychasm is the experiential knowledge of and communion with the emanation of the divine essence that is achieved through spiritual concentration. Rhythmic breathing, particular bodily movements, repeated recital of 'Jesus prayer', and retreat into a secluded locale (a hermitage, *skum/skit*, monastery) all work to create the necessary inner stillness. The hesychast methods and meditative techniques were transmitted by the special mentors – *старцы* /*starsy*, the "holy elders". The particular ethics espoused by them based on asceticism, importance of contemplation, humility, and

²¹³ Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 225-245.

escape from the mundane realities, became especially relevant in the late eighteenth century, when the consequences of the anti-clerical reforms made themselves felt in the increased economic and social marginalization of the clergy.

The role of hesychast theology in preserving and rerouting the practice of Orthodox pilgrimage is hard to overestimate. The monasteries and hermitages where the famous holy elders were known to reside drew hundreds of thousands of believers who hoped for guidance and healing, physical and spiritual. Crucially for our discussion, the celebrated nineteenth century holy elders of the Optyna Pustyn' (a hermitage in the province of Kaluga) were venerated and visited not only by the common people, but also by the intellectuals and culture-makers, among them Gogol', Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, etc. Geoffrey Hosking argues that the spiritual authority of the hesychast holy elders was such as to facilitate the reintegration of the high and low streaks of Russian society and culture, while profoundly affecting Russia's national consciousness.²¹⁴

Russia's nineteenth century great literary tradition with its famed psychologism, obsessive self-introspection, didacticism, and moral anguish is perhaps, the most appropriate illustration of the influence that the ethical system offered by the hesychast theology had on the country's national and cultural discourses.

In her essay "Free Spirit" [«Воля»] that I have quoted earlier, Teffy advances a rather poetic argument about the resilience of Russian pilgrimage. She suggests that the religious sentiment alone does not suffice to propel the wanderers [странники] to embark on their lengthy peregrinations. What is important is to be always on the go [«Все дело было в том, чтобы идти»], to leave for leaving sake:

They are pulled "forward" like the birds of passage. A pull. An incomprehensible force. Unlike the European, we, Russians, are still not

²¹⁴ Ibid, 239-245.

completely detached from nature. The cultural constitutes a fine veneer of our being and the natural can easily break through this veneer. In spring, when the voices of the awoken earth sound louder and call [on us] to get out, to break free [«на волю»] – these voices lead [us] away like a flute of the medieval charmer was leading the mice out of town.²¹⁵

Teffy employs the familiar tropes to juxtapose the nomadic Russians more attuned to nature and less attached to the sedentary comforts of civilization, and the rationality and permanence of the West.

If we now return to the written accounts of the Orthodox pilgrimages, the so-called *хождения/khozhdenia*, we shall see the same socio-historical factors at play in the development of the genre. Here too, Russia's lack of Reformation and of the Humanist tradition conditioned the considerable time lag in the processes of secularization and subjectivization of the accounts of travel. The above mentioned examples of *khozhdenia* written as early as the twelve, fourteenth or fifteenth century (pilgrimages of Daniil, Stefan of Novgorod, Ignaty of Smolensk, monk Zosima, etc.) seem to suggest that rather than a linear progression towards secularization and literal (rather than figural) descriptiveness, it is more appropriate to speak about the gradual accumulation of texts that deviate from the stable model and introduce the personal, the entertaining, and the amusing – i.e. “the literary” – into their narratives in order to both “enhance the authority or the model and heighten the spiritual experience of the readers.”²¹⁶ This process is twofold and affects both the practice of travel and the recounting of it. Just as the journeys themselves frequently combined religious and practical purposes (trade, diplomacy, education, etc.), their written accounts too are

²¹⁵ «До последнего дня были в России странники. Ходили по монастырям, и не всегда вело их религиозное чувство. Все дело было в том, чтобы идти. Их «тянет», как тянет весной перелетных птиц. Тяга. Непонятная сила. Мы, русские, не так оторваны от природы, как европейцы, культура лежит на нас легким слоем, и природе пробиться через этот слой легче. Весной, когда голоса проснувшейся земли звучат громче и зовут громче на волю, - голоса эти уводят. Как дудочка средневекового заклинателя уводила из города мышей.» Teffy, “Volya” in *Teffy: Biblioteka mirovoy novelly*, 327.

²¹⁶ See Gail D. Lenhoff Vroon, *The Making of the Medieval Russian Journey*, (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1978); Andreas Schönle, *Authenticity and Fiction*, 215n3.

often hard to pin down strictly within one paradigm as they include personal impressions and adventures that in their concreteness and subjectivity do not neatly fit into the uplifting figural model of the *khozhdenie*.

Afanasy Nikitin, Journey Beyond Three Seas (1472)

The very term *khozhdenie*, gradually comes to denote accounts of travel as such, losing some of its explicitly religious connotations. Such, for instance, is the famous 1466(8)-72(5) journey to Persia and India of the Tver' merchant Afanasy Nikitin that he described in his travel notes *Journey Beyond Three Seas/Khozhdenie za Tri Moria* that, its title notwithstanding, few contemporary readers would identify as a pilgrimage. Nikitin's work demonstrates the pervasive impact of the traditional religious framework on the narrative composition of the travelogue that combines the author's "ethnographical" interest in matters profane with a staunchly religious outlook. By the time of his journey, Nikitin had widely traveled and was thus chosen by the fellow merchants of Tver' to lead their trade caravan to India. The ships were twice attacked by the pirates, who took away most of the cargo as well as several merchants. When the group arrived to Persia, the majority chose to return home, while Nikitin stayed in Derbent in order to rescue those of his fellow travelers who had been captured by the pirates and recover some of the lost property through trade and other business dealings. When somebody advised him that Persian horses can be profitably sold in India, Nikitin bought an excellent Arabic stallion and sailed off to India. There he sold the horse and stayed on for three more years, doing business and keeping a detailed log of his impressions. His *Journey* is remarkable in the range and sophistication of observations and reflections and remains the classical Russian travelogue, perhaps even the most famous one. Nikitin picked up some of the local

dialect and apparently had access to the palace of the Sultan. He describes the local customs, dress, foods, the astonishing animals, temples and religious festivities. Yet he never loses sight of his own foreignness, tormented by the perceived sinfulness of his sojourn in the pagan world. Soul-searching and agonizing emotionality, atypical of the travel writing of the time, make Nikitin's Journey an extraordinary example of an ethnographic travelogue *avant la lettre*, albeit created within the traditional religious paradigm.²¹⁷

Another example of the emergent ethnographic travelogue still couched in religious terms is the work of Kazan merchant Vasily Gagara, who describes his 1630s journey to the Orient – half pilgrimage, half trade mission. The Russian title of the text, seems to reflect the religious impulse behind the trip – *Khozhdenie of the Vasily the Miserable Nicknamed Gagara in the Palestinian places* - although initially Gagara sailed down the Volga on a ship loaded with goods destined for Persia. Thus, disguised as a report of pilgrimage, Gagara's *khozhdenie* essentially functions as a highly subjective and entertaining “adventure story.” After the ship sank, the merchant decided to make a pilgrimage to Palestine, but the title of his work and his professed piety notwithstanding, he only stayed in Jerusalem for 3 days. He then moved on to Cairo where he remained for two and a half months apparently concerned with the resuscitation of his business, rather than with matters of religious devotion. Before returning to Russia, Vasily briefly backtracks to Palestine and then due to the Turkish-Persian hostilities takes a long route back to Moscow via Turkey, Moldavia and Poland (where he gets imprisoned for another 2 and half months.)²¹⁸ Within the structure of his texts however, the few descriptions of the Orthodox relics are quite

²¹⁷ For more on this, see Mary Jane Maxwell, “Afanasii Nikitin: An Orthodox Russian's Spiritual Voyage in the *Dar al-Islam*, 1468 – 1475”, *Journal of World History* 17:3 (2006), 234-266.

²¹⁸ John Glad, *Russia Abroad*, 36-37, 492.

marginal in comparison with the wealth of “profane” observations. At the core of this work are Gagara’s personal experiences rather than the inventory of the holy sites and the apocryphal narratives associated with them. Obviously, this adventurous journey spilled over the narrow confines of the genre as Vasily described the exotic and the foreign that he marvels at on his way in ample detail, be its Muslim architecture, the pyramids, the Red Sea, the crocodiles on the Nile, sugar cane, etc.

At the same time, just as the experience of pilgrimage is gradually “diluted” by the admixture of utilitarian purposes that prompt the voyages of merchants-cum-pilgrims, so is the literary model of *khozhdenie* that is increasingly affected by other genres and literary forms evolving around the late middle ages. Gagara’s account, for instance, although written in Church Slavonic like most of these texts, is clearly influenced by the rhythmic structure and composition of the Russian folk epic.²¹⁹

The importance of secular tale for the emergent Russian literary tradition is evinced by the frequent admixtures of extravagant fantasies and exaggerations into the seemingly factitious reports. These literary influences percolate into the accounts of travel written within the traditional religious framework through “unsanctioned” descriptions of the strange and miraculous encountered – or invented – by the pilgrims. The concepts of authorship, originality, authenticity in their contemporary sense are, of course, hardly usefully in the discussion of medieval and early modern Russian travel writing, for these texts blur the distinction between the first-hand experience and the hearsay, the individual impressions and those borrowed from earlier writers.

By the seventeenth century the accumulation of “deviations” – both in the practice itself and its literary rendition - had reached the critical mass and there

²¹⁹ Ibid, 37.

emerge separate secular paradigms of travel and genres of travel writing alongside reports of pilgrimage that, too, become more subjective and descriptive. One of them is the genre of the so-called stateinye spiski – accounts of travel written by diplomats on their return from the foreign mission - that originated in the second half of the sixteenth century, but became truly “literary” in the seventeenth century. In addition to the pragmatic information about the foreign lands and the diplomatic and political trivia, these texts gradually acquire a wealth of personal subjective detail that reflected the narrator’s interest in the society and culture of the countries visited. Interestingly enough, the pre-Petrine diplomatic reports are often highly negative and contemptuous about the foreign realities that they describe. Education in the West does not come into vogue until the eighteenth century, specifically encouraged by the imperial edicts of Peter the Great. Judging by the stateinye spiski of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it is understandable why the Russian elite was reluctant to travel or educate its children in the West for the diplomats commonly described it as an abode of sin, moral corruption and alien mores.

Concepts of ‘space’ and ‘place’ in medieval Russia and beyond

Russia’s relationship with the outside world, and in particular, with the West is at the core of my discussion in this work. Conceptions of home, space, universe, foreignness, nativity, etc. ultimately provide the medium through which Russia’s national culture defines itself.²²⁰ As we move from the medieval religious consciousness to secularization in the modern period, the discussion of these cultural constants helps to highlight the essence and the impact of the transition on cultural practices and discourses.

²²⁰ Amy C. Singelton, *Noplace Like Home: The Literary Artist and Russia’s Search for Cultural Identity* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1997), 20.

In his analysis of medieval sense of geographical space, semiotician Yuri Lotman suggests that the spatial and the ethical in Russian medieval texts are synonymous and are expressed through each other.²²¹ Spiritual yearning and pursuit of saintliness, for instance, implied the necessity of physical restlessness, rejection of the sedentary life and traveling that all made the wanderer closer to the true virtue. Retreat into monastery or hermitage was regarded as a symbolic reenactment of pilgrimage, but also of death, that too was conceived of as a form of spatial-geographical relocation, etc. The moral system extrapolated onto the geographical map fell into the binary paradigm that, according to Lotman, is the key structure of Russian culture. For instance, the earth as a geographical space is simultaneously the domain of the living and part of the moral binary: earth vs. heaven, life vs. death, temporal, mortal vs. eternal, etc. Hence, geography in Russian medieval texts functions as a variety of ethical knowledge, so as every movement within this space is loaded with complex religious and moral significations that bring the traveler closer either to hell or to heaven. Particular lands and countries were imagined as more sinful, heretical and pagan, or more virtuous and saintly than others. “Geography, then, as well as travel writing and geographical literature were essentially utopian,” argues Lotman, and “every travel took on the character of a pilgrimage.”²²²

Propensity for binary thinking and imagination is certainly deeply connected to the eschatological view of national history, that both Berdiaev and Lotman (very dissimilar thinkers otherwise) consider central to Russia’s historical and cultural

²²¹ Yuri Lotman, *Semiosfera* (Saint Petersburg: Iskusstvo-SPB, 2004), 298-9.

²²² Ibid, 298. We shall see further on how persistent this symbolic map shaped by medieval ecstatic religiosity turns out to be for Russia’s conception of the outside world and the “West” in particular. In Aleksandr Ostrovsky’s 1859 play *Storm* (*Гроза*), that takes places in a provincial Volga town of Kalinov, the two locals look at the picture of a battle in Lithuania that is drawn next to the picture of “fiery Gehenna” and wonder “What is this Lithuania?” that in the mural is represented as bordering with hell. One of them suggests that “It dropped on us from the skies.” A.N. Ostrovsky, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v shestnadzati tomakh*, vol.2. (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, 1950), 251.

identity. As a result of the Renaissance, Reformation and Enlightenment, in the West the “human-centered view of the world” gradually came to prevail over the apocalyptic “either/or” mentality.²²³ Western Christianity included into its cosmology a wide neutral sphere of the “in-between”: neither the unredeemably sinful nor the unconditionally holy. In Russia, argue Lotman and Uspensky in “Binary Models in the Dynamics of Russian Culture”, cultural history is determined by the essentialist duality and the absence of such neutral axiological realm, that makes evolutionary development hardly unlikely, as the mutually exclusive alternatives are pre-programmed to destroy each other rather than negotiating a compromise.²²⁴

Of these binary irreconcilable opposites the most important ones are the spatial binary of “here” and “there”, and the temporal binary of “now” and “then” that may assume additional meanings over time, but that are nevertheless, essentially interdependent, with spatiality often standing in for temporality. The explosive terms of binarism impose on Russia’s historical consciousness a non-evolutionary – maximalist - conception of the “new” that is experienced as a radical eschatological break with the earlier socio-historical formations, regardless of the actual residual continuity between the earlier period and the subsequent one. To be sure, no historical transformations has ever involved complete and radical erasure of the previous cultural memory: both paganism and the pre-Schism Orthodoxy, for instance, have certainly been retained in the cultural and psychological fabric, but their valences

²²³ David Bethea, *The Shape of Apocalypse*, 13n8.

²²⁴ Yuri Lotman and Boris Uspensky, “Binary Models in the Dynamics of Russian Culture (to the End of the Eighteenth Century)” in Alexander Nakhimovsky and Alice Stone Nakhimovsky, eds., *The Semiotics of Russian Cultural History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 32.; Yuri Lotman, *Kul'tura i vzruv* (Moscow, 1992), 257-260; Sergei Medvedev, “A General Theory of Russian Space: A Gay Science and a Rigorous Science” in Jeremy Smith, ed., *Beyond the Limits: The Concept of Space in Russian History and Culture* (Helsinki: Suomen Historialinen Seura, 1999), 15-47.

shifted, turning earlier pagan gods into demons of the “Christian world”, and earlier orthodoxy into heresy.²²⁵

Analyzing medieval sense of the geographical space that is staked out by the moral binaries of “sinfulness” versus “sainthood”, Lotman focuses on the concept of “chosenness” that is naturally suggested by such stern moral (i.e. geographical) coordinates and that survives well beyond the middle ages. The dichotomy of “ones’ own, native vs. alien, foreign” also functions as a variation of the mirror opposites of “virtue vs. vice” where the native land is always positively contrasted with the strange and heretical foreign country. Earlier (n32) I have cited a characteristic dialogue from the nineteenth century play by Aleksandr Ostrovsky *Storm* [*Гроза*] in which the two idlers contemplate the eerie, almost diabolic origins of Lithuania that supposedly “dropped on us from the skies.” Lotman uses the same text to illustrate the semiotic correlation between “the foreign” [*чужой*] and the “iniquitous”. A certain wandering Feklusha, who passes through the town on her way, shares her knowledge of the faraway lands with the young protagonist:

They say there are such countries [...] where they do not even have Orthodox tsars but where the sultans are governing the land. In one land there is sultan Makhnut the Turk, in another – sultan Mahnut the Persian; and they pass judgment over all of the people and whatever they judge is not right. And they cannot decide even a single affair equitably [...] Our law is righteous and theirs is not. [...] And then there is also the land where all the people have dog’s heads [...] for they are infidels.²²⁶

²²⁵ David Bethea, *The Shape of Apocalypse*, 13.

²²⁶ Aleksandr Ostrovsky, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v shestnadzati tomakh*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1950),

227. Quoted in Yuri Lotman, *Semiosfera*, 300. «Говорят, такие страны есть, милая девушка, где и царей-то нет православных, а салтаны (sic!) землей правят. В одной земле сидит на троне царь Махнут турецкий, а в другой – салтан Махнут персидский; и суд они творят, милая девушка, надо всеми людьми, и что ни судят они, все неправильно. И не могут они, милая, ни одного дела рассудить праведно, такой уж им предел положен. У нас закон праведный, а у них, милая, неправедный. [...] А то есть еще земля, где все люди с песьими головами ... за неверность.»

The metonymical use of geographical locales to express moral and ethical notions is aptly captured in the seventeenth century writings of archpriest Avvakum. The famous opponent of patriarch Nikon and his reforms, Avvakum considered the 1666 Schism to be an overt manifestation of the conquest of Russia by the Antichrist and lamented the end of genuine Orthodox Christianity that had turned his native land into domain of heresy (i.e. Babylon): one does not need to travel to Persia, he says, as now “Babylon is all around” [«...не по што ходитъ в Персиду, а то дома Вавилон.»]²²⁷

Although the use of semantic opposites that is at the core of the Tartu semiotic school may suggest rigid, simplistic readings of literary texts, the process of semiotization (of ascribing meaning to the binary opposites) is much more open-ended than it may initially appear. Following Bakhtin, Lotman stresses the culturally-bound, the emotional and the subjective in the evaluative interpretation of the spatial and temporal relationships in literature.²²⁸ Thus, depending on the specific character of the culture that produces the text, on the social, historical and cultural location of the reader and of the author, etc. the basic dichotomy of “one’s own” vs. “foreign” can be interpreted differently. Whereas in medieval texts, the native land was always charged positively as familiar, right and saintly, juxtaposed with the foreign land of the sinful and the infidels, this opposition was reinvented in modern times, to the effect that the foreign becomes exotic, desirable and attractive – utopian - effectively contrasted with the boring, unauthentic and imperfect native country, etc.

By the turn of the eighteenth century, idealistic and highly allegorical paradigm of spiritual travel was eroded under the influence of secularization and the

²²⁷ Yuri Lotman, *Semiosfera*, 301.

²²⁸ Mikhail Bakhtin: “Chronotope in a work always contains within it an evaluating aspect <...> In literature and art itself, temporal and spatial determinations are inseparable from one another, and always colored by emotions and values.” M. Bakhtin, “Formy vremeni i khronotopa v romane. Ocherki po istoricheskoy poetike” in *Voprosy literatury i estetiki* (Moscow, 1975), 391. Quoted in Katharina Hansen Löve, *The Evolution of Space in Russian Literature*, 37.

rise of empiricism that reached Russia from the West. On the one hand, the flowering of natural disciplines, development of ethnography and the wide scale of geographical explorations have turned geography into science while costing it much of its allegorical meaning. On the other, the doctrines of Enlightenment relocated questions of moral betterment from outside of the traditional religious framework into the domain of classical education and Sentiment. Yet for all the modernizing zeal of Petrine reforms that dramatically opened the semi-Oriental, essentially medieval, theocracy to the secular influences of the West, these “imports” could not entirely destroy the core semiotic structures of Russia’s national identity, of which those predicated on spatiality and temporality are crucial. According to Lotman, the essential “asymmetry” of the geographical space, its intrinsic connectedness to the general conception of the world, and the ease with which geography takes on symbolic, metaphorical connotations makes it an ideal springboard for semiotic modulations and constructions even for modern consciousness.²²⁹

Transition to secular modernity: travel reports by diplomats

The waning of the religious paradigm of travel in the seventeenth century discussed above did not, as I have argued earlier, put an end to pilgrimage as a practice and *khozhdenie* as a literary genre. The gradual secularization of the society is reflected rather in the new set of interests that propel Russian travelers abroad and that shape written accounts of their journeys. One of them is certainly diplomatic service. Extensive diplomatic relationships with the foreign countries that intensify by the 1630s and reach their golden age during the Petrine reign spurred into the ambassadorial service the most worldly and educated members of the Russian

²²⁹ Yuri Lotman, *Semiosfera*, 303.

nobility, whose reports and travel notes (known as *статейные списки/stateinye spiski*) have greatly enriched Russian literature of foreign travel. Among the literary and intellectual figures who over the next two centuries would spend part of their careers on a diplomatic mission abroad were the poet and ambassador to England Antiokh Kantemir (1708-1744); Prince Petr Kozlovsky (1783-1840), poet, engineer, mathematician and a diplomat-cum-expatriate in various European countries for 37 years; Pavel Svinin (1787 - 1839) a member of the first Russian diplomatic mission to the United States, author of the earliest Russian travelogue about America, the 1815 *The Experience of a Picturesque Journey Through North America* [*Опыт живописного путешествия по Северной Америке*]; playwright Alexander Griboedov (1790-1829) who was killed by the mob while on mission in Teheran; poet Fyodor Tiutchev (1803-1873) who spent 15 years in Munich and Turin as a member of the Russian diplomatic corpus; playwright, literary critic and conservative nationalist thinker Konstantin Leontiev (1831-1891) who was employed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and served in the Ottoman Empire, etc.

The evolution of the stateinye spiski aptly illustrates the development of Russian travel writing as a genre since it encapsulates the crucial political and cultural transformation underwent by the society in the wake of Peter's reforms. The earlier, emotionally and factually restrained writing of the diplomats, often quite hostile to or contemptuous of the foreign realities that they described is by the mid eighteenth century succeeded by the more personalized and detailed accounts that demonstrate the author's keen interest in the subject matter and not infrequently include philosophical or political musings prompted by the inevitable comparison of the foreign country to one's own. The amplification of the author's presence within the narrative is also reflected in the bold political statements that the author's allow

themselves and that are a far cry from the cautious, sanitized attitude of their predecessors that sought to absent the personal and the subjective from their reports. The ideological diversity evinced by the later diplomatic reports is quite impressive, ranging from the anglophilia of Kantemir, to Tuitchev's Slavophilism and criticism of the West, from Prince Kozlovsky's explicit disdain for Russia's "Asiatic barbarity to Leontiev's nationalist conservatism and rejection of Western liberal democracies (e.g. his famous concept of Western civilization as *«тиджачная цивилизация»* - "civilization of corporate suits"), etc. These and similar statements were made possible by the very formation of the relatively unconstrained ideological sphere within the otherwise autocratic regime and the political polarization of Russia's educated elite gripped by the socio-philosophical and political doctrines that reach the country as an echo of the European Enlightenment. Thus, exposure to Western Europe, both as a personal experience (the physical "being there") and as awareness of its cultural and political paradigms accounts for the worldly sophistication of the travelers and their texts, which has few precedents in the earlier travel writing.

CHAPTER 2: XVIII century Russian travel writing: the emergence of literary genre

Three major factors form the background against which Russian travel writing transforms itself to become by the late eighteenth century a prominent literary genre: westernization, secularization, and the rising importance of education. These interrelated elements help to flesh out the structural (i.e. narrative, authorial voice), stylistic, semiotic and ideological shifts in Russian travelogues of the period. As we shall shortly see, its distinctiveness from the western European analogue in functions, forms and objectives had been predicated on the peculiarities of Russia's historical and social development, specifically, on the country's belated coming to the European modernization and Enlightenment.

Although the beginnings of modernization and westernization in Russia are typically associated with the reforms of Peter the Great, "alien" western influences cause anxiety among both the clergy and the boyars already by the mid-seventeenth century. Although Peter I is commonly credited with introducing western science and culture into his country, the first theater headed by a German pastor I. Gregory was open at the court of his father, tsar Alexei Mihkailovich, in 1672, and the school for ballet and drama followed in 1673, reflecting the tsar's own interest in these art forms. Emulation of western life style reflected in interior design, architecture and patterns of entertainment and leisure were certainly restricted to the few courtiers around the tsar, but they do reflect the elite's growing interest in and cultivation of European ways, however cautious and tentative.²³⁰ At the same time, the introduction of western fashions and ideas into the society that was then emerging from a prolonged period of

²³⁰ Pierre A. Hart, "The West" in Nicholas Rzhevsky, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 85 – 102.

social and political turmoil was far from painless, causing further confusion and resistance, in particular on the part of the clergy.

Peter the Great inherited from his father, tsar Alexei, a deeply ingrained suspicion of the rising dominance of the Church but did not share in his traditionalism. Thus, at the core of the social and cultural reforms undertaken within Peter's project of modernization were on the one hand, introduction of Western learning and culture into Russia and on the other, the weakening of the socio-political influence of the Orthodox Church. Peter's famous travel to the Baltic provinces, Poland, Austria, Prussia, Holland and England in 1697-1698 - the so-called Great Embassy [*Великое посольство*] - came to be a turning point in Russia's relationship to the European culture. His fascination with the West and his eagerness to personally study and to have Western ideas, technology, military and nautical armament, languages, sciences, calendar, fashion, mores, etiquette, etc., adopted for his country had decisively redirected the outlook of the country's elite. In the newly reformed civil and court hierarchy of the Petrine Russia, education and mastery of the European culture became crucial prerequisites for the high social standing and access to privilege, marking off the elite from both the non-nobles and the less distinguished members of the nobility.²³¹ At the same time, construction of St. Petersburg and the many projects initiated by Peter I attracted many westerners, many of whom settled in Russia permanently.

Crucially for our further discussion, Russia's exposure to the west coincided with – and was an important element of – the country's evolving sense of national self

²³¹ Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire*, 156. Another important outcome of Peter's reforms was the entry of women into the public realm. Previously confined to the domestic sphere, the proverbial boar *terem* [tower-chamber], with the establishment of the Noble Assemblies women were explicitly encouraged to learn the etiquette and the Western dress and participate in the entertainments of the court.

as a secular European empire. In the words of Louise McReynolds, Peter the Great should be considered a quintessential Russian traveler since “he journeyed to western Europe to find not only himself but, more to the point, to find the nation he embodied.”²³² The dialectical engagement with the European civilization (actual, or most often, “imagined”) that was at the core of Russia’s self-reinvention and modernization in the eighteenth century had placed an unprecedented importance on travel and travelogue as educational media for the reading “sedentary” public at home, and the testing ground for the most vital social, cultural and philosophical debates of the day through which the modern national identity was gradually taking shape.

The specificity of the eighteenth century Russian travel writing if compared with its western European analogues (for all the obvious national peculiarities within the unfortunately generic category), is reflected in the idiosyncratic set of objectives and functions attached to the act of travel and its subsequent literary rendition in the Russian culture. In western Europe travel engaged the attention of the most prominent thinkers and writers of the day, from Defoe, Swift, Boswell, Sterne, Smollett to Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, etc., not to speak of scientists, explorers and countless leisure travelers, who considered it worthy to turn their experiences into a travel book for aesthetical, educational or moralizing purposes. Russia, on the contrary, lacked both a comparable tradition of scientific and educational journey, and a native cultural discourse that would have made the idea of travel an attractive idiom for the study of the world’s natural and human diversity.²³³ The two interconnected factors that to a great extent shaped modern western European travel experience, and by implication,

²³² Louise McReynolds, “The Prerevolutionary Russian Tourist: Commercialization in the Nineteenth Century” in Anne E.Gorsuch and Diane P.Koenker, eds., *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist Under Capitalism and Socialism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 20.

²³³ On the role of travel and travelogue in the Western European intellectual and cultural discourses in the eighteenth century, see Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 25-122.

modern European identity - the geographical explorations and the colonial conquests on the one hand, and the rise of natural sciences and ethnography on the other – affected Russia only indirectly, through the importation of the western intellectual debates. In the Enlightenment Europe, philosophical reflections on the world beyond the now broadened geographical horizons laid the groundwork for the new set of cosmopolitan values defined in explicit juxtaposition with the non-European and/or “primitive” “Other” (e.g. Europe’s own medieval past.)²³⁴ Applying these values to their own encounters with Europe, Russian travelers had to grapple with additional difficulties in situating themselves amongst the competing domestic discourses that varied in their appraisal of the country’s westernization and that were similarly divided in their perception of contemporary western Europe. Petrine westernization had effectively split the national consciousness (before it actually had a chance to conceive of itself as “national”) deepening the rift between the cultivated (i.e. westernized) nobility and the masses of other Russians, whose comparatively eastern traditions and social practices were looked down upon by the elites as relics of the patriarchal pre-Petrine past. This rift has not healed to this day.

Boris Groyce offers an interesting psychoanalytical interpretation of Russia’s split self as simultaneously a bearer of western philosophical discourses and their object, one’s own “Other.” For Groyce, the Russian *интеллигент/intelligent* is essentially

torn between his (sic!) ‘European consciousness’ and his ‘Russian Otherness’... While Rousseau was dreaming about the Native Americans, the German philosophy – about the Indians... then the Russian intelligent turned out to be a centaurs – half-Rousseau and half-Native American, half-Schopenhauer and half-Indian... Thence, for instance, the toying of Russian avant-garde with the native Russian art forms, such as icons, lubok folk printings, etc. In one’s own “Otherness” the Russian recognized the longing of

²³⁴ Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Ribies, eds., *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), 50.

the European philosophy, in his [European]self – the realization of the European ideal.²³⁵

All this meant several things for Russia's emergent tradition of modern literary travel writing, which will surface further on in my discussion of the specific examples of Russian eighteenth century travelogues. As I will argue throughout this section, while Russia's nascent taste for the genre obviously developed in *emulation* of the western European texts of the kind, it could not *duplicate* the long established tradition of empirical, educational and leisure journey that had existed in the west since the late Middle Ages and that accounted for the particular evolution of the genre there.

* * *

Peter I was not the first Russian monarch to encourage young nobles to travel and study abroad, but the one whose initiative turned out to be more successful than that of his predecessors, and even more importantly, had set up a crucial precedent for the decades to come. Out of the dozens of youngsters sent to Europe in the late sixteenth century by Boris Godunov, not a single one had ever returned to Russia. As Russia's commercial and diplomatic connections with the West intensified with the country's entry into the European diplomatic network, merchants, diplomats and other professionals as well as hundreds of students sent to study technical sciences on state-sponsored trips traveled to Europe thereby forging crucial connections between Russia

²³⁵ «...русский интеллигент, напротив, сам расколот на «европейское сознание» и его «русское Иное» -- этого ему на первое время хватает и без всякого либидо. Если Руссо предавался мечтам об индейцах, германская философия - об индийцах, Гоген -- о полинезийцах, Пикассо - об африканцах и т.д., то русский интеллигент оказался кентавром из Руссо и индейца, Шопенгауэра и индийца, Пикассо и африканца (действительная ситуация русского авангарда с его интересом к иконе, вывескам, лубку и т.д.). В своем собственном «ином» русский узнавал мечту европейской философии, в себе самом -- реализацию его идеала Boris Groyce, "Rossia kak podsoznanie zapada," 158. Andreas Schönle expresses the same idea, when he writes that "[w]estern European countries had all constructed an "other" that helped them stabilize their identity: England had France, France had the Orient, and Germany had Italy. Russia had nothing, except, perhaps, its own past, a fact that created intense soul-searching." *Authenticity and Fiction*, 13-14.

and the West. As few of the early students spoke foreign languages or had any knowledge of the European ways prior to their trips, they remained to a large extent deeply rooted in the traditional religious mentality of the pre-Petrine era. The traditional perception of the “West” as a source of heresy and military threat profoundly affected the Petrine travelers who left for Europe with a heavy heart, armed with a range of preconceptions and prejudices. Handicapped by their lack of proper education and knowledge of foreign languages, they paid scant regard to what Peter I would have expected them to explore: politics, economics, sciences and technology, but instead, focused on religious objects, relics and other similar curiosities that only confirmed their assertions of the superiority of the Russian Orthodox Church. The travel accounts of these journeys that we possess illustrate the Russians’ gradually growing receptiveness and openness to the European culture as acculturation into the European mores and mastery of social graces and languages took time to acquire.

Travel Diary of Petr Tolstoi (1697)

Petr Tolstoi’s (1645-1729) extensive travel writing on his multiple trips all over Italy is, perhaps, one of the best illustrations of the profound psychological and cultural transformations undergone by early Russian travelers to Europe. Tolstoi was among the first Russian students sent by Peter the Great to study naval sciences in the West in the late 1690s, he also accompanied the tsar on his travels to Poland, Holland and France in 1715-1716, and in 1724 also to Persia. In his capacity of Russia’ first permanent minister to Constantinople he had plenty of international exposure and traveled widely in Italy and Germany, etc. Tolstoi’s account was supposed to serve as a guide-book on Italy for Peter I himself, and the author masters Italian in order to be

able to go around without resorting to the help of interpreters and local guides. A pious Orthodox Christian who admits at believing in sorcerers, miraculous relics and apparitions, Tolstoi is much interested in similar marvels of Western Christianity, as well as in the religious cults and liturgies of various Christian denominations that he describes in lengthy detail throughout the early pages of his travelogue. His style and the writing skills change markedly throughout the text, and so does his initially unenthusiastic attitude towards his lengthy stay in the West. His descriptions of the European architecture, laws, dress, commerce, etc., become more structured and erudite and often show the author's attempt at gaining additional knowledge about the places that he visits in order to substantiate his own observations. From the initially disjointed and monotonous note-taking, the travelogue evolves into a comprehensive description and reflection on the diverse features of European societies and, importantly, also on the traveler's inner experience as "the" Russian abroad. It would be erroneous to attribute this change to the author's assumed secularization or growing skepticism and rationalism that he could have acquired in Europe. Tolstoi learns to write in a captivating and informative way and he learns to ask the right questions and to inquire into the nature of the things he observes, without, however, losing his profoundly religious orientation. His transformation is mental and cultural as his interests gradually surpass the narrow confines of religiosity and he is immersing himself into the utterly unfamiliar culture of the European nobility. By the end of his European sojourn – and his book - the questions of social rank, money, leisure, cuisine, fashions, entertainments, charity, the public role of women, etc., all utterly new and exciting, preoccupy Petr Tolstoi no less than different expressions of

Christian faith did in the outset of his journey, the interest in which, though, he never abandons completely.²³⁶

* * *

Educational and leisured travel abroad was further catalyzed by the 1762 edict of Peter III, who emancipated the nobles from the compulsory military duty thereby enabling them to travel in Europe. By the end of the eighteenth century hundreds of Russian students were pursuing degrees in sciences, law, philosophy, medicine or philology at the universities of Edinburgh, Oxford, Koeningsberg, Upsala, Strasbourg, Leiden, Leipzig, Guttenberg, etc. Academy of Sciences, Moscow University, Medical Collegiums, the Holy Synod, the Imperial Court, etc, issued scholarships to the worthy applicants who could not rely on their families' support.²³⁷ Education received abroad was a vital prerequisite for social mobility as most of such graduates came to play leading roles in education, legal profession and the development of the health care system in their own country. Unlike the first students sent to Europe during Peter's rule, later generations of students were placed under strict supervision and control (both private, of an overseer accompanying the group, and state-sponsored) that guaranteed their diligence and proper comportment.

The eighteenth century travel accounts, of which we have quite a few, demonstrate a growing interest not only in the social and political institutions of the foreign lands, but attention for the mundane features of life: habits, fashions, foods,

²³⁶ P.A. Tolstoi, *Puteshestiva stol'nika P.A. Tolstogo po Evrope, 1697 – 1699*, L.A. Ol'shanskaya and S.N.Travnikov, eds, (Moscow, 1992). See K. V. Sivkov, *Puteshestviia russkikh ludei za granitsu v XIII veke* [Foreign Journeys of the Russians in the XVIII c.] (St.Petersburg: Energia, 1914), 7-8 and Max J.Okenfuss, "The Cultural Transformation of Petr Tolstoi" in A.G. Cross, ed., *Russia and the West in the Eighteenth Century* (Newtonville, Mass.: Oriental Research Partners, 1983), 228-237.

²³⁷ Perhaps, the best known example is Mikhailo Lomonosov, who traveled to Marburg University in 1736-1741 on the scholarship that he received as a student of the newly established Academy of Science. Having benefited from the German education himself, Lomonosov moved on to establish the first Russian university in Moscow (1755) as a breeding ground for home-grown academic cadres, and a counterbalance to the overwhelming domination of foreigners in natural and technical sciences.

domestic environment, behaviors and social norms that provoke not only the travelers' intellectual, but also emotional response. The shift towards this new sensitivity signals the transition from the traditional Christian consciousness, pronouncedly disinterested in the ordinary life as a priori depraved and transitory (which we have seen reflected in the traditional religious paradigm of travel and travel writing) to the modern identity that is organized around the tangible, earthly materiality just as much (or perhaps, even more) as around the lofty matters of the spirit. As the boundaries of the experience are broadened by the increased knowledge of and responsiveness to the values and norms of the foreign cultures, so too are the confines of the genre, as the traveling authors start to include observations that they have previously deemed inappropriate or irrelevant and that would seem superfluous for the more sophisticated travelers of the later era who would not need to elucidate foreign curiosities to the increasingly worldly audience.

Scholarly discussions of Russian travel writing as a literary genre typically begin with the three by now classical texts written between 1777 and 1801: Denis Fonvizin's *Letters from France* (1777-1778), Aleksander Radizhev's *Journey from Petersburg to Moscow* (1790) and Nikolay Karamzin's *Letters of a Russian Traveler* (1791-1801.) However, as Sara Dickinson demonstrates in her work on the Russian travel writing of the period, the proper understanding of the socio-cultural and stylistic factors that made up for the "literariness" of the genre is impossible without the closer study of the preceding texts and of the social context that engendered them.²³⁸ These generic sociological and textual hallmarks of what by the end of the eighteenth century would develop into a full fledged literary genre can be traced to the earlier,

²³⁸ Sara Dickinson, *Breaking Ground: Travel and National Culture in Russia from Peter I to the Era of Pushkin* (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2006); "Four Writers and a Waterfall: Questions of Genre in Russian Travel Writing about Western Europe, 1791 – 1825" in *Germano-Slavica* 11 (1999): 3-26; "The Russian Tour of Europe Before Fonvizin: Travel Writing as Literary Endeavor in Eighteenth Century Russia" in *Slavic and East European Journal*, no. 1, vol. 45, (2001):1-29.

less studied texts by Aleksandr Kurakin (*Journal de mon voyage*, 1772) or Ekaterina Dashkova (*Journey of a Distinguished Russian Lady to Several English Provinces*, 1775 and *Le Petit tour dans les Highlands*, 1777). First of all, both the nineteenth year old prince Aleksandr Kurakin, whose three-year stay in Europe consisted of both university study in Holland and a series of educational tours in Western European countries, and princess Dashkova (1743-1810), who undertook a series of business and leisured trips to Europe between 1769 and 1782 are addressing their accounts to a rather specific, private audience – their family members, friends, and confidants. Yet both authors demonstrate a growing awareness of the aesthetic and informative potential of their writing and make an explicit effort at stylizing their work so as to meet particular assumptions required of a literary text on the one hand, and on the other, to show their competence and ease in navigating the foreign realities. The “literariness” of these earlier travelogues is crafted through the manifest attention to details, lengthy descriptions of urban and especially bucolic landscapes replete with metaphors and literary clichés, heightened emotionality of the author herself who no longer withdraws from the narrative but on the contrary, adopts a literary pose of a sensitive, care-free, competent and self-assured voyageur, a true cosmopolitan *avant la lettre*. This self-stylization was certainly facilitated by the distinguished social standing of these travelers who could afford their nonchalant relationship to the Western culture having gone on numerous tours in preparation for their study abroad, spending years at foreign universities, mastering foreign languages, establishing personal relationships within the European aristocratic circles, etc. It comes as no surprise that the general association of foreign travel with the high social standing prompts the traveling authors, especially those of more humble social origins to stress their sophistication and cosmopolitanism, as do, for example, both Fonvizin and

Karamzin, who lack the princely titles of Dashkova or Kurakin. Sara Dickinson argues that “the comparatively lesser social rank of these men actually encouraged them to try their hand at literary travel writing and thereby to lay claim not only to the prestige associated with leisured travel abroad, but also to that of the aristocratic traveler’s textual voice.”²³⁹

The use of particular stylemes in the late-eighteenth century Russian travelogues, borrowed narrative strategies, as well as explicit referencing of other texts and concomitant self-fashioning of the narrator against his or her literary predecessors or fictional characters – in short, everything that makes the text literary - becomes possible with the circulation and translation of the popular Western European examples of the genre in Russia. In his discussion of the role of the Russian translations of Western European literature in the formation of Russian literary canon in the eighteenth century, Dmitry Likhachev introduces the concept of “literary transplantation”.²⁴⁰ Not just specific works, but entire genres were imported into Russia through translation, stylization or theater adaptations and began their development within an entirely different socio-cultural context than the one that engendered them in the west. Not infrequently, the work in translation became more popular and influential in Russia than it was in its original language and assumed an utterly different cultural function and meaning there. While the literary trends and individual texts could be “transplanted” or appropriated through translation, the symbolic and socio-cultural connotations attached to them could hardly be. At the same time, the institutionalization of the field of literary writing, the distinctions

²³⁹ Sara Dickinson, “The Russian Tour of Europe Before Fonvizin”, 20.

²⁴⁰ By the turn of the nineteenth century, there were only 3 original novels and 13 translated ones published in Russia in 1800, the ratio of journal publications for the same year is 1:31. Dmitry Likhachev, *Razvitie russkoy literatury X-XVIII vekov: Epokhi I stili* (Leningrad: 1973), 15-23; Yuri Lotman, “Ezda v ostrov liubvi” Trediakovskogo i funkzia oerevodnoy literatury v russkoy kul’ture pervoy poloviny XVIII veka” in Yuri Lotman, *Probelmy izychenia kul’turnogo nasledia* (Moscow: 1985), 222-230.

between genres and fields, remained rather rudimentary, which accounted, among other things, for the peculiar merger of tasks assigned to literary writing and to the persona of an author.²⁴¹ From the fusion of these functions: didactic, educational, aesthetic, political, philosophical, etc. stems a particular assumption of the writer's moral authority and the power of the first-person singular narrating voice.

Laurence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1768) first published in Russian in excerpts in 1779, complete translation does not appear until 1793; Tobias Smollett's *Travels Through France and Italy* (1766) Charles Dupaty's *Letters on Italy* (1785) enjoyed wide success with the European and Russian readers and were read by potential travelers in Russia in either originals or in translations to other European languages, since the Russian translations typically lagged behind significantly the initial publication in the west. Sterne, Dupaty Smollett, le Vaillant, Abbot Barthelemy, and other less known writers have imbued the Russian reading public with the taste for the emerging genre, which at the time was enjoying the booming popularity in Europe.²⁴² Both Kurakin and Dashkova read Sterne either prior to their journeys or take the book with them and Karamzin's *Letters of a Russian Traveler* are full of paraphrases, echoes and references to the *Sentimental Journey*. Sterne offers a comprehensive inventory of travelers' personae for his epigones to choose from: "idle travelers, inquisitive travelers, lying travelers, proud travelers, vain travelers, splenetic travelers, travelers of necessity, delinquent and felonious travelers, unfortunate and innocent travelers, simple travelers" and finally, in a tongue-in-cheek

²⁴¹ A.Schönle, *Authenticity and Fiction*, 13.

²⁴² For the reception of Sterne in Russia, see V.I. Moslov, "Interes k Sternu v russkoi literature kontza XVIII i nachala XIX vv" in *Istoriko-literaturny sbornik, posviaschenny V.I.Sreznevskomy* (Leningrad, 1924) and Neil Stewart "From Imperial Court to Peasant's Cot: Sterne in Russia" in John Neubauer and Peter de Voogd, eds., *The Reception of Laurence Sterne on the Continent*, (New York, London: Continuum 2004), 127-153.

manner of self-introduction – sentimental travelers.²⁴³ His own literary alter-ego, the witty and spontaneous narrator, Reverend Mr. Yorick, quickly becomes a powerful model for numerous Russian travelogues, the authors of which tried to construct a similar traveling figure by imitating Yorick’s tastes, manner of speaking, turns of phrase, etc.

A certain assumption of intimacy in the relationship between the author and the reader, penchant for self-reflection and posturing, amplified attention to the emotional experiences of the narrator and emphasis on the personal impressions and (consciously aestheticized) feelings, admiration for the simpler and more natural “idyll” of the countryside and the longing for the “purer” uncontaminated emotionality, which we find in the literary accounts of travel written in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, are all characteristic ingredients of Sentimentalism. Both subjectivity and certain whimsicality of tone had been imported into the travel writing from the conventions of diaries and letters widely popular at the time, in the form of which many of the earlier texts were written or consciously stylized as epistolary or diary notes. A. Kurakin, for example, writes for his tutor and family members, some of whom were contemplating similar trips, while Dashkova addresses intermittingly her daughter and friends, Karamzin writes (or rather, in a conscious fit of stylization, pretends to write) to and for his friends, the Plescheevs, etc. In his seminal analysis of the genesis of Russian literary travelogue, the early twentieth century formalist T. Roboli argued that the Russian travelogue grew out of epistolary writing and memoir that by the eighteenth century have achieved the full-fledged recognition and status of literary genres. This etymological connection accounts for one of the most distinctive features of Russian travelogue: the dialogical

²⁴³ Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 34-35

mode of the narrative and explicit personification of the reader. Inheriting the function of friends-addressees to whom earlier generations of travelers were sending their travel notes in a form of letters, readers were introduced into the story as fellow travelers and witnesses of the author's adventures.²⁴⁴ At the same time, the cult of friendship crucial for the Sentimentalist ethos explains why prefaces dedicated to the author's friends quickly became a standard feature of Russian travelogues. These prefaces usually contained apologies for the weakness of the author's pen, "which was often justified by the fact that *friends* insisted on the publication of such intimate pages written for oneself and for a close circle of acquaintances."²⁴⁵ Gradually such prefaces became a formality, an atavism that reflected the transformation of the travel account from an intimate document to the recognized form of literary writing worthy of publication.

Importantly, despite the premise of immediacy and simultaneity of the act of travel and of its description, historical deconstruction of the eighteenth century Russian travelogues reveals the discrepancy between the actual circumstances of the trip and their narration that often seems to be based on the pre-mediated artistic and structural idea, rather than the traveler's actual impressions. Lotman and Uspensky, for instance, analyzed Karamzin's famous *Letters of a Russian Traveler* to identify the pre-conceived artistic design at work in its narrative organization that imposed ordered meaning and cohesiveness on his travel experiences.²⁴⁶ The personal letters that Karamzin did send home to his friends differ significantly from the stylized

²⁴⁴ T. Roboli, "Literatura puteshestvii" [Literature of Travel] in B.M. Eikhenbaum and Iu.M. Tynianov, eds., *Russkaia proza: Sbornik statei* [Russian Prose: Collection of Essays] (Leningrad: Academia, 1926), 42-73, 71.

²⁴⁵ Ibid, 47.

²⁴⁶ Yuri Lotman and Boris Uspensky, "Pis'ma russkogo puteshestvennika" Karamzina i ikh mesto v razvitiu russkoy kul'tury" in Nikolay Karamzin, *Pis'ma russkogo puteshestvennika*. (Leningrad: Nauka, 1984), 541.

“letters” that form his literary account. This skewed temporal-spatial relationship between the movement of the traveling body across the terrain and the movements of the pen across the pages of diary or letters is, of course, hardly atypical. In the case of Russian travelogue, it works to subjugate the mimetic, representational functions of the travelogue to either its literariness or, more often, the ideological subtext that is primary to the texts truthfulness and documentary accuracy.²⁴⁷

The epistolary form of the travel account made rigorous and coherent composition unnecessary since the author was free to change subjects at whim, jettison the linear chronology of the narrative or the unity of style altogether, while maintaining the confessional, unabashedly subjective tone that placed him or herself at the center of the narration. Although the first traces of conscious self-fashioning can be found already in the Renaissance writing, the literary engagement with the self in a form of personal narratives, diaries, confessional letters, etc. – and certainly, autobiography per se as a distinct genre – develop within the particular cultural context of the Enlightenment that allows the author to be more than just a teller of the tale, but also a self-stylized hero of his or her own exploits. The emphasis here is not on the conjunction between the personalized narrative (“the birth of the author”) and modernity, but rather on the particular historically-specific cultural practices of the self and conceptions of “personhood” that structure the position of the narrator within the text and shape the authorial engagement with one’s own “written” self.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁷ G.A. Tiime, “O fenmene russkogo puteshestvia v Evropu. Genezis i literurny zhanr.” [On the phenomenon of Russian Travel to Europe: Genesis and the Literary Genre] *Russkaia literatura*, no.3 (2007), 3-18.

²⁴⁸ The point is aptly illustrated in Michel Foucault’s discussion of historically specific discourses of the self that he builds around the analysis of ruptures and continuities between the ancient Stoic practices of the self and the Christian hermeneutical (confessional) tradition: “People have been writing about themselves for two thousand years, but not in the same way. I have the impression – I may be wrong – that there is a certain tendency to present the relationship between writing and the narrative of the self as a phenomenon particular to European modernity. Now, I would not deny it is modern, but it was also one of the first uses of writing. So it is not enough to say that the subject is constituted in a

One of the important features of the eighteenth century travel writing is the growing awareness of one's national identity and speculations about the differences and similarities between the national characters of different peoples. And just as most travelers tend to generalize from individual encounters to the broader national essences, the figure of the traveler herself becomes a generic stand-in for "the" Russian abroad (e.g. Karamzin tellingly entitles his account *Letters of a Russian traveler*.) The act of displacement from one's own native context inevitably challenges attachments, creates expectations, undermines or conforms biases, seeds ambivalence by revealing the tension between the entrenched beliefs and empirically acquired knowledge, and more importantly, heightens awareness of one's own belonging. We have seen examples of such enhanced self-awareness already in the earliest accounts of travel, but this motive had been certainly given a new construal in the era of European nation-building. Consider, for example, the fascinating travel notes of Denis Fonvizin, *Letters from France* (1777-1778). Already in his 1769 play *The Brigadier-General* and in *The Minor* [*Недоросль*], the play that made him truly famous, Fonvizin reflects on the reception of western and especially French cultural influences in Russia. Although *The Brigadier* is routinely read as a criticism of the pervasive Russian Francophilia of the time, Fonvizin's argument seems to be somewhat more complex as he lampoons not the French culture as such, but rather its superficial, servile imitation by the still unenlightened public that adopts some foreign mannerisms but lacks profound education in its native language. One of the female protagonists, for instance, wonders why anyone would need to spend money on

symbolic system. It is not just in the play of symbols that the subject is constituted. It is constituted in real practices – historically analyzable practices. There is a technology of the constitution of the self which cuts across symbolic systems while using them." M.Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress" in Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), 369.

expensive and impractical grammar books, confessing that she had torn her grammar book apart to make paper hair curlers for herself. All the negative characters of the comedy are marked off by their ungrammatical Russian and pretentious abuse of the equally ungrammatical French.

Denis Fonvizin, Lettres de France (1777-1778)

Fonvizin had certainly read Aleksandr Kurakin's travel notes. After all, he was a secretary and confidant of Nikita Panin, the tutor of the would-be emperor Paul I, and Kurakin's own great-uncle and legal guardian. Panin's francophobia (or more precisely, anti-gallomania) rather widespread among the Russian elite during the reign of Catherine II despite (or perhaps, due to, by way of self-preservation instinct) the almost total dependency on the French fashion, cuisine, language, and literary taste, had made deep inroads into the young Kurakin's views as his travel notes amply demonstrate. Fonvizin, too, seems skeptical about the French culture even before he actually makes it to France. Caricatures of obsessive Russian francophilia that date back to the works of Antioch Kantemir (1708-1744), Aleksander Sumarokov (1717-1777), Nikolay Novikov (1744-1818) and to the early performances of the Russian public theater, had generated a cast of stock figures of both Russian semi-educated Francomaniacs and the French fops and beaux, that seemed to come straight out of Molière. Although the anti-francophilic satire often betrayed the superficiality of Russian knowledge and adaptation of western culture, it was by no means a specifically Russian phenomenon, being similarly prevalent in Denmark, Poland and

Germany – i.e. in the countries that were most affected by and apprehensive of the French cultural domination over their own tenuous national distinctiveness.²⁴⁹

At the same time, the practiced observing eye of a professional writer, however immune Fonvizin was to the cultural appeal of the French, could not help noticing the achievements of technology, art, and fashion, unknown in his own country. The moments in the narrative when Fonvizin’s splenetic traveler catches himself praising what he sees and abruptly retorts to his usual scornful and didactic tone are the most interesting ones as they expose the tension between the immediacy of the personal experience and the pre-conceived ideological position of the author, of which more in a moment. Upon visiting Lyons, for example, Fonvizin is noticeably impressed by the efficiency of the local silk industry but quickly notes that the city is otherwise nothing more than a foul-smelling slum, and so is Strasburg, whose cathedral and other architectural wonders Fonvizin describes at length. Paris too, “was only slightly cleaner than a pigsty” although Fonvizin admitted its opera and theater to be truly magnificent. This concern for the aesthetical in the spectacle of the foreign country is typical of the late eighteenth century Sentimentalist travelers who are acutely concerned with their own emotional and sensual responsiveness to the beauty or ugliness around them. However, the physical filth and poor hygienic conditions, the leitmotifs of Fonvizin’s description of the French cities, also seem to allude to the moral decay of their citizens, those “sinners on whom the sun never

²⁴⁹ Walter Gleason “The Image of the West in the Journals of Mid-Eighteenth Century Russia” in A.G.Cross, ed., *Russia and the West in the Eighteenth Century* (Newtonville, Mass.: Oriental Research Partners, 1983), 109-122. Interestingly enough, unlike the nineteenth century Slavophiles who regarded the westernizing reforms of Peter the Great as the source of contaminating foreign influences and the point of deviation from Russia’s organic historic development, the mid-eighteenth century Russian “archaists” mounted their critique not so much against the political or institutional changes implemented by Peter, but much more passionately – against the fashions and styles imported from France and their domestic adepts, the glamorous fops of the Kuznetsky Most district. Yuri Lotman, “Idea istoricheskogo razvitiia v russkoi kul’ture kontsa XVIII – nachala XIX stoletia” in G.P.Makogonenko and A.M.Panchenko, eds., *Problemy istorizma v russkoi literature. Konets XVII – nachalo XIX v* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1981), 82-90.

shines.” Everywhere he goes the Russian writer sees dishonesty, vanity, cupidity, debauchery, and deceit: “Superficial glamour, eccentricity and insolence in men, shameless obscenity in women – frankly, I see nothing else here.”²⁵⁰ And elsewhere:

A Frenchman is devoid of reason and would consider it a chief misfortune of his life to have it, since then he would have to start thinking, instead of having a good time/enjoying himself. Entertainment is the sole object of his desires... Money is his idol.²⁵¹

These and other suchlike peevish comments notwithstanding, Fonvizin’s reflections on the human qualities that distinguish the Frenchmen from his own compatriots appear to touch on something rather important for the Russian thinkers and culture makers of the time. Much of the opposition to the prevailing francophilia of the day, especially following the events of 1789, was fueled by the rejection of the extremities of the French atheist philosophy as conducive to social and political turmoil on the one hand, and on the other, as incongruent with Russia’s traditional morality. The moralizing protagonist of *The Minor*, Fonvizin’s alter-ego Starodum, admits at having studied the works of contemporary (western) thinkers, but warns the younger female character that although they “do fight prejudice, they also root out virtue.”²⁵² Starodum articulates here the key problem in Russia’s complex relationship to the modernizing influences of European cultures that seems to reveal more about the country’s own conflicting identity oscillating between the pre-modern traditional mentality and the risk of losing one’s individuality by importing the more advanced

²⁵⁰ «Пустой блеск, взбалмошная наглость в мужчинах, бесстыдное непотребство в женщинах, другого, право, ничего не вижу.» D.I.Fonvizin, *Zapiski pervogo puteshestvia (Pis'ma iz Franzii)* in *Russkaia proza XVIII veka*, ed. S.Chulkov (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1971), 175.

²⁵¹ Ibid, 309.

²⁵² «Я боюсь для вас нынешних мудрецов. Мне случалось читать из них все то, что переведено по-русски. Они, правда, искореняют сильно предрассудки, да воротят с корню добродетель.» Denis Fonvizin, *Nedorosol'* [The Minor] in *Sobranie sochinenii v dvukh tomakh*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1959), 149-150

European culture. The perceived opposition of secular rationalism and righteousness that encapsulates Russia's cautious entanglement with westernization (i.e. modernization) produces multiple readings, some of which we have encountered earlier, that define Russian national essence in explicit contrast to western pragmatism, formality, "lack of soul," and "moral corruption, while celebrating its supremacy over the west in matters of heart and feeling."²⁵³

Elsewhere in the *Letters* Fonvizin is disturbed by the alleged unscrupulousness of the French, or perhaps, more broadly, western, social conduct:

Almost any Frenchman, when someone asks him affirmatively about some subject would say "yes", and if one asks him negatively about the very same matter would say "no."...If this discrepancy stems from politeness, then it does not really suggest any profound intellect. ...One should give credit to this nation in that it has mastered the art of conversation...it thinks little and it does not really have time to think, consumed by word-full and hasty talks....This is the natural character of this nation. Add to this the utmost moral corruption and you would have an accurate idea of a people whom the entire Europe venerates as a model for itself.²⁵⁴

If one disregards all the venom and unfair generalizations (which, parenthetically, antagonized many of Fonvizin's contemporaries but endeared his descendants in the more patriotic day and age – i.e. during the Napoleonic wars), Fonvizin's brash juxtaposition of virtue and social etiquette, of the bourgeois pomposity and reason is worth as it draws from the Russian intellectual discourse of his time, and at the same time, relies heavily on the political and philosophical writing of Rousseau, Montesquieu, Helvétius and other European thinkers. In light of this dual discursive

²⁵³ Starodum elaborates on the tenets of his ethical system that consists of one thing: to have a heart, to have a soul <.> Everything else follows a fashion: a fad for brains, a fad for particular kinds of knowledge, just as there are fads for buckles and buttons. <.> Without [soul] the most enlightened thinker is but a pitiful creature." «Отец мне непрестанно твердил одно и то же: имей сердце, имей душу, и будешь человек во всякое время. На все прочее мода: на умы мода, на знания мода, как на пряжки, на пуговицы.» Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Denis Fonvizin, *Zapiski pervogo putesthestvia (Pis'ma iz Franzii)* [Notes of the First Journey (Letters from France)], in *Russkaia proza XVIII veka* (Russian eighteenth century prose), ed. S. Chulkov, (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1971), 294. .

orientation, a provocative reading of Fonvizin was suggested by Alexis Strycek who comes nearest to accusing Fonvizin of plagiarism or, at best, of the near complete dependency on both western literary accounts of France and Italy and the French journals of the time, from which Fonvizin extensively borrowed not only facts and descriptions, but also their interpretations. The Russian writer appears to be particularly impressed by the 1751 work of Charles Duclos, *Considérations sur les mœurs de ce siècle* [Considerations on the Mores of This Century] that mounts a moralizing critique of the utilitarian ethos of the aristocratic society, its institutions and values that care not for the common good and happiness of men. The abounding traces of Fonvizin's reading in his travel notes highlight a paradoxical genesis of the Russian cultural perception of the West that drew extensively on Europe's political and philosophical thought on the one hand, and on the other, presented Russia as a superior alternative, expressing its utopian self-perception as a harmonious polity unaffected by the moral decay of the West.²⁵⁵ As such, this phantasmagoric construct clearly had much more to do with the indigenous socio-political and cultural processes in Russia itself rather than with the actualities of the West as observed or imagined by Russian travelers.

Fonvizin's attention to the ways of high society and social manners is typical of the travel writing of his time and more generally, of Russia's intellectual discourse of the second half of the eighteenth century that centered on the question of western influences. The sphere of the everyday behavior and the external attributes of culture, such as manners, fashions, etc., the whole ideology of *préciosité* and *politesse*, and later, of the bourgeois *civilité* imported to Russia during and after Peter's reign were the most visible and immediate markers of westernization, and the ones that agonized

²⁵⁵ Alexis Strycek, *Rossia epokhi prosveschcheniia* (Moscow: Prometei, 1994), Alexis Strycek, *Denis Fonvizine* (Paris, 1976), 359-363.

or appealed to the elite more readily than the subtle and gradual systemic transformations. The Petrine reforms rerouted both the individual, spontaneous behavior, and the public, normative comportment that had to be unlearned and consciously replaced with the alien norms and habits. Yuri Lotman argues that the estrangement from the earlier behavioral codes and the adaptation of the new ones imbued the westernized elite with a penchant for self-reflection and theatricality, that by far preceded the influence of Sentimentalism.²⁵⁶ However, the socio-economic context into which these foreign norms were transplanted was markedly different from the Western European society that had produced them, as the country lacked both a native bourgeoisie and a secular tradition of *badinage* that socially and culturally structured the concept of a *public* self in the West.²⁵⁷ In an important sense then, this importation of cultural markers meant *imitation* rather than duplication.

Distressed by the French politesse that for him is little more than a sign of artificiality and emptiness, Fonvizin mounts his Rousseadian critique of the moral vices permeating the French society equating the bourgeois culture that he despises with the French national character as such. On Fonvizin's mental and psychological map, the political society of the "West" with its attendant moral debilities has no parallel in Russia, which evolves within its own *organic* temporality. Contemporary reader might be struck by Fonvizin's paradoxical insistence that the Frenchmen,

²⁵⁶ Yuri Lotman, "Poetika bytovogo povedeniia v russkoi kul'ture XVIII veka," in *Izbrannye stat'i*, vol.1 (Tallinn: Alexandra, 1992).

²⁵⁷ This psychological and behavioral tension gradually worn out, as the country's cultural, economic and diplomatic integration into the Europe proceeded apace. The French Revolution became an important catalyst in the process of Russian adaptation of the Western (and in particular, French) culture, when thousands of French émigrés fled to Russia not infrequently finding employment as chaperons and teachers in the aristocratic families. Combined with the proliferation of educational institutions during the reign of Catherine II and the open possibility of foreign travel, this influx of foreigners helped to rear the thoroughly westernized Russian elite, who often felt more at home in the French language and culture, than in Russian. At the same time, the adoption of Western culture, almost exclusively a privilege of the nobility, deepened the rift between the elite and the people, turning the worldly aristocracy, in the words of Kluichevsky, into "foreigners at home." Vasily Kluichevsky, "Kurs russkoy istorii," *Sochineniia, volume V* (Moscow, 1959), 183. Quoted in Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire* (London: Fontana Press, 1996), 159.

although legally possessing rights and freedoms suffer from the abuses of the tyrannical absolutism and the all-powerful bureaucracy that in reality quashes these rights, while the Russians, although not yet legally emancipated, enjoy a fuller sense of freedom.²⁵⁸ Not finding an ideal polity in either France or Italy, Fonvizin argues that the organic Russian community being significantly younger than the European societies contains a promise of moral redemption, since “nous commençons, et ils finissent. I think that one who has just come into the world is more fortunate than one who is leaving it.”²⁵⁹

Nikolai Karamzin, Letters of a Russian Traveler (1789-1890)

The purpose and tone of Nikolai Karamzin’s famous travel notes are strikingly different, although he, too, takes a keen interest in social graces, and national

²⁵⁸ «Рассматривая состояние французской нации, научился я различать вольность по праву от действительной вольности. Наш народ не имеет первой, но последнюю во многом наслаждается...Неправосудие во Франции тем жесточе, что происходит оно непосредственно от самого правительства и на всех простирается.» D.I.Fonvizin, *Zapiski pervogo puteshestvia*, 313.

²⁵⁹ Letter of Denis Fonvizin to Ya.I.Bulgakov (January 25, 1778) in Denis Fonvizin, *Sobranie sochineny*, vol. 2 (Moscow, Leningrad, 1959), 493. Quoted in Walter Gleason “The Image of the West in the Journals of Mid-Eighteenth Century Russia”, 110. The idea of Russia’s cultural and political rebirth and its historical “youth” in comparison with other European nations emerges in the wake of Petrine reforms, which, among other things, introduced the Julian calendar and moved the celebration of the new year from September 1 to January 1, whereupon it was first celebrated in 1700, whereby giving this concept a powerful symbolic, yet tangible dimension. The perception of Peterine Russia as a totally different national and cultural entity that within several decades completely replaced the earlier medieval Russian civilization was cultivated by both the emperor himself and the cultural figures of the age, although the popular attitude towards this transformation varied greatly. However, Russia’s “late coming to history” and the resulting *exceptionalism* of its historical path enter the country’s cultural and philosophical discourse to become one of its most tenacious tropes. While proponents of modernization regarded Russia’s late coming to European modernity and Enlightenment as a cause of the country’s technological, economic and political backwardness, archaists, Slavophiles and some Westerners emphasized the ontological dimension of Russia’s perceived “youth”, that they regarded as a token of its messianic *Sonderweg*. Unencumbered by the moral decay of the “old” west, Russia, they believed, would lead the European civilization away from iniquitous ideas and towards authentic, harmonious spirituality. See Stephen L.Baehr, “In the Re-Beginning: Rebirth, Renewal and *Renovatio* in Eighteenth Century Russia” A.C.Cross, ed., *Russia and the West*, 152-166. Outside of these ideological interpretations, Russia’s delayed westernization had very specific socio-cultural manifestations: the importance of (high) culture in the matrix of national identity and the cosmopolitan outlook of the country’s educated elite, which, in the words of Geoffrey Hosking, were not confined by the horizons of their own homeland, but “drank in English, French, German and Italian culture with equal enthusiasm: they were ‘pan-European’ and considered all Europe part of their spiritually augmented homeland. And what other European nobility could boast a cultural output to match Pushkin, Lermontov, Tuitchev, Turgenev, Tolstoi, Glinka, Musorsgkii and Rkhmaninov?” Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire*, 169.

characters. The *Letters* became the first widely read Russian travelogue after its author, historian and writer Nikolai Karamzin (1766-1826), published part of the manuscript anonymously in the two magazines that he was editing to the wide acclaim of the reading public and numerous imitations on the part of lesser writers.²⁶⁰ The significance of this work is manifold and the detailed analysis of its thematic elements, narrative structure, and the textual influences that it lays bare would certainly be beyond the limited scope of this chapter.²⁶¹ Commonly referred to as the founding father of Russian Sentimentalism, Karamzin can also be defined as the founding father of Russian *literary* travel writing, in that not only he is among the first to deem his work worthy of publication for the wide audience, but also in that he blends in aesthetic conventions of the Sentimentalist *belles lettres* with the journalistic, documentary orientation of travel reportage to forge a completely new type of the traveling narrator. Another “path-breaking” quality of Karamzin’s work is tentatively suggested by Andreas Schonle who speculates that Karamzin’s explicitly proclaimed intention of traveling for the sake of new impressions and enjoyments may define his leisured tour devoid of any utilitarian purpose as a kind of proto-tourism. But although Karamzin’s narrator claims to be committed to little more than pure pleasure, the author’s reflections on the beneficial function of travel and the philosophical underpinnings that he elaborates to justify his hedonism are both too sophisticated and too premeditated to befit a tourist in today’s meaning of the term.

²⁶⁰ M.Nevzorov, «Journey to Kazan’, Vyatka and Orenburg in 1800» [«Путешествие в Казань, Вятку и Оренбург в 1800»]; P. Shalikov, “Journey to Malorussia” 1803-1804 [«Путешествие в Малороссию»]; V. Izmaylov, “Journey to the Mid-day Russia” 1800-1802 [«Путешествие в полуденную Россию»]; M. Gladkova, “A Fifteen-day Long Journey of a Fifteen-year Old, Written to Please the Parents and Dedicated to a Fifteen-year Old Friend”, 1810 [«Пятнадцатидневное путешествие пятнадцатилетнего, писанное в угождение родителям и посвящаемое пятнадцатилетнему другу»], etc.

²⁶¹ For a thorough analysis of Karamzin’s oeuvre, see J.L. Black, “Karamzin’s *Letters of a Russian Traveler*: An Education in Western Sentimentalism,” in *Essays on Karamzin: Russian Man-of-Letters, Political Thinker, Historian, 1766-1826* (The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1975), 22-39 and Natalya Kochetkova, *Nikolai Karamzin* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975), 57- 74.

Karamzin's *Letters* brilliantly illustrate one of the key features of the text's literariness – the self-conscious distance between the author and the narrator. At first glance, his hedonistic voyageur is certainly much more inspired by Sterne's fictional characters than by Karamzin's own temperament. The naïve, whimsical and highly sensitive youth travels around Europe with no clear objective, following in the footsteps of Thomas Nugent's celebrated *Grand Tour* (1749), and, in the British part of his journey – of Sterne's Yorick. He gets introduced to the most prominent thinkers of the time, such as Herder, Wieland, or Kant, and finds himself in the midst of crucial historical events whose significance he does not seem to be able to grasp at once. The Sentimentalist propensity towards exaggerated emotions feeds on the constant motion and the new adventures offered by the experiences of the journey. In his pursuit of the sensations that would further enrich his imagination and enhance self-awareness, the narrator cares little for the factuality of the stories he recounts – some of Karamzin's actual experiences are fictionalized, which does not seem to matter much as long as the fictions, too, can nourish the soul and the imagination better than the uneventful stretch of the road.

Not only is the narrator's emotional self placed at the front stage of Karamzin's story with the self-assurance unknown to earlier travel writers, the very experience of the trip is conveyed in ample detail. Therein lies one of the important differences between Karamzin and his beloved Sterne, whose causal and inconsistent narrator does not ever deliver an account of his journey in Italy promised by the title. Karamzin, in contrast, makes ample use of various guidebooks of the time and sought to give the domestic audience both sensory (visual) and emotional familiarity with the European countries that he visits, even at the cost of fictionalizing his own impressions. The mundane materiality – the taste of supper, the exact price paid for a

boat ride, the design of a dress, etc. – does matter not only because it entertains the reader, or documents the factuality of the journey. By the end of the trip, in a manner typical of contemporary sentimental tourists, Karamzin amasses a veritable inventory of odds and ends that would prop his future memories (*les souvenirs*) as mnemonic devices: coins, scraps of paper, dried flowers, pebbles, etc. By detailing the setting within which his adventures unfold, Karamzin’s narrator comes forward as the center of the composition whose involvement with and emotional reaction to the physical and human actualities of his journey turn out to be the ultimate rationale for the lengthy descriptive passages: it is hardly accidental, that the very title of the travelogue foregrounds the traveler, rather than the journey itself, whereby stressing the author’s ego-centric focus (compare the common title *Journey to/from...* and *Letters of a Russian Traveler*.) The Sentimentalist traveler’s taste for self-fashioning works to authenticate only those features of external reality that resonate within the psyche and soul of the traveler: the moods and musings of the narrator are invariably tuned in with the weather and the atmosphere of what he sees around him since everything that resists such personalization simply does not get included into the text. Before concluding, Karamzin rereads some of his earlier letters and admits that his work truly “reflects his soul as a mirror” and would remind him with the passing of years his thoughts, dreams and emotions during the eighteenth months of his trip: “And what is more fascinating to a man (between you and me, let’s admit it) than his own self?”²⁶²

This Sentimentalist anthropocentric/egocentric universe is also the one that is thoroughly semiotic. Art and life converge/concur and the narrator goes at great length to further aestheticize (beautify and fictionalize) the natural scenery around him

²⁶² Quoted in N. Kochetkova, *Nikolay Karamzin*, 59.

whereby turning it into a pastoral or dramatic backdrop that nourishes his taste for self-dramatization. Not only does Karamzin insist on the special meaning and evocativeness that the sites that have been described in literature carry for him, but he also laments that the fictional characters invented by Rousseau or Stern never existed in reality. This propensity to extrapolate the literary (abstract, aestheticized) on the literal (specific, mundane) shapes Karamzin's encounters with the locals that are automatically turned into theatrical cardboard figures of "the" generic peasants, shepherds, etc. Idealization of the rural, "primitive" life as more authentic and pure is certainly a staple *topoi* of the period, but what is interesting about Karamzin's passion for the bucolic is that the emotionality of the naïve, excitable narrator is counterbalanced by the self-irony of the composed and levelheaded author who accompanies the journey alongside his literary *doppelgänger*.²⁶³ There is no question that for all the exaggerated admiration of the simple life and proclaimed intention to "forego many of the comforts of life (which we owe to the enlightenment of our day) to go back to the primitive state of man", Karamzin, is a staunch believer in progress, education and the benefits of the European civilization, with which he seeks to

²⁶³ As I have shown in the first chapter, Rousseadian juxtaposition of the natural, simple life and the moral corruption of the city, although routinely misread and simplified, inspired the eighteenth and early nineteenth century writers to seek the natural happiness and authenticity outside of the vices of the civilized society. Desert islands, idyllic countryside, happy and gentle peasants, "noble savages", etc. become the staple elements of the literary plot, and travel as a structural motif is used consciously by the writers of both adventure stories, picaresque novels and the philosophical tractates of the Enlightenment era. The "simple" and "natural" environment helped the protagonists to separate the true desires and habits from the unnatural socially-constructed ones, it stripped off the veneer of the discusses several Russian novels that present the natural person, a virtuous primitive man, "a savage", as the bearer of truth, authenticity and sincerity – i.e. P. Bogdanovich's 1781 novel *A Savage Man that Laughs on Learnedness and Contemporary Mores* [Дикий человек, смеющийся учености и нравам нынешнего света], M. Basharulov's *A Savage European* (1804) [Дикая Европейка, или Исправление преступления одного добродетелью другого], and *Excerpt of the Journey to *** I*** T**** [Отрывок Путешествия в*** И*** Т***] that is usually attributed to Radischev. See Yuri Lotman, "Puti razvitiia russkoi prosvetitel'skoy prozy XVIII veka" in *Problemy russkogo Prosveschenia v literature XVIII veka* (Moscow, Leningrad: 1961), 79-106.

phony, artificiality – civility – to reveal the living soul and sincere sentiment. Although most of the books read in Russia in the eighteenth century were translations of the European originals, Yuri Lotman

acquaint his readers at home through his travel account.²⁶⁴ The key to Karamzin's eulogy to the simple man of nature is not only his Sentimentalism or the influence of Rousseau. The "authenticity" that he finds among the Alpine herdsmen is conceived of here as an intimation of the organic and stable – "eternal" -- cultural features of an autochthonous national identity that is revealed to Karamzin not in the increasingly cosmopolitan metropolis of his time, but through the "primitive" folk. He is confused by the border regions with their hybrid cultural and ethnic markers, which do not seem to fit neatly into the preconceived notions of local and national specificity, that he mostly derives from literature or guidebooks.

His own Russianness, however, is a different matter entirely. Not unlike Fonvizin, who regards the reign of Peter the Great as the point of conception of new Russian identity, Karamzin admits that until the Petrine reforms the Russians have been "lagging behind the Germans, the French, and the English by at least six centuries." By the late eighteenth century Russia's Europeanness is beyond doubt, affirms Karamzin, and he does not share in Fonvizin's angst about the attendant transformations in the Russian national character and the loss of Russia's moral fiber:

We are not like our bearded ancestors – so much the better! Outer and inner coarseness, ignorance, laziness, boredom were the lot of even those of the highest ranks. All paths to redefining the mind and satisfying the noble spirit are opened to us. The purely national is nothing next to the all human. The most important matter is being a human, not being a Slav.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁴ Quoted in Kochetkova, 63.

²⁶⁵ «Немцы, французы, англичане были впереди русских по крайней мере шестью веками; Петр двинул нас своею мощною рукою, и мы в несколько лет почти догнали их. Все жалкие Иеремиады об изменении русского характера, о потере русской нравственной физиономии или ничто иное как шутка или происходит от недостатка в основательном размышлении. Мы не таковы, как бородатые предки наши: тем лучше!... Все народное ничто перед человеческим. Главное дело быть людьми, а не славянами.» N.Karamzin, *Izbrannye proizvedenia v dvukh tomakh*, I. (Moscow, Leningrad: 1964), 417-418; Andreas Schönle, *Authenticity and Fiction*, 58-63, I.Z.Serman, "Rossiia i zapad" in A.G.Cross, ed., *Russia and the West in the Eighteenth Century*, 53-67. It is perhaps, of no small importance, that Karamzin early liberalism and enthusiasm for the western culture, so obvious on his trip around Europe, gives way to skepticism shortly after his return. By the anxiety and frustration of the Russian nobility with the effects of westernization and the instability of Russian national identity. As the European imperial powers were turning into nation-states, the garb of

Russia's historical "youth," according to Karamzin, is a beacon of its unique adaptability, its capacity to reincarnate itself into new cultural forms. It is almost as if Russia's national distinctiveness (the feature that Karamzin persistently seeks out on his journey around other European countries) consists of this intrinsic mutability, the will to embrace the "all-human (i.e. European)." Far from being a sign of the country's immaturity, this cultural mimicry in emulation of the Western European ways is praised by Karamzin in terms that prefigure Dostoevsky's famous idea of Russia's "universal responsiveness" [«всемирная отзывчивость»] mentioned earlier.

Aleksandr Radischev, Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow (1790)

Radischev's is, perhaps, the best known of Russia's eighteenth century travelogues and the one that expands both the stylistic and the political confines of Russian travel writing well beyond the conventions of its time. The *Journey* belongs to the particular category of books that are widely known yet rarely read. The "barbarian style" in which the *Journey* is written at fever pitch, to recall Pushkin's famous remark, its pompous, deliberately archaic language and syntax hardly endear it to contemporary readers. Included into the high-school literature curriculum, the book has been typically regarded as a political statement conveyed in literary form, which is ultimately secondary and extraneous to the content. It was written in the aftermath of the French Revolution and Pugachev's rebellion, and hence Radischev's critique of serfdom and praise for American civil freedoms could not but agonize the empress. The *Journey's* "subversive" political content earned him a death sentence, later

"imperial" or "European" no longer sufficed to express Russian *national* essence, leading many to criticize the undue zeal of Petrine reforms that had allegedly destroyed the country's authentic spirit. turn of the century Karamzin becomes increasingly conservative, his views reflecting the general

commuted to the ten-year exile, thus making him Russia's first writer to be persecuted for his work, and his book - the first literary work to be impounded and censored by the imperial degree of 1790.

The political analysis of Radischev's message would serve little purpose here.²⁶⁶ Generations of Soviet literary critics have worked hard to reduce Radischev's controversial personality and his literary legacy (of which hardly anything else is known to the public besides "the" book) to the cardboard figure of a proto-revolutionary, a forerunner of Russia's radical thought, an inspiration for the Decembrists, Aleksandr Herzen, and through him, ultimately - with a touch of typical Soviet absurdity - for the Bolsheviks as well.²⁶⁷ Nor would a political reading be entirely easy. The *Journey* is a true mess of a text, stylistically and ideologically alike, and scholars still dispute the writer's exact ideological stance and intentions. However, despite, or rather, because of these (mis)readings, Radischev's book deserves attention if not for its literary merits, than certainly for the impact it had on the Russian literary tradition.

First of all, Radischev is routinely regarded as the archetype of the conscience-stricken Russian writer. Siberian exile, the banning of the book, and the author's eventual death by suicide in 1802 (some say, by accident) all worked to create an aura of martyrdom around him that got in the way of an unbiased reading of the *Journey*,

²⁶⁶ Despite the large pool of textual commentaries on Radischev as a political thinker, most critics agree that the book's political message is a frustrating muddle of paraphrases from the French and German thinkers, biblical allusions, and a heady admixture of the author's grumpiness. Alongside the evils of serfdom and the depravity of land-owners, Radischev attacks the practice of brushing one's teeth, sexual promiscuity, coerced marriages, tea-drinking with sugar, etc.

²⁶⁷ «Радищев родил декабристов, декабристы -- Герцена, тот разбудил Ленина, Ленин - Сталина, Сталин - Хрущева, от которого произошел академик Сахаров. Как ни фантастична эта ветхозаветная преемственность (Авраам родил Исаака), с ней надо считаться. Хотя бы потому, что эта схема жила в сознании не одного поколения критиков.» Petr Vail and Aleksandr Genis, *Rodnaya Rech: Yroki Iziashnoy Slovesnosti* in Petr Vail and Aleksandr Genis, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol.1. (Ekaterinburg: U-Faktoria, 2004), 33. Parenthetically, Aleksandr Herzen, "awoken" by Radischev, indeed initiated and sponsored the second republication of the book in London in 1858.

while powerfully embodying the particular amalgamation between the aesthetical and the moralizing objectives that became the hallmark of Russia's literature throughout the nineteenth century and beyond. The stereotypical Russian *intelligent* certainly bears much resemblance to the figure that Radischev's traveler cuts in the book. The somewhat poised emotionality, the sense of personal responsibility and shame that bring him to tears in the face of human suffering, his prophet-like ambition to address the empress herself and to elucidate for her the injustices done in her dominion are certainly products of both the writer's own temperament and the sensibilities of his time, but they have also remained the somewhat clichéd attributes of the "truth-seeking" mission of Russian literature long after Radischev. What distinguishes Radischev from other (travel) writers of his day and age who similarly combined Sentimentalist sensitivity and Enlightenment's didacticism, and what also seems to have had sealed his fate and posthumous reputation, is the unprecedented political and social referentiality of his work. Unlike Karamzin or Fonvizin, who test French and German philosophical thought of their time against the foreign societies that they visit, Radischev literally brings home Rousseau, Helvétius, and also importantly, Franklin. By embarking on a *domestic* journey, he extends the validity of these philosophical doctrines to Russia, attacking not the abstract or foreign evils, but the wrongs of his own society.

However, Radischev's contribution to Russian literature is not exhausted by the tenacious attractiveness of his personal myth and his "radicalism." Beyond the entrenched perception of the *Journey* as Russia's first ideological novel and a precursor of much of the nineteenth century social critique, I shall bring into the discussion its literary aspect as well. Not unlike Karamzin, who used his journey as a pretext to turn his travel impressions into a book and to establish himself as a writer,

Radischev, too, appears to be concerned not only with the political implications of his work, but also with his own artistic reputation. Musing over Pushkin's famous question about the motives behind Radischev's doomed undertaking, Petr Vail and Aleksandr Genis provocatively suggest that his writing impulse was very far from political: graphomania.²⁶⁸ The powerful hold that Radischev as a thinker and writer has had on the imagination of Russian literati over the last two centuries proves his ambitions not to be entirely ungrounded. The narrative device that he had pioneered - travel as a quest for social justice and truth - organizes the plot in Nekrasov's *Who Is Happy in Russia?* (1863—1877), Chekhov's *Island Sakhalin* (1890), Platonov's *Chevengur* (1927-1929), and even Erofeev's *Moscow to the End of the Line* [*Moskva-Petushki*] (1969), etc. A more appropriate question then, would inquire not in the political intentions of Radischev or the solutions that he might have envisioned for Russia's social and political debilities, but into his choice of journey as a spinal cord of the plot befitting his political and artistic objectives best.

An admirer of Sterne like many of his contemporaries, Radischev may have sought to satisfy his literary ambitions by writing his very own Sentimental Journey, by choosing the genre that was very popular in his time.²⁶⁹ But it was also the rich symbolical underpinning of travel and a wealth of inter-textual links (Bible, Virgil, Cervantes, folk tradition of Russian wanderers) that it him to engage that seem to be decisive. What makes Radischev a figure of import for both Russian literature and its tradition of radical thought is the fact that his was the first convincing secular *literary* rendition of the perennial trope of travel writing that associates physical movement with spiritual quest. *The Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* decisively married a

²⁶⁸ Petr Vail and Aleksandr Genis, *Rodnaya Rech* [Native Speech], in *Sobranie sochinenii v dvukh tomakh*, vol.1 (Ekaterinburg: Y-Faktoria, 2004), 40.

²⁶⁹ On the influence of Sterne on Radischev see D.M.Lang, "Sterne and Radischev: An Episode in Russian Sentimentalism", *Revue de la littérature comparée* 21 (1947): 254-260.

social statement (however vague in Radischev's case) with the plot based on the author's real or imagined travel - the pattern that would prove very influential for Russian *belles lettres* for years to come.

Not unlike traditional religious pilgrimages, his journey, or rather flight, from the seat of despotism and heartlessness towards a destination that is imagined as more "normal" can hardly be used as a guide to the locales that he passes through. The names of the stations and villages organize the narrative into subchapters and the telltale toponymy suggests a gloomy and miserable countryside. Otherwise, references to the surroundings are essentially irrelevant, hardly evoking a corporeal landscape in between the stopovers, and the descriptions of people and places are functional rather than literary or documentary, inspired not by the representational impulse but by the exigencies of the all-sweeping allegory. The vector of the journey is clearly not so much geographical, but rather moral and symbolic, as it plays out the common opposition between the new, European (i.e. "alien") imperial capital, and the older, more "natural" Moscow, rooted in the pre-Petrine history and tradition. One of the possible readings of Radischev's route, then, would present it as an early articulation of the Slavophile critique of the "new" Russia's imperial culture and a metaphor of a journey back in history, to the organic community of the pre-imperial *Rus'*.

There is another spatial and symbolic dimension to the trajectory of Radischev's travel. The description of St. Petersburg as the abode of beasts [«жилище тигров» in "Chudovo," p.16] and the epigraph to the *Journey* that describes a many-headed growling monster, rearticulate Radischev's flight from this infernal realm as a kind of anabasis. The epigraph - «Чудище обло, озорно, огромно, стозевно и лаяй» - was taken from Vasily Trediakovsky's epic poem *Tilemakhida* (1766), a Russian translation of Fénelon's *Les aventures de Telemaque* (1699).

Fénelon draws from the richly metaphorical storylines of the classical Greek myths to advance a scathing attack against the French absolutism of his time, while conveying this political statement in a form of an early Enlightenment rendition of a *Bildungsroman*. The young protagonist, Telemachus, descends into the underworld in search of his father, and although he does not find Odysseus there, he receives an important lesson on the ways of righteousness and wickedness. A would-be ruler himself, Telemachus is particularly impressed by the Mirror of Truth, that reflects their true essence back to kings and sovereigns, who see themselves in this Mirror as many-headed roaring monsters. The use of katabasis/anabasis motive is, of course, a common literary device, that not only reveals to the protagonist the real nature of things, but also helps to uncover or reclaim the true self.²⁷⁰

However, this is where the analogy with the religious paradigm of travel falls short, as Radischev's journey does not promise any salvation or even arrival. The Journey ends before the traveler ever sets foot in Moscow and contains no description of the city, although the Radischev spells its name in capital letters twice with several exclamation marks: «*МОСКВА! МОСКВА!!!*» In his tribute to Lomonosov ("Tale on Lomonosov") that concludes the work, Radischev seems to hint at the perpetual irresolution of his own truth-seeking endeavor, since "the temple of glory" remained inaccessible even to Lomonosov, this epitome of the inquisitive enlightened mind. Frustration, instead of salvation, irresolution, in place of harmony, is the point of arrival for truth-seekers and wanderers that manifestly sets modern narratives of travel apart from traditional religious pilgrimages.

Indeed, upon closer look Radischev's traveler is not moving towards, but rather from: from the self-congratulating naiveté towards a more sober and ambiguous

²⁷⁰ Vladimir Kantor, "Otkuda i kuda ekhal puteshestvennik?" ["Where to and where from was the traveler going?"] in *Voprosy literatury* no. 4 (2006): 83-138

view of himself and the ways of his country, that makes a hard and fast ideological labelling of his position problematic. The maturation of his inner life reverses the pattern of conventional *Bildungsroman* that usually ends with harmonious reconciliation between the self and the world. In the oft-quoted opening lines the narrator looks around himself in dismay to see the suffering of humanity and feels his heart filled with pain. He then turns his gaze inward to recognize the human nature as the source of evil for other humans, which is often caused by the lack of proper - “straight” - gaze.”²⁷¹ The journey is undertaken in order to acquire the knowledge of the inner self and of the human reality and to straighten up the distorted vision.²⁷²

The specificity of Russian literary travel writing

The emergence of travel writing as a recognized literary genre in Russia should thus be viewed against the backdrop of crucial political, social and cultural developments that accompanied Russia’s belated arrival into European modernity. The relationship between texts and socio-historical context(s) functions on several levels here and I shall discuss them briefly now in lieu of conclusion. On the one hand, there are concerns of artistic form in its broadest sense – the particular characteristics of Russian travel writing as a narrative with its inner dynamics and objectives, on the other – the kind of discourses perpetuated through these narratives and their function in Russian culture. The specific textual and thematic characteristics of the eighteenth century western European travelogue had historically evolved over the course of several centuries spurring forward, as I have shown in the first chapter, diverse

²⁷¹ «Я взглянул окрест меня — душа моя страданиями человечества уязвлена стала. Обратил взоры мои во внутренность мою — и узрел, что бедствия человека происходят от человека, и часто оттого только, что он взирает непрямо на окружающие его предметы» А. Радисhev, *Puteshestvie iz Peterburga v Moskvu. Vol'nost'*. (St.Petersburg: Nauka, 1992), 6.

²⁷² On the role of visual metaphors in the *Journey*, see Andreas Schönle, *Authenticity and Fiction*, 20-22.

paradigms of religious and lay travel. This evolutionary development had to be compressed into mere decades in Russia, a country, that however keen on adopting western cultural products, had to tailor them to fit domestic socio-political reality and ideological exigencies.

The history of the reception of Sterne in Russia is a good case in point. While Russian writers of greater or lesser talent were taking their inspiration from Sterne's ironic and sensitive narrator, the elements that went into the making of Yorick's sentimental journey could not entirely be replicated on the Russian soil, but instead, were thoroughly remolded in ways that give away the immaturity of Russian literary tradition. Sterne's *Tristram Shandy and Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* deconstruct through parody and irony the two most popular genres of the eighteenth century European literature – *Bildungsroman* and travelogue. *The Sentimental Journey*, for instance, explicitly challenges Smollett's 1766 *Travels Through France and Italy*, mocking his "inquisitive" yet quarrelsome and xenophobic traveler in a caricature figure of Smelfungus. Sterne's satire must have been rather unfair: much of Smollett's spleen was caused by the family calamity (the death of his daughter) and his own illness that set him off on his trip. The difference between the two travelers, the acerbic Smollett and the kind, sensitive Yorick, however, is not merely temperamental. Sterne mocks the very idea of an "inquisitive traveler" personified by Tobias Smollett and reflected in the complete title of his book *Travels Through France and Italy* that promised the readers an exhaustive compendium of the traveler's observations of people, customs, laws, trade, art and historical monuments, accompanied by a thorough description of the historical sites of Nice and "a weather calendar for the eighteen months" that Smollett had spent there. Yorick, on the contrary, is manifestly indifferent to the historical and cultural sites of either France or

Italy. By eschewing any premeditated plan for his trip he chooses to follow his moods and whims that lead him off the beaten track of the curious and dutiful travelers. He refrains from visiting “Palais-Royal, the façade of the Louvre, [Jardin du] Luxembourg”, and prefers not to bore the reader with the lengthy discussions of politics, trade, economics or legislative system as would Henry Fielding or Joseph Addison. His true subject is not the objective world around him, but rather its reflection in the thoughts, feelings and emotions of the *sentimental* traveler himself.

Russian followers of Sterne could afford neither his irony, nor his causal attitude towards the representational, documentary function of the travel account, reading him first and foremost as a model English Sentimentalist writer.²⁷³ The well-established literary novelistic canon and the philosophical and scientific discourses of the Enlightenment underlying it that were the target of Sterne’s parody, were only recently imported to Russia from the west, and the country simply did not have its own Richardson or Smollett to lampoon. To offer a travel narrative that worked outside of both Rousseaudian pedagogy, the source of European *Bildungsroman*, and the empirically bent canon of travelogues, Sterne had to anticipate the impending cultural shift in tastes and objectives of writing that would occur with the birth of Romanticism. By the end of the eighteenth century the Russian nascent literary tradition was not yet autonomous and mature enough to advance a similar critique of the European cultural models that it was then still busy catching up with. Karamzin and Radischev, though clearly inspired by Sterne, are incapable of his

²⁷³ This is not to say that irony and parody were altogether absent from the corpus of Russian travelogues, but rather that these texts constituted a rather marginal brunch within the larger terrain of Russian travel writing. See, for examples, the better known works, such as P. Yakovlev’s *Sentimental Journey on Nevsky Prospect*, 1820; A. Velt’man’s *The Wanderer*, 1831-2; O. Senkovsky’ *Fantastic Journeys of Baron Brambeus*, 1833, etc. The emphasis on the narratorial persona holographed through many misadventures and humorous situations described with self-reflexive irony and a touch of nonchalance, as well as the particular merger between fiction and non-fiction, between the extra-literary and meta-literary reality signal the importance of this rather marginal brunch of travel literature for the rise of autonomous fiction and self-justified literary imagination. For more on these texts, see Andreas Schonle, *Authenticity and Fiction*, Chapter 4: “The Space of Irony”, 202 – 158.

self-distancing vis-à-vis both the Sentimental novel and the Enlightenment paradigm. Hence, the peculiar hybrid quality of Karamzin's or Radischev's works, who borrowed the structural and thematic core from *Bildungsroman* and infused it with the accentuated sensitivity and auto-reflexivity typical of Sentimentalist authors.²⁷⁴

Yorick's principled playfulness and nonchalance, the facetious haphazardness of his account were widely imitated by Russian writers but only half-heartedly so. In socio-historical terms, a leisurely *voyageur* preoccupied with nothing but pure aestheticism and matters of his heart and imagination was still practically unknown in this country, and thus a legitimizing purpose had to be presented to the reader in order to imbue the seemingly idle pastime with some substance. For Karamzin this purpose was clearly educational. His audience could not be relied on to have had a thorough knowledge of the foreign countries that the traveler was passing through, and neither did the allusions to the natural sites described in the European novels make much sense to those unfamiliar with the writers that he evoked. The actual experience of foreign travel was still a relatively new phenomenon, both costly and physically taxing, which few could afford. Neither did Russia have a comparable tradition of scientific or educational journey that had familiarized the western European audiences with both the natural and human diversity of the continent and with the world beyond it. Thus, the inescapably didactic, illustrative function of Russian travel writing clashed with the literary posture of triviality and casualness that the narrator might have wanted to strike.

²⁷⁴ Elena Krasnoschekova, ““Sentimental’noe Puteshestvie.” Problematika Ganra (Laurence Stern i N.M.Karamzin) [“Sentimental Journey” Issues of the Genre. (Laurence Stern and N.M.Karamzin)] in *Filosofsky vek. Rossiia i Britaniia v epokhu Prosvetsheniya. Opyt filosofskoy i kul’turnoy komparativistiki* [*Philosophical Century. Russia and Britain in the Age of Enlightenment. Essays in comparative philosophical and cultural criticism*] (St. Petersburg, 2002), 191-206.

By the same token, Radischev, who might have found Yorick's self-centered monologues too unserious and flippant, replaces this lightheartedness with a solemn political critique in a cloak of a travel account. His travel narrative, pieced together from incoherent episodes, dialogues, visions, retold stories, etc, functions not as an actual record of a factual trip, but as a pervasive allegory of coming back to one's senses and recovering the true vision of himself and the world around, an anticlimactic *Bildungsroman* of sorts. In the course of his journey of intellectual and spiritual maturation Radischev employs the discourse of travel and its attendant metaphors and tropes to challenge political authority and to reassess himself as a sensitive and moral individual.

In short, although the demise of neoclassicism signaled the move away from normative universalizing approach to the individual self towards the valorization of the private, idiosyncratic sensual and emotional experience, the shift of paradigms in Russia was heavily enmeshed within a particular socio-historical context that accounted for a different dialectics between the rationalism of Enlightenment on the one hand and Sentimentalism on the other. While the European countries were entering the nineteenth century having converted the doctrines of the Enlightenment (and its discontents) from abstract philosophizing into law and civil ethos, Russia was just emerging from its medieval past, struggling to define its national identity against the acutely felt indebtedness to the West and pinning its hopes on its "unique spirituality." In the analysis of the eighteenth century Russian travelogues as the media for and makers of political discourses, the connection between the experience of travel and the evolving sense of national self inevitably comes to the fore. While the western European encounter with the "Other" put to the test the Enlightenment affirmation of reason, tolerance and individual freedom and mostly reaffirmed the

cultural self-confidence of the traveler, the Russian exposure to the west involved a careful balancing act between uncritical miming of everything foreign and parochial insistence on one's own self-sufficiency, clearly found wanting by the technological and scientific superiority of the West.

For all the braggadocio of Karamzin or Fonvizin in asserting Russia's equality to or even supremacy over the west, Russian travelers were clearly not arriving to Europe from a self-confident cultural tradition. While immersing themselves and their readers into the Western European societies, they also had to engage their own country's recently Europeanized identity. Russian travel writing has never completely veered away from the issues of national exceptionalism and cultural belonging and these subjects have remained at least as important as the self-congratulating subjectivity and auto-reflexivity of modern western travelogues. In fact, as I will argue through the remainder of this work and the individual texts that I will analyze in detail, the vector of Russian travel writing is exactly the opposite: unconvinced by the legitimacy of subjective apprehension of the world it seeks to "objectify the self" by contemplating its place within the public body.²⁷⁵

With the Petrine upheaval propelled by the commitment to thoroughly westernize and modernize the country, Russia's historically problematic relationship to Europe penetrated to the core of society's self-consciousness. The quest to define the country's own distinctiveness inevitably engaged "the West" as a frame of reference or a contrasting foil against which Russia could assert its own identity, and even superiority. Such constructions were diverse and many, some built on the earlier medieval perception of the west as an inherently alien and hostile land of Latin heresy, others celebrated it as an enlightened realm of reason, still others juxtaposed its

²⁷⁵ Andreas Schönle, *Authenticity and Fiction*, 210

rationalism and pragmatism with Russia's very own spirituality and ethics, etc. In the words of Geoffrey Hosking, for generations of Russian travelers and thinkers, "the West" was "not a real set of countries, very different from one another, and each with its own difficulties, but an adventure playground of the imagination."²⁷⁶ Characteristic of all these constructs was their susceptibility to categorical judgments and sweeping generalizations that left little middle ground in between unequivocal acceptance or definite rejection of the western influences, and that did not seem capable of ever entirely tearing away from the West as either a model or an anti-model for what Russia ought to be.

In this sense, the Russian travelogue's failure to cultivate a gaze of curiosity or of pure aestheticism, and to assert self-justified observation of places and people over political interpretation is hardly inconsequential. As literary representations of the actual encounters with the western societies, Russian eighteenth century travelogues are uniquely positioned to illustrate the subtle psychological and ideological mechanisms at work in the author's attempt to organize and "make sense" of the observed reality. The inevitable tension between the political or philosophical discourses by way of which this "ordering" takes place and the traveler's immediate, unrehearsed impressions reveals the inherent discontinuity of all such discourses and the ambivalence behind the seemingly confident authorial voice. The ideological diversity of the eighteenth century authors that I have discussed earlier, and the evolution in the views and opinions of some of them (Karamzin's gradual move from anglophilia and liberalism towards support for autocracy and conservative nationalism is a good case in point) reflects the complexity of Russian entanglement with Europe. It also exposes Russia's inability to advance an indigenous critic of the West without

²⁷⁶ Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 277.

heavily relying on Europe's own philosophical and political doctrines, mostly French, but by the turn of the nineteenth century increasingly replaced by the countervailing trends of German and English thought. The "modernists" that celebrated Petrine westernizing endeavor could not help feeling certain hesitancy on the part of the Europeans as to whether or not to accept Russia as intrinsic part of the European civilization. The "archaists" and conservatives who lamented the loss of the authentically Russian practices and mores to the "corrupting" alien customs, were frustrated by the inability to offer a convincing national substitute to the allure of the culturally and technologically superior Europe. Opposing the unmitigated individualism and the alleged spiritual poverty of the European societies, they turned towards Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism (that arrived to Russia from Germany and Sweden), and a multiple of other currents of esoteric, occult, and mystical thought. The return to piety advocated by many Russian Freemasons was, too, a pan-European phenomenon born out of the rejection of the skepticism of the Enlightenment, but its influence on the Russian intellectuals is hard to overestimate.²⁷⁷

Pietism laid the groundwork for the rediscovery of Russia's own theological tradition that had been forlorn by the earlier generations of Russian nobility. It is partially due to the religious and mystical quests of the Freemasons that the Slavophiles of the 1830s were able to resuscitate the prestige of the Russian Church exalting the Orthodox religious ethics (and its social application - e.g. *соборность/sobornost'* [congregationaism]) as an autochthonous basis for their concept of Russianness. Although the discernible intellectual lineage behind the Slavophile thought goes back to German idealism, and to Schelling and Hegel in particular, theirs was the first successful attempt to elaborate a comprehensive

²⁷⁷ Pierre R.Hart, "The West" in Nicholas Rzhevsky, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 92-106.

ideological system in a quest for a country's national distinctiveness. This system was both utopian and conservative, and not immune, as its later career proved, to chauvinistic and xenophobic ideas, but it was homegrown and drew on a thorough analysis of the deep social and cultural ruptures created by the shock-westernization.

There was still another solution to the frustrations of Russia's westernization compounded by the country's failure to find an indigenous substance to its volatile national self. The solution was to add another element to the Russia versus Europe dichotomy: Orient. The triangulate relationship allowed Russia to break the conundrum described by Boris Groyce as the "internalization of 'otherness,'" to test its own Europeanness against the non-European "Other" and perhaps, to discover its true historical vocation without referencing Europe altogether.²⁷⁸ Romanticism's "discovery" of Asia/Orient created an additional arena on which (and against which) Russia could overcome insecurity about its own Europeanness, by assuming for itself a civilizing "Europeanizing" role traditionally associated with Western Europe.

²⁷⁸ Boris Groyce, "Rossiia kak podsoznanie zapada" [Russia as the subconscious of the West] in *Isskustvo utopii* (Moscow: Khudozhestvenny zhurnal, 2003), 150-167.

CHAPTER 3: XIX century travel writing and the rise of prose fiction

Russian Orientalism

As we have seen in the first part of this work, fascination with the “Orient” pervaded European Romantic culture throughout the first decades of the nineteenth century. When the fashion reached Russia it was given an additional powerful impetus by the geopolitical developments in the country. Although Russian military presence in the Caucasus goes back to the mid-sixteenth century, the Russian public only “discovered” this region in the first decades of the nineteenth century with the annexation of Georgian provinces in 1801 and the military conquest-cum-colonization of Northern Caucasus throughout the 1820s and beyond.²⁷⁹ The campaign that lasted for almost fifty years (1817-1864) was meant to establish Russia’s hold on the territories that laid between it and its new acquisitions in the Southern Caucasus (i.e. Kartli-Kakhetia). Russia also entered into a two-year long military confrontation with Persia (1826-1828) and with the Ottoman Empire (1828-1829) that made the “Eastern

²⁷⁹ I refer here to the seminal definition of Orientalism proposed by Edward Said, who spoke of a “Western style of dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” that produced and was produced by a western hegemonic discourse dependent on a “distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, historical and philosophical texts” in E. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978), 2-3, 120.

The first “Orient” discovered by Russia, argues Sara Dickinson, was not the Caucasus, but the Crimea, conquered during the reign of Catherine II: “This was not yet the full-fledged Orientalism of Said’s classic model. A concerted institutional effort at the political and cultural control of colonial territories would develop only in the 19th century, largely in response to the Russian empire’s conflicts further south and east with the peoples of the Caucasus. While there is a direct link between Catherinian descriptions of the Crimea and later Orientalist characterizations of the Caucasus, Russia’s encounter with the Crimea is better described as a preliminary process of “otherization”: the production and circulation of images and stereotypes that expressed the region’s “otherness” or ontological difference from the norms of the dominant culture, in this case those of Western Europe. In order to promulgate such distinctions, of course, Russia needed to claim West European cultural standards as its own.” Sara Dickinson, “Russia’s First “Orient”: Characterizing the Crimea in 1787”, *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 3.1 (2002): 3-25, 3.

question” all the more pressing on its international agenda and a subject of heightened public interest.

The growth of military and literary interest in the “South”/Orient was accompanied by the state-sponsored institutionalization of oriental studies. In 1804 a ministerial degree mandated the university teaching of oriental languages; six years later count S. Uvarov’s formulated the objectives of Russian engagement with the Orient in his *Projet d’une Academie Asiatique*: cultural mediation between Europe and Asia. Alongside the military expansion in the Caucasus, travel, literature and academic oriental studies were supposed to substantiate Russia’s claims for Europeanness by positioning it on equal footing with other producers of oriental discourse: no longer an object of Europe’s condescending gaze, but itself an imperial power bent on “civilizing” Asia’s “backward peoples.”²⁸⁰ In Dostoevsky’s famous words:

In Europe we were hangers-on and slaves, but to Asia we shall go as masters. In Europe we were Tatars, but in Asia we, too, are Europeans. Our civilizing mission in Asia will bribe our spirit and drive us thither. It is only necessary that the movement should start. Build only two railroads: begin with the one to Siberia, and then – to Central Asia, - and at once you will see the consequences.²⁸¹

The “discovery” of the Caucasus was not a mere result of the country’s increased military and civil presence in the region, but equally important, of the literary appropriation of the exotic southeastern borderlands. Between 1820s and 1830s

²⁸⁰ See Monika Frenkel Greenleaf, “Pushkin’s “Journey to Arzrum”: The Poet at the Border”, *Slavic Review*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (Winter, 1991):945; Marc Bassin, “Asia” in N.Rzhevsky, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 57-84; Peter Scotto, “Prisoners of the Caucasus: Ideologies of Imperialism in Lermontov’s “Bela”, *PMLA*, Vol. 107, No. 2 (March 1992): 246-260; Izabela Kalinowska, *Between East and West: Polish and Russian Nineteenth-Century Travel to the Orient* (New York: University of Rochester press, 2004), Susan Layton, *Russian Literature and the Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), etc.

²⁸¹ Fyodor Dostoevsky, “Geok Tepe. Chto dlia nas Aziya?” [Geok tepe. What is Asia to us?] *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, Vol, 27 (Leningrad: Nauka, 1990), 32-40.

translations of western Oriental travelogues crammed the pages of most literary journals, inspiring Russian authors to embark on their own *voyages Orientales*. Through the works and travels of Pushkin, Bestuzhev-Marlinsky, Lermontov and later, Tolstoy, and of countless other less well-established authors, the Caucasian “South” and Crimea (with its connection to the history of ancient Greece on the one hand, and contemporary “Asiatic” inhabitants on the other) became Russia’s own Orient.²⁸² Katya Hokanson puts it deftly in her study of Russia’s early nineteenth century political and cultural discourse:

The Caucasus, as Russians know it, did not really exist until Pushkin created it in his 1821 (published in 1822) narrative poem, “The Captive of the Caucasus.” But, according to Vissarion Belinsky, once Pushkin’s narrative poem appeared the region “became for Russians the cherished land not only of wide, expansive freedom, but of inexhaustible poetry, the country of boiling life and bold dreams!”²⁸³

Alongside arts and letters, memoirs of the officers of the tsarist army and journalistic pieces on military service in the Caucasus were extremely influential in shaping the reading public’s view of the “Orient.” These accounts were regularly published by best historical and literary journals and almanacs, such as *Russkii arkhiv*, *Russkii vestnik*, or *Russkaia starina*, usually in several installments, and were enormously popular with the readers. The critical tension between the Oriental mythmaking propagated by the literary accounts and the officers’ first-hand experiences exposed by these texts shattered some of Romanticism’s clichés and implicitly challenged the imperial discourse that presented Russia as a sole and historically legitimate agent of

²⁸² It is noteworthy, that at the turn of the nineteenth century Russia identified itself with the “North” on the symbolic map of the world and its juxtaposition with Europe was thought of as West versus North, not as West versus East. See L. Sofronova, “Obraz Evropy v russkom kul’turnom kontekste XVIII veka.” [The image of Europe in Russia’s eighteenth century cultural context] in M.Leskinen and V.Khorev, *Mif Evriopy v literature I kul’ture Pol’shi iu Rossii* [The Myth of Europe in Russian and Polish literature and culture] (Moscow: Indrik, 2004), 97-110.

²⁸³ Katya Hokanson “Literary Imperialism, Narodnost’ and Pushkin’s Invention of the Caucasus”, *Russian Review*, no. 3, vol. 53, (July, 1994): 336-352; 336.

enlightenment in the region.²⁸⁴ The many voluminous accounts of the miserable conditions of military service in the Caucasus and of senseless atrocities committed on both sides, problematized the dichotomy of barbarity versus civilization that sustained Russia's imperial Orientalist discourse. To the Russians the border between Europe and Asia has always appeared to be a matter of ideological rather than geographical mapping and has remained flimsy up to this day.

At the same time, there is little consistency in the Romantic literature of the period as to the legitimacy of Russia's conquest (euphemistically referred to as "pacification") of the Caucasus. According to poet, playwright and diplomat Aleksander Griboedov (1795 – 1829) Russia's Caucasian campaign was little more than the "struggle between the mountain and forest freedom with the drum enlightenment." [*«борьба горной и лесной свободы с барабанным просвещением»*]. Political readings of Pushkin and Lermontov's Caucasian poems and prose reveal a remarkable fluidity in the attitudes of both poets to their country's colonizing enterprise in the South, their poetics heavily influenced on the one hand, by the anti-autocratic rhetoric and celebration of the freedom-loving "savage" mountaineers, which is the common place of Byronic Romanticism, and on the other, by the dominant imperial discourse that asserted Russia's historical right to "enlighten" the backward peoples of its imperial periphery. As Susan Layton has shown in her own study of literary responses to the Caucasian campaigns, "Russian literature does indeed run a gamut between underwriting and resisting the Caucasian conquest: writers were sovereign in their textual domains but wielded their representational authority to different ends."²⁸⁵ Not infrequently, even in the eyes of

²⁸⁴ See Dana Sherry, "Kavkaztsy: Images of Caucasus and Politics of Empire in the Memoirs of the Caucasus Corps' Officers, 1834-1859", *Ab Imperio*, no. 2 (2002): 191 – 222.

many staunch proponents of modernization and reform, the costs of Russian imperial expansion in the East were outweighed by the perceived righteousness of the country's civilizing mission in the region: among the non-Europeans the semi-Europeanized country was performing a typically "western" role, thereby, it was hoped, laying the groundwork for modernization and reform at home.²⁸⁶

Similarly, the romantic imagery of the defiant inhabitants of the would-be colonized areas of the Caucasian South (mostly borrowed from the rich repertoire of western European Romanticism) often encompassed diverse, if not mutually exclusive, categories that portrayed the locals as both savage and poetic, treacherous and noble, physically repellent and sensuous, libidinous and chaste, cruel yet noble, etc.²⁸⁷ The source of this disparity cannot be exclusively reduced to the clash between "Romantic" and "Realistic" forms of representation, but rather to the diverse ideological and poetic needs to which these descriptions of Russia's "native Other" were put. For all the semantic affinity between Russian and western Romantic figurations of the "noble savage", when drawing analogies between Russian Orientalist discourse (at least, the part of it that deals with the Caucasus) with British or French Orientalism(s) it is important to recognize the impact of Russia's repressive autocratic regime on the emotional anxieties and frustrations of the Russian Romantics. Censored and controlled by the "all-seeing and all-hearing" authorities, the Russian artist often came to *identify* with the highlanders that were similarly subjugated by the tsarist despotism and to romanticize their defiant, freedom-loving

²⁸⁵ Susan Layton, *Russian Literature and the Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 102.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁸⁷ Hayden White, "The Noble Savage as Fetish," in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 194; Peter Scotto, "Prisoners of the Caucasus: Ideologies of Imperialism in Lermontov's "Bela", *PMLA*, no. 2, vol. 107 (March 1992): 246-260; 248-9.

ethos – a powerful motive, which distinguishes Russian Orientalism from its western analogues.²⁸⁸ Corollary to this is the persistent narrative of a disillusioned Russian officer, often captive, salvaged by the love of a courageous native maiden (Pushkin’s *Prisoner of the Caucasus*, Lermontov’s “Bela” in *The Hero of Our Time*, etc.) and the image of the Caucasus as a refuge from the despotism or world-weariness of the North (i.e. imperial Petersburg). The reality of Russian autocracy gave a powerful political dimension to the common Romantic trope that celebrated escape from the strictures of society into the “uncivilized” elsewhere in a hope of a freer, more honest mode of being. The idea of an imperial periphery or borderland as a domain of freedom and behavioral authenticity will become one of Russia’s most enduring cultural constants from Romanticism onward.²⁸⁹ Parenthetically, a similar centrifugal impulse can be observed in the travelogues of Soviet writers that created their own “symbolic geography” of the periphery. In the situation of thorough governmental control and

²⁸⁸ “[T]he Russian artists, while seldom denouncing the empire explicitly, provided an alienated prism through which to contemplate the ‘prison of all nations’ in which both the Russian and the highlander were –however differently – trapped.” Harsha Ram, *Prisoners of the Caucasus: Literary Myths and Media Representations of the Chechen Conflict* (Berkeley: Berkley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies, 1999), 14. Quoted in Izabela Kalinowska, *Between East and West: Polish and Russian Nineteenth-Century Travel to the Orient*, 10.

²⁸⁹ Consider, for example, Lermontov’s famous 1841 poem:

Farewell, farewell, unwashed Russia,
The land of slaves, the land of lords,
And you, blue uniforms of gendarmes,
And you, obedient to them folks.

Perhaps beyond Caucasian mountains
I’ll hide myself from your pashas,
From their eyes that are all-seeing,
From their ever hearing ears.

Прощай, немытая Россия,
Страна рабов, страна господ,
И вы, мундиры голубые,
И ты, им преданный народ.

Быть может, за стеной Кавказа
Укроюсь от твоих пашей,
От их всевидящего глаза,
От их всеслышащих ушей.

almost total impossibility of foreign travel, the far reaches of the Soviet empire (e.g. Estonia, Armenia, Georgia, etc) came to be politicized as allegorical getaways for the disenchanting artists. In a heavily centralized state the “less Soviet” Baltic republics, for example, offered an illusion of an ersatz Europe, attracting unrecognized poets, writers, scholars, political and moral exiles and other misfits (e.g. Sergei Dovlatov, Yuri Lotman, Joseph Brodsky, David Samoilov, etc.)

As I have stressed earlier, the question of Russia’s protracted and complex involvement with the Orient, both military and aesthetic, is intrinsically connected with the country’s precariously European imperial identity. Asia has never become an “autonomous field of activity in its own right,” but rather a space for projecting the complexity of a much more decisive engagement with Europe.²⁹⁰ Russian mythologeme of Asia/Orient was changing over time, shaped by the developments in domestic and foreign politics and the homegrown political doctrines. Parenthetically, the “Orient” of Russian cultural and geopolitical imagination in the first three decades of the nineteenth century is also geographically less expansive than the “Orient” constructed in the aftermath of the Russian military conquest of Central Asia in the 1860-1880s that had engendered its own Orientalist discourse outside of Romanticism’s conventions. Whereas earlier perceptions of the “Orient” tended to present it as an alien, if not hostile civilization (e.g. Vladimir Soloviev: “Asia is a providential enemy”), by the turn of the twentieth century the ideologies of Scythianism and later, Eurasianism attempted to valorize Russia’s relationship with Asia by developing a vision of Russia that was neither purely European nor Asiatic, but that absorbed strong cultural and anthropological influences of both civilizations to develop into an entirely independent entity, a unifier of the Eurasian continent (e.g.

²⁹⁰ Marc Bassin, “Asia”, 74.

Alexander Blok: “Yes, We are Scythians, we are Asians” [«Да! Скифы - мы, да, Азиаты – мы, С раскосыми и жадными очами!»]) This is not the place for a thorough discussion of Russian Orientalism and the ideology of empire: the question has already solicited voluminous scholarly attention and will most probably continue to do so in light of the recent conjunction between post-socialist discourse and postcolonial studies.²⁹¹ Instead, I shall look at one of the most famous Russian Oriental travelogues in order to read Russian textual “Orient”/South against its western analogues.

Aleksandr Pushkin, Journey to Arzrum (1835)

Earlier I spoke about the Caucasus’ appeal to the Romantic imagination as a domain of “mountain and forest freedom,” a palpable alternative to the harassments and pervasive control of the imperial capital. Pushkin embarked on his semi-illicit trip south in 1829 having been refused permission to travel to Paris, Italy or China like he wanted to. In 1828 he made an attempt to join the army in the Russian-Turkish war, which also meant going abroad; his request was denied. Despite frequent appeals to the authorities, Pushkin was never allowed to leave Russia, and had spent four years exiled to the south in the early 1820s (Kishinev, Odessa) and two more years in his country estate under house arrest, having to request authorization for his every trip. The tropes of captivity, exile and imprisonment that figure prominently in Pushkin’s

²⁹¹ For the discussion of Russian Orientalism see the debate in the special issue of *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 1(4) (Fall 2000): 691-727: Adeeb Khalid, “Russian History and the Debate over Orientalism”, 691-699; Nathaniel Knight, “On Russian Orientalism: A Response to Adeeb Khalid”, 701-715; Maria Todorova, “Does Russian Orientalism Have a Russian Soul? A Contribution to the Debate between Nathaniel Knight and Adeeb Khalid”, 717-727; and Ekaterina Dyogot, “How to Qualify for Postcolonial Discourse” and Margaret Dikovitskaya, “Does Russia Qualify for Postcolonial Discourse? A Response to Ekaterina Dyogot’s Article” in *Ab Imperio*, no. 2 (2002): 547-557; Nicholas Riasanovsky, “Asia through Russian Eyes,” in Wayne Vucinich, ed., *Russia and Asia: Essays on the Influence of Russia on the Asian Peoples* (Stanford: Hoover Institute Press, 1972); Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini, eds., *Russia’s Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), etc.

writing are thus important to him not only as the stock themes of Romantic poetics, but as a reflection of his own frustrated desire to leave and persistent entanglement in the “nets of the empire”.

Pushkin’s personal circumstances, however severe, were by no means unique. Following the suppressed Decembrist uprising of 1825 that was regarded by the court as an expression of libertarian western influence, Nicholas I sought to restrict Russian residence abroad. Not only was the tsar’s permission for foreign travel made a requirement, but unauthorized study abroad could jeopardize the applicant’s right to enter state service. Pushkin’s unauthorized trip to Armenia also cost him official reprimand upon return. In 1834 a series of directives limited the allowed duration of foreign tenure to five years, which was further reduced to two years in 1851 on a case-by-case basis.²⁹² It is not clear whether these and other restrictions had significantly affected the number of Russian students and travelers abroad, but the very fact of the restrictive legislative initiatives is noteworthy.

The theme of escape and border-crossing that haunts Pushkin’s poetry and prose, as well as private correspondence is signaled toward the end of chapter 2 in the Journey:

“Here’s the Arpachai,” the Cossack told me. Arpachai! Our border! This was worth the Ararat! I galloped toward the river with an indescribable feeling. Never before had I seen a foreign land. There was something mysterious about the border for me; from my childhood, travel has always been my favorite dream. For many years, I had led a nomadic life, wandering through the South, then the North, but I never before broke free of Russia’s immense border. I rode happily into the cherished river, and the good stallion carried me to the Turkish shore. But this shore had already been conquered and I remained still in Russia.²⁹³

²⁹² Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime* (London : Penguin Books, 1990), 214.

²⁹³ «Арпачай! наша граница! Это стоило Арарата. Я поскакал к реке с чувством неизъяснимым. Никогда еще не видал я чужой земли. Граница имела для меня что-то таинственное; с детских лет путешествия были моей любимой мечтою. Долго вел я потом жизнь кочующую, скитаясь то по югу, то по северу, и никогда еще не *вырывался* из пределов необъятной России. Я весело въехал в заветную реку, и добрый конь вынес меня на турецкий берег. Но этот берег был уже

The above passage contains both the elements of Romantic poetics (e.g. “nomadic life”, “wanderings”, “mysterious border”, “breaking free”, dreams of faraway lands, etc.) and the frustrating anti-climactic resolution: the empire has expanded yet again, engulfing its earlier frontiers to the dismay of the traveler. This anti-climax encapsulates the structure of the entire narrative: throughout the text Pushkin persistently punctures the Romantic discourse of the Caucasus typical of his earlier Byronic lyrics, inverting the conventions of the genre and playing with the expectations of his readers. In what follows I shall briefly discuss the narrative strategies that make such inversion and Pushkin’s self-reinvention possible. I shall argue that the “new” Pushkin that emerges through irony, self-mockery and carnivalization marks the point of transition from Romanticism to Realism.

The deflation of Romantic rhetoric in the *Journey* necessitated in the de-heroization of the author’s narratorial persona on the one hand, and on the other, a move away from the topos of landscape description propagated by travelogues of Oriental journeys, and ultimately, from the conventions of the genre altogether. Early in the narrative the poet finds a tattered copy of his own poem “Prisoner of the Caucasus” replete with Romantic rhetoric that he himself had been so instrumental in implanting on the Russian soil. A more mature Pushkin of the *Journey to Arzrum* is dissatisfied with what he reads, declaring it juvenile and naïve. The dual impulse of both nostalgic recollection of the “real (more authentic and “wild”) Orient” of the past and the conscious self-distancing from the idealism and follies of Pushkin’s earlier romantic self is evident throughout the travelogue. In place of the “steep stony pathways”, “snow-covered mountain-tops” and “unfenced cliffs” that inspired the traveler on his previous visits, Pushkin now finds none of the earlier charm and

завоеван: я все еще находился в России.» А. Pushkin, *Sochinenia v trekh tomakh*, vol. 3 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, 1986), 391.

wilderness: the poetic sublime turned into the prosaic and the mundane.²⁹⁴ The land he traverses bares silent ruins, decayed cemeteries, dry fountains, and none of the famed “Asiatic opulence” [«*Азиатская роскошь*»] that occidental travelers always seek in the East:

I do know of a saying more senseless than the words “Asian opulence”. This saying was probably born during the Crusades, when, having left the bare walls and oak-chairs of their castles, the poor knights first saw red sofas, multihued carpets, and daggers with colorful gems on their handles. Now one could rather speak about Asian poverty, Asian swinishness [«*Азиатское свинство*»], etc. but opulence is certainly an attribute of Europe. In Arzrum you cannot for any money buy what you would find in the smallest store of any provincial town of the Pskov area.²⁹⁵

Although the traveler pays tribute to the intricacy [«*затейливость*»] of Asian decorativeness, he also pronounces it utterly devoid of taste, thought and grace. [«*в них нет ничего изящного: никакого вкуса, никакой мысли...*»].²⁹⁶ One hundred fifty years later this idea will reverberate in another travelogue: account of Joseph Brodsky’s journey to Istanbul. Brodsky is obviously more specific and elaborate in his historico-philosophic commentary on Islamic civilization than Pushkin who downplays the question of religion in his description of the Caucasus (not least due to the region’s ethnic and cultural diversity). Yet Brodsky makes a similar connection between the

²⁹⁴ The *Journey the Arzrum* as it was published in 1835 was a reworking of both Pushkin’s private letters to his brother Lev and his friends, and a rendition of his *Caucasian Journal* that he kept throughout the trip in 1829. The complete version of the passage that was also included in the *Journey*, albeit half-abridged, reads as follows: “Yes I confess: I miss the former wild and free state – I missed our steep stony paths, the bushes and the unfenced cliffs [over which we would wander on those chilly Caucasian evenings]. Of course, the country has been brought into perfect order, but it has lost much of its allure [Just as a poor and naughty child, who has grown with time into a moderate and respectable man, loses his former charm.] quoted in Ian M. Helfant, “Sculpting a Persona: The Path from Pushkin’s *Caucasian Journal* to *Puteshestvie v Arzrum*” in *Russian Review*, no. 3, vol. 546 (July, 1997) : 366-382, 378.

²⁹⁵ «Не знаю выражения, которое бы было бессмысленнее слов: азиатская роскошь. Эта поговорка, вероятно, родилась во время крестовых походов, когда бедные рыцари, оставя голые стены и дубовые стулья своих замков, увидели в первый раз красные диваны, пестрые ковры и кинжалы с цветными камушками на рукояти. Ныне можно сказать: азиатская бедность, азиатское свинство и проч., но роскошь есть, конечно, принадлежность Европы. В Арзруме ни за какие деньги нельзя купить того, что вы найдете в мелочной лавке первого уездного городка Псковской губернии». А. Puishkin, *Sochinenia*, 404.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 405.

Oriental love of decorum and non-figurative ornamentation (with its extensive use of verses from the Koran) and what he defines as “profound Eastern indifference to problems of a metaphysical nature” that turns past, history, creativity, quotations from the Prophet, etc, into a mere “pattern in a carpet. Trodden underfoot.”²⁹⁷

As the traveler progresses towards Georgia, the famed Asiatic intricacy and romantic mysteriousness unravel in front of his eyes, breeding disappointment and irony. The “Orient” of traditional Arabic tales and Oriental travelogues obscured from the penetrating western gaze by the maze-like palace courts, enclosed harems, eunuchs and armed guards simply does not exist (anymore?). Pushkin enters with ease into all the “reputed bastions of cultural impregnability” – harem, women’s bathhouse in Tiflis, the palace of the pasha, etc. discovering, in Monika Greenleaf’s words, the “Orient” that is “wide open, not desirable, but debased in its exposure.”²⁹⁸ Penetrating voyeuristic western eyes, this pan-ultimate cliché of postcolonial studies today that had percolated into post-colonial exposition through Foucault’s studies of the role of the “gaze” in mental and penitentiary institutions) is rendered obsolete in Pushkin’s account by the disappearance of the very protective boundary between the previously hidden object of this look and the voyeur himself. The women in the harem appear flirtatious and none of them all that beautiful; the undressed women in the baths show no sign of commotion upon the poet’s entry – in fact, he enters “as if an invisible man”, etc.²⁹⁹ The magic and eroticism of the “Orient” are gone, and so is the exoticism of the place already riddled with decay and sameness.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁷ Joseph Brodsky, “Flight From Byzantium” in Joseph Brodsky, *Less Than One: Selected Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1986), 393-446; 432-3.

²⁹⁸ Monika Frenkel Greenleaf, “Pushkin’s “Journey to Arzrum”: The Poet at the Border”, *Slavic Review*, vol. 50, no. 4 (Winter, 1991): 950.

²⁹⁹ A. Pushkin, *Sochinenia*, 384.

³⁰⁰ Monika Greenleaf, “Pushkin’s “Journey to Arzrum”, 950.

Crucial for the Oriental discourse and the structure of Oriental journey is the perception of the “Orient” as a space of arrested history, a “dead” civilization that was “no longer capable of naming and knowing itself” and awaiting the occidental traveler to come and decipher the near-extinct traces of its ancient glory.³⁰¹ Instead of the sought-after inscriptions of ancient civilizations Pushkin only finds graffiti left by earlier travelers and “several illegible names scratched over the ancient bricks.” Most of the human encounters on his way similarly end up in miscommunication. Whereas the Sentimentalists and Romantics believed the “language of the heart” to be capable of surmounting the barriers of misunderstanding whenever language falls short, Pushkin recounts repeated incidents of confusion and frustration. Asking for water first in Russian and then in Tatar at the doorstep of a peasant hut, he is met with numbness and bursts out: “What carelessness! Thirty versts from Tbilisi on the road to Persia and Turkey, he did not know a word of Russian, nor of Tatar.”³⁰² On the way to Kars, Pushkin is given a Turkish horseman to accompany him. The Turk takes him for a foreigner (non-Russian) and proceeds to talk loudly for the rest of the way, although the traveler obviously does not understand his language and can only guess that the Turk is cursing the Russians.³⁰³ Elsewhere, the poet is asked to produce his travel pass, but instead pulls out a draft of the verse that he had written earlier for a Kalmyk girl. His trick is never discovered and the uncomprehending officer “with Asian features” grants him passage - and new horses - with much honor and respect.³⁰⁴

³⁰¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 123-166.

³⁰² Andreas Schönle, *Authenticity and Fiction*, 185-187. A. Pushkin, *Sochinenia*, 387

³⁰³ A. Pushkin, *Sochinenia*, 391.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 393.

Indeed, the entire trip can be described as a sequence of misadventures. The traveler is annoyed by repulsive food, bad service, high prices, bed fleas, uncomprehending locals, an outbreak of plague, etc. Most grotesque of all is his early encounter with a young Kalmyk girl, the one to whom he would later dedicate the above-mentioned epistle. The episode is noteworthy for it encapsulates the anti-romantic, parodic impulse of the entire *Journey*. Again, an intercultural erotic encounter between the disenchanted and cynical male westerner and an exotic Oriental woman is a common coin of Romanticism's Oriental discourse. Pushkin, however, is sure to tease his readers, upsetting their expectations. The traveler comes across a camp of nomadic Kalmyks and notices a young pretty girl who is smoking tobacco while sewing. She speaks broken Russian, but a conversation ensues:

I sat beside her. "What's your name?" – "***", "How old are you?" – "Ten and eight" – "What are sewing?" – "Trousers" [«портка»] – "For whom?" – "For self." She handed me her pipe and started to eat. Tea was boiling in the cauldron with mutton fat and salt. She offered me her ladle. I did not want to refuse it and swallowed, trying not to breathe in. I do not think that any other national cuisine could produce anything more disgusting. I asked for something with which to get rid of the taste. They gave me a small piece of dried mare's meat; I was happy even for that. Kalmyk coquetry scared me; I hurried to leave the tent and rode off from the Circe of the steppe.³⁰⁵

In the earlier version of this episode recounted in the journal and then edited for the publication in the *Journey*, the encounter is replete with self-mockery: the poet asks the girl for a kiss and gets rejected, while she hits the intruder with some musical instrument ("resembling our balalaika") on the head. He flees: "Kalmyk amiability bored me."

³⁰⁵ «Молодая калмычка, собою очень недурная, шила, кура табак. Я сел подле нее. «Как тебя зовут?» - «***». – «Сколько тебе лет?» - «Десять и восемь». – «Что ты шьешь?» - «Портка». – «Кому?» - «Себя». Она подала мне свою трубку и стала завтракать. В котле варился чай с бараньим жиром и солью. Она предложила мне свой ковшик. Я не хотел отказаться и хлебнул, стараясь не перевести духа. Не думаю, чтобы другая народная кухня могла произвести что-нибудь гаже. Я попросил чем-нибудь это заесть. Мне дали кусочек сушеной кобылятины; я был и тому рад. Калмыцкое кокетство испугало меня; я поскорее выбрался из кибитки и поехал от степной Цирцеи.» Ibid, 373-4.

Note the difference between the neutral “boring amiability” and the much more charged “frightening coquetry” of the later version. The “Orient” is no longer an amiable and exotic domain, to which the Europeans come to realize their aesthetic and erotic fantasies. Far from romanticizing the exotic, Pushkin is explicit about his loathing of its “uncivilized” and cruel ways. Here, again, he nostalgically recalls the “earlier” days of Circassians’ “knightly spirit” that had since gone into eclipse: the noble and daring raiders of the yesteryear had turned into brutal and treacherous robbers, who attack the weak and the defenseless, maltreat their captives and are quick to kill at a whim. “What shall we do with such a people?”, exclaims Pushkin, suggesting, quite sarcastically, that since “opulence” seems capable of taming the rebellious mountaineers the introduction of the samovar (!) may prove helpful. On a more serious note, he advocates the spreading of the Gospels as a means to pacify and civilize the violent mores of the Circassian society. Proselytism, as he well knew, had never been on Russian imperialism’s agenda. The “earlier days” of knightly spirit, then, seem to suggest the times before the arrival of the Russians, whose only cultural baggage has long consisted of the proverbial samovar, and whose senseless cruelty amply demonstrated during the long military campaign rivaled that of the local tribes.³⁰⁶ Should Pushkin’s assessment of the violent Circassians, then, be taken as a testimony of the utter failure of Russian colonizing enterprise among the Caucasian peoples, that not only failed to bring “civilization” to the region, but was also conducive to the corruption of the mores and the swell of violence on *both* sides?

³⁰⁶ The samovar, as a stand-in for Russia’s cultural import will surface again, albeit with dead seriousness, in Dostoevsky’s *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* (1863). Offended by the presumed arrogance of a German gate keeper in Cologne, Dostoevsky fumes: “Deuce take it! - I thought, We, too, have invented the samovar... we have the journals... we have ...”. «Черт возьми, - думал я, - мы тоже изобрели самовар... у нас есть журналы... у нас делают офицерские вещи... у нас...». Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomakh*, vol. 4 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literature, 1956), 65.

The ultimate indictment of the Romantic mythology of the “Orient” and another anti-climactic point of the narrative is the passage about Griboedov. A celebrated poet and diplomat, Griboedov was appointed Russia’s minister plenipotentiary at the negotiations with Persia and was killed (literally torn apart alive) by an angry mob during the local religious riot. On his way to Kars, Pushkin encountered a carriage that was taking Griboedov’s remains from Teheran back to Tiflis for burial, so as not to leave them in the country that Griboedov had come to loathe long before his violent death there. Pushkin asked the two Georgians who accompanied the remains about the nature of their load and the carters gave him a misspelled, mutilated name “*Griboed*.” Pushkin readily identifies with the fellow poet and namesake, admitting that he admires Griboedov’s integrity, his passionate and noble character, even his “instantaneous and beautiful death.”³⁰⁷ At the same time, he worries that Griboedov’s life and deeds would soon be forgotten and hastens to jot down his own recollections of the dead poet. For him, there seems to be a fundamental synonymy between violent death at the hands of the fanatical mob and the engulfing oblivion to which the ignorant crowd condemns its best citizens, and the Russians, notes Pushkin, being both “lazy and devoid of curiosity” [«мы ленивы и нелюбопытны»] are much prone to such forgetfulness. Monika Greenleaf makes an interesting argument when she interprets this laziness and lack of curiosity as essentially Asiatic attributes that further erase the already volatile border between the “Orient” and Russia: inability to remember oneself, profound indifference to preserving memory in time.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁷ Pushkin, *Sochinenia*, 389.

³⁰⁸ Monika Greenleaf, “Pushkin’s Journey to Arzrum: The Poet at the Border”, 952.

Alongside revision of Romantic mythmaking of the “Orient”, a revision that prefigured contemporary fatigue with the straightjacket of politically correct post-colonial theory by more than 150 years, Pushkin deconstructs the Romantic figuration of the occidental traveler to the “Orient.” A common criticism directed against Said’s *Orientalism* targets his essentialist understanding of homogenous “Western” identity assumed and produced by his argument. Not only is the Hegelian dialectics of knowing and defining the “self” through the “other” is implicit to the logic of his approach, but he is able to illustrate his construction of the culturally self-confident occidental “self” through a wide range of narratorial personas produced by centuries of western travel to Asia. Pushkin’s travelogue subverts Saidian framework for it does not immediately reveal a tangible self-confident narrator, but rather a figure of evasion, an exile, the “invisible man” who could enter the Tiflis bathhouse unrecognized and barely noticed. Pushkin does not construct any corporeal alternative in place of the naïve an impressionable wanderer of his earlier lyrics that he ridicules in the *Journey*, but instead, basks in the unintelligibility of the travelers’ identity, its carnivalesque, *liminal* essence.³⁰⁹

I have spoken earlier about the elements of the plot that work to create this effect – the anti-climactic tenor of the narrative, the accumulation of frustrations and misadventures during the trip, the self-mocking tone of the traveler, his semi-illicit status and toying with the identity papers, the vague objectives and goals of the very trip, etc. Indeed, Victor Turner’s definition of liminality discussed in the earlier chapters of this work fits Pushkin’s traveling persona well: anonymity, invisibility, silence (in this case, restraint from human contact and interrupted, flawed communication at other instances), a-sexuality, endurance of pain, discomfort and

³⁰⁹ See also Yuri Tynianov, “O *Puteshestvii v Arzrum*,” *Vremennik Pushkinskoi komissii*, vol. 2 (Moscow, Leningrad, 1936): 67.

danger.³¹⁰ Other scholars talk about the multiple disguises that Pushkin invents for himself during his Caucasian journey (e.g. putting on a Turkish fez, presenting himself as the Devil to the unsuspecting Ossetians, etc.) or his making plans for fleeing Russia via the Black Sea as the real pretext for his trip that further blur the identity of the traveler.³¹¹ What emerges from these many evasions and masquerades is a decisively new prosaic narrative voice, consciously self-referential and dismissive of the vast overpopulated terrain of oriental traveling, a voice that effortlessly moves from one subject to another without perpetuating the overblown rhetoric of Pushkin's predecessors in the field. Adopting Harry Levin's definition of Realism as a parodic exposure of the artifice of literature's mimetic pretensions, the self-effacing self-mocking persona that Pushkin cuts for himself in the *Journey to Arzrum* signals the transition to a radically new literary paradigm of Realism.³¹²

Another source of liminality is, of course, Pushkin's exilic status. Importantly, Pushkin's exile is not (or not only) a romantic figuration, but an actual experience of being banished from the imperial capital and forbidden to ever leave the country, an experience not freely chosen in a gesture of romantic fancy, but painfully thrust upon him. Pushkin's longing for the "other lands" [«*тоска по чужбине*»] and the painful dual experience of being banished from- and exiled to- would become a constant of Russian cultural imagination and consciousness throughout the nineteenth, and especially in the twentieth century, when exile, forced displacement and/or impossibility of foreign travel would become the fate of millions.

³¹⁰ Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969), 94-130.

³¹¹ Andreas Schönle, *Authenticity and Fiction*, 187; Yuri Druzhnikov, *Prisoner of Russia: Aleksander Pushkin and the Political Uses of Nationalism*, 431. Quoted in Izabela Kalinowska, *Between East and West*, 144.

³¹² Harry Levin, "Romance and Realism", *The Gates of Horn: A Study of Five French Realists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 51; Ian M. Helfant, "Sculpting a Persona", 375 – 382.

Apart from the structural changes that flagged out by the unintelligibility of the narratorial “I” in Pushkin’s travelogue, it also accomplishes another, discursive, function. Here we are brought back to the concept of the *elusive* border that precludes any “crossing over” to the other side both in concrete physical sense as an escape abroad, and metaphorically, as a possibility of meaningful interaction with the locals that had proved utterly unsuccessful for Pushkin. The poet’s failure to break free from the embrace of the empire that keeps expanding spatially swallowing up new territories and tribes is ultimately an expression of the empire’s Asiatic nature that loathes to let go of its captives and whose endless borders remain tightly sealed.³¹³ At the same time, and perhaps, paradoxically, the fleeting imperial frontier also suggests the certain fluidity and diffusion of cultural border that renders problematic the neat civilizational juxtaposition of the colonizer and the colonized. Just as Pushkin’s own European “self” is ambivalent and self-effacing, the Oriental “other”, too, eludes easy stereotyping. None of the mountaineers that Pushkin encounters on his way are “pure” types in the sense that Romanticism had imagined them to be. This fluidity and ambivalence of each and every human quality is telling: the Ossetian women are supposed to embody chastity and modesty, yet they are curious, flirtatious and “benevolent to the travelers” [*как слышно, очень благосклонны к путешественникам*]; the supposedly brave and “knightly” warriors are portrayed as miserly and cowardly brutes; the Georgian women are renowned for their beauty yet once they grow old they turn into “sheer witches”, etc. It is perhaps, not accidental that the most grotesque example of this ambivalence is the figure of the prisoner taken captive by the Russian troops. Brought in for medical examination on Pushkin’s request, the Turkish man is found out to be a hermaphrodite, a disease “frequent

³¹³ Monika Greenleaf, “Pushkin’s “Journey to Arzrum”, 952-3.

among nomadic Tatars and Turks.»³¹⁴ The gender ambivalence of the prisoner does not fully explain Pushkin's fascination. The Turk, too, is a *liminal* figure *par excellence* and Pushkin describes his appearance in terms that seem strikingly incongruent with the Turk's Asian pedigree: as a tall chubby *muzhik* [Russian male peasant] with a face of an old, snob-nosed *chukhonka* [Estonian woman]. I shall argue that this semantic amalgamation of European/Russian and Asiatic attributes further erases the idea of cultural boundary that escapes the traveler and points towards the undefined, ambivalent national identity that for all his self-mockery and self-effacement, looms large behind the traveler's back. Thus, although nominally Pushkin's is an Oriental travelogue, its other inescapable subject incipiently present throughout the narrative is Russia itself.

Orthodox pilgrimage to Palestine revived

Another popular form of the nineteenth century Oriental travel that deserves to be mentioned here is, of course, religious pilgrimage to the Holy Land. As I seek to argue throughout this work, one of the critical features of Russian travelogue is that the representation of foreign and domestic space in it, as well as the very choice of destination (as well as the particular mode of retelling the travel impressions) are thoroughly semiotized and politicized. The very transition from the Imperial South (Crimea and the Caucasus) to Palestine as the major destination for Russian Oriental travelers from the 1830s on captures a particular dynamics of Russian ideology and culture: i.e. the progression towards a more confident sense of national identity with Russian Orthodoxy as its crucial facet. Orthodox pilgrimages increasingly popular

³¹⁴ «Тут узнали мы, что между пленниками находился гермафродит. Раевский по просьбе моей велел его привести. Я увидел высокого, довольно толстого мужика с лицом старой курносой чухонки.» А. Pushkin, *Sochinenia*, 400.

among the social elites and the rising middle classes since 1830s (notwithstanding their steady popularity with the lower, illiterate classes) also allowed Russian travelers to disengage from western behavioral and literary models, the pre-fabricated itineraries and sights and to develop their own. The timing is hardly accidental. The 1830s mark the birth of the Slavophile ideology that was instrumental in recovering the prestige of Russian Orthodoxy as a foundation of Russia's national identity and culture. The common leitmotif of most Russian pilgrimages of the time was the increased confidence in Russia's unique role in the Near East as a sole guardian of the true rites of Christian faith and of the many Christian shrines of the Holy Land, that according to many a traveler's reports had been damaged by centuries of neglect and profanation at the hands of the Arabs. This confidence not only drew from the visibly increased Russian presence in the region by way of secular and religious travel, but also from Russian military and diplomatic successes against the Turks. Both Russia's imperial expansion into the East in the wake of Treaty of Adrianople and its self-perception as the chief custodian of the true Christian faith endowed with specific spiritual mission had made deep inroads into the century's discourse of Russia's national identity.

In the *Journey to Arzrum*, Pushkin mentions one of Russia's best known pilgrims, Andrei N. Muraviev, whose *Journey to the Holy Places in 1830* had made such a strong impression upon him and earned its author the appellation of "Russian Chateaubriand."³¹⁵ In his somewhat ironic, yet generally sympathetic review of this

³¹⁵ «С умилением и невольной завистью прочли мы книгу г. Муравьева... Молодой наш соотечественник привлечен туда не суетным желанием обрести краски для поэтического романа, не беспокойным любопытством найти насильственные впечатления для сердца усталого, притупленного. Он посетил св. места как верующий, как смиренный христианин, как простодушный крестоносец, жаждущий повергнуться в прах пред гробом Христа Спасителя. — Он traverse Грецию, реоссире одною великою мыслию, он не старается, как Шатобриан, воспользоваться противоположною мифологией Библии и Одиссеи. Он не останавливается, он спешит, он проникает в глубину пирамид, пускается в пустыню, оживленную черными

travelogue, Pushkin explicitly juxtaposes Muraviev's Christian humility and piety and the standard motivations of Oriental travelers – quest for personal aesthetics of the exotic, wanderlust and escapism as a cure for one's own disillusionment and world-weariness, etc. Muraviev's account is interesting for the current discussion for it also illustrates the author's conscious effort to reinsert his own travelogue into the 600 years long-history of khozhdenie [traditional narrative of pilgrimage] thereby bypassing western Orientalist discourse and making an explicit claim for Russia's national specificity. He opens his story with an overview of the major Russian pilgrimages, from Abbot Daniil (early 1100s) to Zosima (1420) and Vasilii Barskii (1723), explicitly identifying with their piety, strength in enduring the hardships of the journey and meticulousness in documenting their trips.³¹⁶

European travelogues of Russian officers, 1812-1814

By the mid 1830s, the trumpeting of one's own national identity becomes the staple feature of Russian travelogue, both secular and religious, for the genre obviously offered an excellent venue for auto-reflexivity, exploration, comparison and the “making sense” of the observed differences. However, it would be erroneous to present the history of Russian travel and travel writing of the first half of the nineteenth century exclusively in terms of its gradual reorientation from the emulation of western literary fashions and travel protocols towards an affirmation of its' own independent vision. Instead of resorting to crude categories of emulation or antagonism, one could rather speak of Russia's profound ambivalence towards western culture that remained a determining concept of ideological deliberations and a

шатрами бедуинов и верблюдами караванов, вступает в обетованную землю, наконец с высоты вдруг видит Иерусалим.» Quoted in Monika Greenleaf, “Pushkin's “Journey to Arzum”, 948.

³¹⁶ Aleksandr Muraviev, *Puteshestvie ko sviatym mestam v 1830 gody* (Moscow: Rossiia molodaya, 1999). For more on nineteenth century Russian Orthodox pilgrimage, see Izabela Kalinowska, *Between East and West: Polish and Russian Nineteenth Century Travel to the Orient*, 104 – 142.

locus for the nascent national consciousness both as a point of attraction and rejection, desire and frustration. As we have just seen, the literary and ideological “discovery” of the “Orient” helped to reconfigure Russia’s complex entanglement with Europe and with one’s own belated europeanization. The diplomatic and military expansion South- and Eastward allowed Russia to “try on” a European role in its Asiatic domains thereby testing the legitimacy of its claims for an equal place among other European empires. The reality of both the protracted Caucasian campaign and of the later subjugation of Central Asia offered important sobering corrections to the self-congratulating perception of Russia’s civilizing mission along and across its borders, and by extension, to Russia’s Orientalist discourse. Its fundamental difference from the many and diverse western European analogues laid in Russian Orientalism’s simultaneous operation within two frameworks of reference. Not only was Russia producing its own Orientalist description of its Asiatic “Other”, but it also remained an object of the European “othering” Orientalist gaze, of which it was perpetually conscious.

Fyodor Glinka, Letters of a Russian Officer (1808-1816)

The amplitude of the cultural (diplomatic, ideological, etc.) attraction to the “West” vacillated along with the historically-specific constellation of domestic and foreign factors. For instance, Napoleon’s invasion of 1812 and the unprecedented degree of social solidarity and patriotism that cut across social and cultural divides gave rise to nationalistic rhetoric both among the common folk and the Francophone nobility. The Russians’ pursuit of the remnants of the French army across the European continent and their triumphant entry into Paris following Napoleon’s defeat was discussed in numerous travel accounts written by the military personnel. The best known of these

(e.g. Fyodor Glinka's *Letters of a Russian Officer, 1808-1816*; 1815 letters and sketches of Kontsantin Batuishkov, the wartime diary of Aleksandr Chicherin's European travels, the journal of Ivan Lazhechnikov, 1812-1815, etc.) reflect the collision between the patriotic sentiment and the traveling officers' deep rootedness in and affinity towards the French culture. Not only were their travel accounts heavily enmeshed within western conventions of the genre or even written in French (e.g. Batuishkov's account, etc.), but the foreign space itself was also intimately familiar even to those Russian travelers who had never set a foot into Paris before. Even those of them who had not have a chance to embark on their own European Grand Tour during the turmoil of the French Revolutionary and subsequent Napoleonic wars were still the "nurslings of French education" and ardent readers of French literature and travelogues, both foreign and domestic, and could thus claim, like Fyodor Glinka did, to have "recognized" the city they now saw for the first time:

At last, I thought, I shall see the city to which curiosity, gold and passions flow together from the furthest lands of Europe; the city, which is called the capital of the world, the source of enlightenment and taste; the abode of opulence and fashion. Such a city must be vast, splendid, clean, light, spacious and neat. A few more minutes and the curtain will rise! I shall believe the descriptions, people's stories and the hearsay; I shall see and recognize it. ... The suburbs of a city are like an introduction to a book. The suburbs of Paris are rather pleasant to an eye, but for an imagination nourished by the French novels they should seem magnificent. The knights of the Crusades ... felt no such pleasant agitation when approaching the goal of their far-away campaigns and great labors as do the nurslings of the French education upon approaching the capital of France. Every step is a reminder!³¹⁷

³¹⁷ «Наконец, думал я, увижу и я тот город, в который стекаются любопытство, золото и страсти из самых дальних краев Европы; город, который называется столицей света, источником просвещения и вкуса, жилищем роскоши и мод. Такой город должен быть огромен, великолепен, чист, светел, просторен и опрятен. Еще несколько минут - и завеса вскроется! Поверю в описание, рассказы молвы; увижу и узнаю. ... Окрестности в городе то же, что предисловие в книге. Парижские довольно приятны для глаз; а для воображения, напитанного французскими романами, они должны казаться восхитительны. Рыцари Крестовых походов, воспетые Тассом, не с такою приятною тревогою чувств приближались к цели дальних походов и великих трудов своих, как питомцы французского воспитания приближаются к столице Франции. Что шаг, то напоминание!...» Fyodor Glinka, *Pis'ma russkogo ofitsera o Pol'she, Avstriiskikh vladeniakh, Prussii i Frantzii, s podrobnym opisaniem Otechestvennoy i zagranichnoy voyny s 1812 po 1814 god* [Letters of a Russian officer about Poland, the Austrian lands, Prussia and France with detailed description of the Patriotic War and the foreign campaign, 1812-1814.] (Moscow,

Note the reference to the Crusaders, a common styleme of Russian travelogues that we have met earlier in Pushkin's review of Muraviev's *Journey to the Holy Places*. When Pushkin somewhat ironically compared Muraviev's religious zeal with that of an "open-hearted Crusader yearning to prostrate himself in front of the Savior's coffin [*«простодушный крестоносец, жаждущий повергнуться в прах пред гробом Христа Спасителя»*]) the religious metaphor was suggested by the very character of Muraviev's journey to Jerusalem. In the purely secular context of Glinka's sojourn in Paris, the use of the same metaphor gives away the unique significance of Paris as a point of attraction for Russia's "cultural pilgrims", a symbolic capital that needed to be recaptured and mastered. By emphasizing its cosmopolitan, universal air, the Russian military travelers were able to reconcile their patriotism with the brimming enthusiasm for the many wonders and entertainments that the capital city of the their recently defeated enemy had to offer. Thus, for instance, Fyodor Glinka describes his fascination with the *Jardin des Plantes*, and Parisian art galleries by pointing out the many international constituencies of their collections taken from all over the world. For him, just like for his famous predecessor Fonvizin, Paris is a true capital of the world, or even "an entire world in itself."³¹⁸ Glinka describes the city as a giant spectacle over which the curtain rises once the traveler arrives. In a sense, this Russian officer is a perfect tourist *avant la lettre*. Although he has never been to France before, he and his companions make up a list of curiosities and travel sights that they intend to visit and each of them had already been "marked" for them as a "sight" by the novels that they had read and by other travel accounts:

1870) F.Glinka, *Pis'ma russkogo ofitzera*; Available at http://az.lib.ru/g/glinka_f_n/text_0060.shtml (May 17, 2008).

³¹⁸ Sara Dickinson, *Breaking Ground*, 152.

One passes through *le foret de Bondi* and imagines the thousands of adventures that happened in this forest as described in the novels. One sees *V.* and hears the secret trembling in the heart, imagining Richelieu, famed for his amorous successes, and the feast, music, fireworks and other *des folies agreables* that he arranged in this forest for the entertainment of the wives and daughters of marchals and herzogs, dukes and dutches, unbeknown to their husbands...³¹⁹

Importantly, Glinka suggests that this cultural map of France, on which he himself is depended for guidance, will soon be reinscribed with the markers of Russian military glory becoming a source of “the most pure and noble recollections” for all the enlightened Europeans [*«Но с этого времени окрестности Парижа доставлять будут русским и веем благомыслящим европейцам воспоминания чистейшие и благороднейшие.»*]³¹⁹ In his patriotic agitation and impatience to reach Paris as soon as possible he does not seem to be disturbed by the site and smell of the thousands of corpses left unburied all over the French countryside that *are* the potent reminders of the recent war. It was hardly the exclusive duty of the “careless French” to bury the dead, like Glinka seems to suggest, but that of the “enlightened Russians”, too. Indeed, the whole episode does not seem to preoccupy him for too long. His thought moves quickly and feverishly from the beauty of local peasant girls, to the foul smell of decaying bodies and then to the need to get a fast cab for the ride to Paris. So much so for carelessness and frivolity, of which Glinka is quick to accuse the French.

There is yet another powerful trope in Glinka’s description of Paris that needs to be mentioned here. For all the admired opulence and grandeur of the French metropolis, Glinka perceives it as a space both alluring and potentially dangerous – “a

³¹⁹ «Проезжают чрез лес Бондийский ... - и тысячи приключений, случившихся в нем, по сказанию романов, представляются воображению их. Увидят В. - и послышат тайное щекотание в сердце: им представляется, как известный счастливец в любви Ришелье заманивал в этот лес жен и дочерей маршалов и герцогов, княгинь и княжон; забавлял их пирами, музыкою, освещенными без ведома их мужей; шалил с ними, как с аркадскими пастушками, и вовлекал их в приятные глупости, ... и проч., и проч.» Ibid, Available at http://az.lib.ru/g/glinka_f_n/text_0060.shtml (May 17, 2008).

Sodom and Gomorrah” he calls it - for a naïve and impressionable visitor like himself, for the French “have spread all their nets, have laid all their traps and baits and have spared neither tricks nor resources to entice, enchant, and rip off our men.”³²⁰ The encounter between the pragmatic and deceitful westerners and the allegedly provincial Russians (those “innocents abroad” to paraphrase Mark Twain) who are willing to spend excessive money for fear of revealing their lack of true sophistication is a common coin of both Russian and Western travel accounts. Throughout Glinka’s account one may repeatedly discern his insecurity that forces him to be constantly on guard lest he appears ridiculous (“*ridicule*”) to the French: e.g. when deciding over a selection of main courses in a restaurant, or choosing an appropriate outfit in place of his worn out military uniform, etc. Unlike Fonvizin who excelled in beating the French obsession with the strictures of social protocol by lampooning the French concept of *badinage* itself, Glinka is palpably anxious to “pass”. Importantly, unlike most other noble travelers discussed above, Glinka was an offspring of a provincial impoverished nobles to whom the military campaign offered an opportunity to imagine his European journey as a poor man’s Grand Tour, therefore his unbridled enthusiasm and insecurity may be partially attributed to his lower social standing.

The tension between the explicit admiration for the sophistication of the French culture and technology and the scorn for the perceived moral corruption and unscrupulousness of the French underlies Glinka’s account and most of other travel reports discussed here. Perhaps, Glinka’s reference to the Crusades cited earlier is also meant to suggest that the Russian Francophiles had absorbed the very best of what the French culture had to offer, while remaining immune to the vices of the French

³²⁰ «Французы раскинули все сети, расставили все приманки и не щадили никаких уловок, никаких средств, чтоб только наших заманить, очаровать и обобрать!..» F.Glinka, *Pis'ma russkogo ofitzera* Available at http://az.lib.ru/g/glinka_f_n/text_0060.shtml (May 17, 2008).

character. On the one hand, many travel diaries of the period perpetuate the suspicion towards the assumed fickleness, vanity, and frivolity of the French character. The same suspicion had been articulated half a century earlier by Denis Fonvizin, whose popularity as a model travel writer had reached its zenith at the time. As was the case with Fonvizin, the Russian military travelers of the later day are rarely able to advance an ingenuous critique of the French society, heavily relying on the French sources (e.g. see the closing sections of Glinka's *Letters*, etc.) On the other hand, equally persistent is the Russians' concern for being perceived as equal or even superiors to Europeans by virtue of their now proven military might and the alleged cultural sophistication. After all, while the educated bi-lingual Russian officers were intimately familiar with the French culture, the French society knew very little about the country that they had come from, often wondering, as Konstantin Batuishkov records, whether the Russians were even Christians at all.³²¹ When reading the accounts of these military travelers one should also keep in mind the unusual circumstances, in which they had been written. Unlike earlier Russian travelers who had enjoyed a solitary status of gentlemen-travelers, Glinka, Lazhechnikov, Batuishkov, etc. arrive in France with the tide of the military offensive, with a massive influx of other Russians of all ethnic origins, classes and backgrounds that had thus far been unprecedented in the history of France. With the Russian tropes deployed all over the city, the authors of the travelogues discussed here were compelled to take into consideration the realities of such large-scale intercultural encounter that could not but produce a heady mixture of reactions on both sides, from mutual disappointments and stereotyping to fascination or admiration.

³²¹ Dickinson, *Breaking Ground*, 157.

The presence of the non-European soldiers among the Russian troupes stationed in Paris (i.e. the Kalmyks, the Bashkirs, the Tatars, etc.) gave an interesting twist to the problem of Russia's self-perception and the internalization of its image in the eyes of the Europeans. Even the most patriotic of the observers could not help noticing the striking contrast between the "elegant Parisian backdrop" and the encampments of "savage" Asian soldiers amidst the glamour of the European metropolis.³²² Many authors articulate a characteristic combination of anxiety at being associated and lumped together with the Asian soldiers on the one hand, and on the other, of patriotic, imperial smugness at the sight of their triumphant army that had crossed the entire continent absorbing its midst representatives of the Empire's many ethnic subjects. At the same time Sara Dickinson points out the psychological mechanisms of "reverse Orientalism" evident in some accounts of the Russian officers – an attempt to reaffirm Russia's non-Western pedigree and to debunk the negative stereotypes associated with Russia's problematic Europeanness. However, she argues that such alternative, *ad negotum*, identity claims were rather an exception to the general sense of Russia's growing confidence in its European identity.³²³

³²² Ibid. 163.

³²³ In a characteristic passage from his sketches, Batuishkov talks about the Russian army's respectful treatment of the Marquis du Chatelet's chateau at Cirey. One of France's most treasured cultural icons, the chateau had been severely damaged during the French revolution, while the Russian troupes stationed there, emphasizes Batuishkov, demonstrated their knowledge of the place's legendary history and did it no harm. More than that, Voltaire's famed Cirey library could only escape destruction during the Revolution because it had been purchased for Catherine II in 1749, the fact unknown to the local guide and readily contributed by the proud Russian officers: "It is not to Ferney that you need to go to find these valuables but to Petersburg." Ibid, 142 – 175, 161.

Alternative destinations: the turn for domestic routes and the quest for Russian national identity

The euphoria of Russian victory gave rise to the widespread hopes for emancipation and reforms, the hopes that were crashed by an increasingly reactionary regime of Alexander I. The part of the nobility that initially supported Alexander's earlier vision of constitutional order and civil society had been gradually stripped off of political influence and marginalized, to the effect that the late 1810s saw the spread of secret societies with conspiratorial political aims within the higher ranks of the army and the Masonic lodges.³²⁴ Alexander's death in November 1925 had thrown the plans for an organized military coup into disarray, and the badly prepared Decembrist Uprising was easily suppressed by the new tsar, Nicholas I, with massive bloodshed and severe repressions against the leaders and the participants of the plot. The Decembrist Uprising had cast a shadow over the entire reign of Nicholas I. The tsar was convinced that the highly placed members of the nobility that staged the rising were part of a Europe-wide conspiracy that sought to undermine the foundations of his monarchy and to sow social disobedience and unrest. The 1848 revolutions in Europe further aggravated his fear of an upheaval at home, prompting the regime to further tighten censorship, intensify repressions against the suspects of political crimes, heighten the role of police surveillance, etc. Earlier I have spoken about the series of restriction leveled on foreign travel and prolonged stay abroad that by 1851 was limited to two years. Since the late 1830s passports that were necessary for foreign travel were made increasingly difficult to obtain. The tsar's personal permission was required for any lengthy journey and the government was entitled (by the criminal code) to oblige any Russian citizen temporarily residing or traveling abroad to

³²⁴ Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire*, 142-144.

immediately return home for fear of criminal persecution and confiscation of property.³²⁵ In all other cases, an applicant had to publish an announcement of his or her intention to travel abroad in one of the central newspapers and then, provided the permission was granted, to pay a fee. The two accepted reasons for such travel were the need for a specific medical treatment (e.g. sojourn at a sanatorium or a spa) or business. Foreign education and import of foreign books were restricted or banned altogether.³²⁶

The implications of this conservative xenophobic reign for the development of Russian culture were many and diverse. Pervasive police surveillance and enduring control over publishing prevented the emergence of any autonomous civil institutions in Russia and worked to alienate a significant part of the nobility. Not only did Nicholas I do nothing to heal the social and cultural rift between the elites and the mass of the common people created by Petrine reforms, but his own policies allowed a new rift to grow between the imperial power and the elites.³²⁷ One of the most palpable expressions of this alienation and of the stifling atmosphere that pervaded Russian society during Nicholas's reign was expatriation or emigration. Despite governmental restriction on foreign travel, the late 1830s saw a swell in the numbers of expatriates, especially among the literati, who spent lengthy periods of time in Western Europe, blurring a distinction between foreign residence and emigration. To give a few best-known examples: The arch-Romantic Vasily Zhukovsky (1783-1852), famous for his Germano-philia had spent the last thirteen years of his life in Germany.

³²⁵ Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 214.

³²⁶ These measures were not altogether new. Fearing the infiltration of the libertarian ideas of the French Revolution, emperor Paul I (1796-1801) similarly banned import of books and periodicals into the country and forbade foreign travel, especially that undertaken for the sake of travel. His reign was brief and the short-lived and extremely unpopular restrictions could not completely sever Russia's ties with the west.

³²⁷ Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire*, 149.

Poet, critic and accomplished traveler Prince Petr Viazemsky (1792-1878) lived almost exclusively in Europe for the last fifteen years of his life. Nikolai Gogol' (1809 – 1852), his support of autocracy notwithstanding, had spent almost thirteen years in Western Europe and worked on the *Dead Souls* in Paris and Rome. His letters from abroad illustrate a remarkable change in his perception of Western European societies, from the earlier contempt to growing appreciation for the security and comforts he found there. Expatriation allowed him a degree of solitude, a productive distance from his subject - Russia - and non-partisanship that could not have been possible at home. When in 1839 financial difficulties of his family forced Gogol' to shortly return to Russia, the prospective homecoming tormented him. He felt trapped, estranged from the home society and the literary circles, pleading to be allowed to go back to Rome, so that "his soul may be able to rest lest [he] perishes in Russia."³²⁸ Ivan Turgenev (1818-1883) lived for long periods of time in Belgium and France. In the late 1860s he bought a house in Baden-Baden and maintained close ties with the European luminaries of the time, including Flaubert, Zola and George Sand.³²⁹ In most of Turgenev's novels the characters have an experience of living or traveling abroad, in his novel *Asya* the entire action is set in Europe. Ivan Goncharov (1812-1891) similarly preferred to work on his novels at various European spas, and completed his famous *Oblomov* (1857) at the spa of Marienbad, etc. To be sure, the motivation for expatriation and a long sojourn abroad was not always exclusively political – Gogol' and Goncharov, for instance, left Russia simply because they worked better while in

³²⁸ In a private letter he sent to his friend from Rome in 1843, Gogol's explicitly connects his urge to travel and his writing: "I am traveling for the sake of traveling. Traveling, as you know, is my usual remedy.... I am depending on the road and on God, and I implore Him to allow me to be on the road just like He is at home...so that I may have the strength to produce something." Amy Singelton, *Noplace Like Home: The Literary Artist and Russia's Search for Cultural Identity* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1997), 9.

³²⁹ John Glad, *Russians Abroad*, 54 – 63.

Europe, and Dostoevsky, a frequenter of Europe's casinos and gambling tables stayed outside of Russia because he feared debt prison at home and was an addicted gambler.

All this meant several things for travel and travel writing. For one, expatriation and a taste for foreign travel that survived all the restrictions imposed by the imperial authorities had rendered the foreign experience and close ties between Russia's educated elites and western literary circles customary and "normal" – i.e. not a subject for didactic descriptive travelogues addressed to the domestic publics now increasingly familiar with the West. In the opening lines of his *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* (1863) Dostoevsky confesses that he feels perplexed by his friends' pressing requests for the writing down of his travel notes, since

[w]hat is there to write? What is there to tell that is unknown to you, that has not been already recounted? Who of us, Russians, (that is, of those who at least read journals), would not know Europe twice as well as Russia? I said here "twice" for the sake of politeness, but it should probably be "ten times better" instead.³³⁰

Such cultural interaction also worked to prop the Russians' sense of cultural adequacy (i.e. "Europeanness") vis-à-vis European societies. At the same time, limitations of foreign travel increasingly shifted the traveler's attention towards domestic spaces. Mostly, however, that meant medical and recreational tourism to the spas of the imperial periphery: the Crimea and Northern Caucasus, a more accessible alternative to Baden-Baden or Marienbad. Travel in the Russian interior was a different matter entirely. Dostoevsky's remark about the Russians' insufficient knowledge of their own land rang true for many of his literary predecessors, although it may not be entirely accurate if one considers the sheer number of travel accounts produced by domestic travelers since the late eighteenth century, when the western fashion for internal tours had first reached Russia. Most of these travelogues, however, are hardly

³³⁰ Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomakh*, vol. 4, 61.

household titles today, and could not compete for popularity with the travelogues describing foreign locales.

Travelers in provincial Russia were certainly propelled by diverse motivations. For some it was simply an opportunity to travel cheaply, if not always comfortably. Others published their travelogues in order to help debunk the negative perceptions of Russia perpetuated by western travelers who had visited the country and to describe Russian provincial types that could stir patriotic feelings and instill pride in their compatriots. Whatever the motivation for the internal tour, domestic travel and travelogue inevitably involved cultural reflection over and comparison between the well-described landscapes of western Europe and the domestic terrain. The obvious dissimilarities between the western and local topography and the very patterns of travel available at home and abroad prompted a search for the new models of cultural description that could account for the perceived inferiority/superiority of Russia native territory vis-à-vis the West.³³¹ No less importantly, travel writers exploring Russia's interior had to struggle to represent it as essentially *Russian* – i.e. inalienably connected with the nation's past and present, its mentality and culture. These two concerns are at the core of Russian travelogue's trajectory in the first half of the nineteenth century, of its eventual demise ultimately, of the rise of realist prose fiction.

The body of western travelogues written about Russia has grown significantly by the mid nineteenth century, offering the Russian reading publics a vision of their country that it was not always happy to accept, especially as it frequently touched on

³³¹ That western European landscape and the level of tourist service were regarded as standards for domestic tourism and travel is evident in the practice of naming hotels, resorts and restaurants after western European analogues. Louise McReynolds notes that a customary name for the first hotel to be constructed in almost any Russian provincial city was almost always *Evropeyskiai* [European], and other common names included Russian transliterations of Grand Hotel, Bellevue, etc. *Russia at Play: Leisure Activities at the End of the Tsarist Era* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 157.

the deep-seated anxieties and frustrations over the country technological and cultural backwardness in relation to the west. Larry Wolff has presented a detailed analysis of these travelogues and the role of western travel in the symbolic mapping of the European continent in the era of Enlightenment and beyond in his seminal study on the subject. Wolff adopts Saidian approach for his discussion of western discursive constructions of Eastern Europe as an object of western civilizing gaze and the “Other”, against which the western end of the continent could conceive of itself as a superior enlightened realm.³³² However, *Inventing Eastern Europe* exclusively focuses on western representations of Eastern Europe and Russia in particular, and does not explore the impact of these constructions on the self-perception of the Eastern European peoples scrutinized by the western probing eye. What might become a fascinating focus for a separate inquiry is the process of transculturation, to borrow Mary Louise Pratt’s term – i.e. the relationship of cross-fertilization between the western-produced discourse of Russia and native forms of self-representation, the “interlocking of gazes” that emerges through comparative reading of western and Russian travel texts of the given period. However, as becomes evident throughout the current discussion, the relationship between western and domestic travelogues as agents and producers of discourse was by no means symmetrical. The Russians not only heavily relied on western styles and models of travel and travel writing, but also lagged behind in comprehensive mapping (both symbolic and cognitive) of their own terrain.

To be sure, not all of the western accounts of travel in Russia became known to the Russian public: some were censored, other simply did not circulate or had not been translated. However, those which were read in Russia, frequently caused a

³³² Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994).

scandal. For example, the 1768 travelogue *Voyage en Sibirie fait par ordre du Roi en 1761* [A Journey to Siberia] written by the French astronomer Abbe Chappe d'Auteroche after his travel to Tobolsk described the country as a backward and savage land. The publication infuriated empress Catherine II who retaliated with an anonymous response to l'Abbe d'Auteroche entitled *Antidote* that consistently discredited all his observations and conclusions. Later travelers were not much more sympathetic. John Ledyard, an American from New Hampshire, had crossed Russia with a quasi-ethnographic expedition between 1787 and 1788.³³³ He ventured into Siberia armed with a racial hypothesis that suggested an explicit connection between the anthropological type and the level of civilization achieved by a given ethnicity. Progressing from Europe towards Asia and studying representatives of different ethnic groups and tribes on his way, Ledyard firmly distinguished between the civilized “whites” of Europe and the uncivilized “Tatars” and other dark-skinned inhabitants of Siberia, whom he thought to be analogues to the American Indians and even Africans. According to Ledyard, anthropologically the “white” Russians could qualify to be considered among the Eastern European peoples, but their manners and ways were unmistakably Asiatic. Needless to say that such conclusions did not endear Ledyard's expedition to Catherine II. Since he had failed to secure the empress's permission for his travel, she ordered him arrested near the Pacific coast and taken all the way through Siberia and Russia to Poland to be left there, rather unceremoniously.³³⁴

Although Ledyard presented his observations under the cloak of scientific “field research”, his judgments about the semi-civilized manners of the Russians could be found in most lay travel accounts written by western visitors to Russia, from

³³³ Stephen D. Watrous, ed., *John Ledyard's Journey Through Russia and Siberia 1787 - 1788: The Journal and Selected Letters* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966).

³³⁴ Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 506.

the seventeenth century Russian travels of Adam Olearius to the late eighteenth century Louis-Phillipe Segur and beyond.³³⁵ Perhaps, the most offensive of western travel accounts, and yet the most influential of them all, still quoted in Russia up to this day, was the 1839 travelogue of Astolphe de Custine, *La Russie en 1839* [known in English as *Empire of the Czar: A Journey Through Eternal Russia*.] Arriving to Russia with an established literary reputation and a number of close ties with the members of the country's elite, de Coustine enjoyed a warm welcome at the court for Nicholas I hoped to have a renowned literati write a favorable account of his stay in Russia. The book published after the visit, was not a mere disappointment, it was a blow, all the more heavy since the tsar had made the "ungrateful French traveler" his confident and showered him with signs of affection. De Coustine was not deceived by the lavishness of the court and the megalomaniac design of the empire's Northern capital. He wrote about the corrupting impact of Russian despotism, which bred servility, cruelty, and ubiquitous eagerness to impress the foreigner by creating a semblance of opulence, might, and progress:

What makes Russia the most curious State in the world to observe today is that one finds oneself there in the presence of extreme barbarity brought about by the enslavement of the Church, and ultimate civilization imported from foreign countries by an eclectically minded government. To understand how rest or at least immobility result from the impact of such diverse elements, you have to follow the traveler right into the heart of this strange country.³³⁶

The book's main thesis - the ephemeral (or chimerical?) character of Russian civilization, an exterior simulative form devoid of original autochthonous content, which he calls "an empire of catalogues," "a giant colossus on clay feet." To use the terms of postmodernist cultural critique Marquis de Coustine talks about a culture of

³³⁵ For a wide selection of western travelogues and their analysis, see Vasily Kluichevsky, *Skazania innostrantxev o Moskovskom gosudarstve* [The foreigners' tales of Muscovy] (Moscow, 1991).

³³⁶ Marquis Astolphe de Coustine, *Rosssia v 1839 godu* [*La Russie en 1839*]. Originally published in Russian as *Nikolaevskaia Rossiia* [*Nicholas's I Russia*] (Moscow:Zacharov, 2007), 19.

simulacrum designed for show that has but a (borrowed) tag in place of the material/intellectual substance:

Russians have only names for everything, but nothing in reality. Russia is a country of facades. Read the labels – they have “society”, “civilization”, “literature”, “art,” “sciences”- but as a matter of fact, they do not even have doctors. If you happen to call a Russian doctor from your neighborhood, consider yourself dead in advance.³³⁷

And elsewhere:

What, in the end, is this crowd that they call here the people [*народ / narod*] and that is lauded all across Europe for its loving deference towards its monarch? Do not deceive yourself in vain – these are the slaves of the slaves. The nobles select with particular care several peasants on their estates and send them to the capital for greeting the empress. These selected peasants are allowed into the palace where they mingle with the court servants and perform the role of the *people*, the people, which does not exist outside of the palace walls.

Russia is an empire of catalogues: if one runs through the titles, everything seems beautiful. But... open the book and you discover that there is nothing in it... How many cities and roads exist only as projects! Well, the entire nation, in essence, is nothing but a placard stuck over Europe.³³⁸

In this sense, proverbial Potemkin’s villages are a perfect symbol of Russian “culture of facades” that simulates a sense of reality by producing its plausible copies. De Coustine implicitly evokes this trope when he speaks about the Russians’ pride in their wealth and the opulence of their new capital that he had found ridiculous. For all the abundance of rich palaces and mansions, a foreigner had a trouble finding decent lodgings in St. Petersburg, for the hotels lacked appropriate service and were downright grubby. The new royal palace that was rebuilt at the cost of so many human lives and resources was swarming with bed bugs within months of its construction, etc. – “such are the contrasts that one encounters here at every turn. In this city Europe and Asia have rightly intertwined.”³³⁹ De Coustine must have touched on a raw nerve

³³⁷ Ibid, 71.

³³⁸ Ibid, 138.

of Russian self-perception for his book has been enthusiastically applauded and/or attacked by generations of Russians ever since. Nicholas I forbade both the circulation of the book and any mentioning of the “ungrateful traveler’s” name, but despite all prohibitions the book was illegally smuggled into Russia and widely read.

De Coustine’s disquisition, however outrageous it appeared to the imperial court, was not altogether unfamiliar or strange to the Russian intellectuals of diverse ideological stances. For instance, the Slavophiles, an intellectual tradition that emerged in the early 1830s, similarly argued for the ostentatious character of Russian culture. Whereas de Coustine ridiculed Russia’s insufficient Europeanness, describing its people as imposters who had ceased being barbarian but had not yet learned to be as civilized as they pretended to be in front of foreigners (the very pretense seems to have agonized him more than the “bad manners” themselves), the Slavophiles decried the loss of authentic Russianness to the alien European mores. Their critique of contemporaneous Russian civilization as inauthentic, false and counterfeit echoes de Coustine almost verbatim, although, obviously, to a radically different conclusion.

The opponents of the Slavophiles, Westerners, have been inspired by the ideas of Petr Chaadaev. In his celebrated *Lettres philosophiques* (1836) that bare unequivocal influence of German idealism, Chaadaev denied Russia a place within the history of humankind. He argued that Russia had both failed to contribute to the course of human progress and civilization and to borrow anything fruitful from it, distorting and corrupting whatever it had adopted from the experiences of other nations. Russia’s existence, charged Chaadaev, is essentially a-historical, for it

³³⁹ Particular features of Russian religious tradition discussed in the second chapter combined with the cluster of historical circumstances that accompanied Russia’s belated and complex modernization allow some contemporary cultural critics to talk about the profound affinity between Russian mentality and traditions and the basic tenets of postmodernism. See, for example, a fascinating study by Mikhail Epstein, “The Origins and Meaning of Russian Postmodernism” in Ellen E. Berry and Anesa Miller – Pogacar, eds., *Re-Entering the Sign: Articulating New Russian Culture* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995), 25-47.

possesses no memories of its past, “no traditions, no morality, no culture, no duty, no justice” in short, nothing original or individual that could serve the foundation of its existence. Spiritual homelessness that Chaadaev talks about here brings to mind the notions of wandering and uprootedness whose centrality for the Russian cultural matrix has been discussed here earlier:

Situated between East and West, supporting ourselves with one elbow on China and another on Germany, we ought to have united within us imagination and reason... [Instead, we have] [n]o charming recollections, no gracious images in our memory, no powerful instructions in our national tradition. Cast a glance over the centuries we have traversed, over the land, which we cover, and you will find not a single attractive reminiscence, a single venerable monument which would revive past ages with power, which would retrace them vividly and picturesquely. We live only in the most narrow present, without past and without future, in the midst of an insipid calm...

.....
 In our houses we are like temporary squatters; in our families we are like strangers; in our cities we are like nomads... We are the sole people in the world that has given nothing to the world, learnt nothing from the world, and bestowed not a single idea upon the fund of human ideas. We have not contributed in any way to the progress of human spirit, and whatever has come to us from that progress we have disfigured.³⁴⁰

For Chaadaev, Russia is anchored neither in time nor in space, an amorphous, ambivalent entity (“a void in history”) that can best be described by way of negation rather than through definite attributes: i.e. geographically it belongs to neither Europe nor to Asia, stands outside of world history and has no authentic substance. It is “une nation batarde” (Chaadaev wrote his *Lettres* in French), a nation that has come into being like an illegitimate child, without a heritage. Pronounced insane by Nicholas I, Chaadaev later mellowed down his indictment of Russia’s a-historical being. In *Apologie d’un fou* [*Apology of a Madman*] (1837) he retorted to the well-known argument that regarded Russia’s historical “youthfulness” as a premise of its special

³⁴⁰ «В домах наших мы как будто определены на постой, в семьях мы имеем вид чужестранцев, в городах мы походим на кочевников...» Petr Chaadaev, “Filosoficheskie pis’ma” in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i izbrannye pis’ma*, vol.1 [Complete collection of works and selected letters] (Moscow, 1991), 324-5.

ability to adopt the best from the totality of human experience having been spared the mistakes and debilities of the “older” civilizations. Russia’s backwardness was thus re-conceptualized in positive terms, as a source of its *sonderweg* instructive for the rest of humanity to whom Russia, Chaadaev believed, was predestined to reveal the way to a better, more just society. Understandably, this revision of Chaadaev’s original thesis proved particularly inspiring for the messianic streaks within both Slavophilism and Westernism, and has remained enormously influential for subsequent generations of the country’s political thinkers.

Whatever the ideological stance of the interlocutors in the debate over Russia’s national identity and historical destiny the urge to define “What in the end is Russia?” had remained at the hub of the country’s political, social and cultural discourses throughout the nineteenth century. Could travel writing, a medium ideally suited for comparative reflection over cultural specificity of different societies, offer a palpable content to this elusive Russainness that had been long pronounced ephemeral and simulative by both foreign and Russian thinkers? At a first glance, the very evolution of this genre accompanied by the gradual emergence of the narratorial auto-reflective persona that self-consciously spoke in the name of the collective national “we” seems to be predicated on the rise of a self-assured national consciousness. Although the overview of the history of literary travel writing presented in the first chapter was rather schematic and did not account for the many national specificities of different western European literatures, it did highlight the generic historical and structural synchronism between the foregrounding of the narrator within the literary text and the rise of national awareness. In Russia, however, the relationship between literary, and broader, cultural processes on the one hand, and the socio-political factors on the other, was further skewed by the country’s heavy dependence on foreign cultural

models.³⁴¹ It was not until the early 1830s that the debate over the national definition engendered original/autochthonous ideological responses (i.e. Westerners and Slavophiles).³⁴² In other words, whether eagerly emulating western literary models and intellectual trends or, in later years, claiming a certain independence from them, Russian writers were lagging behind in elaborating a sense of national tradition and character on which “the” Russian traveler could rely at home and abroad.

To be sure, Russian travelogues of the European tours that had flourished since the eighteenth century were instrumental in forging a figure of a Russian traveler who would be relatively secure in his or her national identity and its perceived Europeanness. Regardless of the traveler’s actual attitude towards western European cultures and societies, he or she were eager to act as representatives of their compatriots and invariably displayed keen interest in issues of national identity and cultural difference. However, the definition of the traveler’s “Russianness” was more often construed through contemplation and critique of foreign ways rather than through any affirmative articulation of positive attributes of Russian national essence. A common place of Russian travel writing that focuses on western Europe and of Russian thinking about the west in general that persists up to this day is the routine

³⁴¹ The transplantation of these models meant that they had to be adopted for the social, ideological, and cultural context that was much different from the one that had engendered them in the west. Earlier I have spoken about the concept of *préciosité*, the Russian career of which was strikingly different from its career in western Europe. Another example would be more familiar – the fashion for the picturesque that created a vogue for domestic country tours in the late eighteenth century Britain could not be adequately transferred into Russia. The dichotomy of urban, industrial landscape and the “uncontaminated” bucolic countryside that structured picturesque tours simply did not function in the pre-industrial Russia, whose cities resembled oversized villages more than anything else. As a result, the phenomenon of self-contained aestheticism and pre gaze unburdened by any specific legitimizing purpose did not strike deep roots on the Russian soil.

³⁴² The use of “autochthonous” needs a qualifier. Both Westerners and Slavophiles had certainly experienced the influence of German idealism, particularly of Hegel and Schelling, and then later, of French socialism. But unlike earlier intellectual trends, like Pietism, they were able to offer a comprehensive analysis of the profound social and cultural schisms created by Peter’s project of shock modernization as well as their visions of a national idea capable of unifying the fractured society. Both Westerners and Slavophiles had a clearly pronounced populist streak to their thought and they proposed indigenous substance for the content of Russian national identity - e.g. Russian orthodox Church, peasant commune, etc.

juxtaposition of the achievements of western civilization and the debilities of human nature: i.e. to paraphrase Fonvizin and Glinka, “France is beautiful, but the French are horribly corrupt.” The dichotomy of civilization versus culture (or, put differently, of spirit versus materiality, or of barbaric chaos versus orderly vulgarity) is hardly a specifically Russian cultural trope, but a common coin of national conservative thought prevalent in the societies that experience a belated arrival to modernity. Its tenacity in Russian consciousness can be attributed to a complex combination of historical and socio-cultural factors that range from the specificity of Russian Orthodox religious tenets, to the enduring sense of cultural inferiority in relation to western Europe, to the virtual absence of bourgeoisie, etc. Not infrequently, the source of the Russian traveler’s dislike of the Europeans encountered during the journey is quite vague. Consider, for example, travel notes of playwright Aleksandr Ostrovsky (1823-1886) written during his 1862 European tour. Traveling through Austria, Germany and Italy, Ostrovsky records his fascination with the architecture, museums and the natural sights of the visited countries, admiring the solidity and order “still absent at home.” But the population of these lands hardly ever earns his praise. His complaints are often ridiculous: he criticizes fashions and manners, declares all women in Berlin to be badly dressed, all French – cunning and rude, and Frankfurt to be “swarming with Yids.” A remarkable passage illustrates the arbitrariness of his disapproval:

At one of the stations I was appalled by the figure of a Prussian officer: deep blue uniform, blue collar, trousers with the red edging, his little cap cocked; his hair combed with an English divide. He was pockmarked and blonde, raising his nose and screwing up his eyes.³⁴³

³⁴³ «На одной из станций меня неприятно поразила фигура прусского офицера: синий мундир, голубой воротник, штаны с красным кантом, маленькая фуражка надета набекрень; волосы причесаны с аглицким пробормом, рябоват, белокур, поднимает нос и щурит глаза.» A. Ostrovsky, *Poezdka za granitzy v aprele 1962 goda: dnevnik* (Trip abroad, April 1962: diary) in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 13 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literature, 1852), 241.

What exactly was wrong with that anonymous Prussian officer whom Ostrovsky describes with such uncharacteristic detail is obscure: perhaps, the very fact of his foreignness. Such examples can be offered endlessly and they do illustrate the heady mixture of distrust and curiosity, suspicion and envy, fascination and inferiority complex, imperial smugness and propensity for isolationism that had been structuring Russian relationship to the outside world over the course of history.

CHAPTER 4: “Geography of space – geography of national soul”

‘Mapping’ Russia: from travelogue to realist prose

Writing a quarter of a century earlier, De Coustine had already responded to Ostrovsky’s splenetic comments about the Europeans: “Before comparing the two nations... wait until your nation comes into existence.”³⁴⁴ The waiting took a while (some say it is not over yet), but incessant comparison with and against alien customs and behavioral norms, which the Russian travelers encountered on foreign turf, certainly helped to define and fix the contours of their own. Yet whereas the comparative modality of foreign travel came to be a springboard for national self-construction, domestic itineraries engendered an altogether different relationship between the traveling observer and the social reality on the ground, as well as a different subject position for the narrator him/herself. First of all, up to the second half of the nineteenth century and the rise of bourgeois and lower middle class tourism, Russian leisure travel has remained an almost exclusive prerogative of the aristocratic elites. The protocols of western literary travel writing adopted in Russia did not prescribe any meaningful encounter between the aristocratic traveler and the common folk, which was almost exclusively construed as stage props for the tour (e.g. Sentimentalism’s idyllic peasants, Romanticism’s noble savages, etc.) Where such encounters did take place, the situation of the peasants and of lower orders of the society impelled a more sober gaze of the onlooker and a comprehensive social critique, which could not be accomplished within the rather formulaic structure of travel writing. Obviously, the very act of relocation from the urban location to the

³⁴⁴ «Вчера некоторые придворные восхваляли при мне благовоспитанность своих крепостных. «Попробуйте-ка устроить такой праздник во Франции,» говорили они. «Прежде, чем сравнивать оба народа, - хотелось мне ответить, - подождите, чтобы ваш народ начал существовать.» De Coustine, *Rossii v 1839 godu*, 138.

rural provinces or vice versa worked to create an ideological subtext around the relationship of modernity versus tradition, westernization versus peasant culture, imperial opulence and provincial backwardness, etc. Beginning in the 1830s ideological radicalism and sensitivity to social issues, which have been famously anticipated in Radischev's allegorical *Journey from Petersburg to Moscow*, became the hallmarks of Russia's emerging realist prose and literary criticism.

Furthermore, outside of Romantic itineraries to the newly acquired southern imperial peripheries, the very landscape unfolding in front of the Russian traveler's eyes could hardly be appropriated and mapped through the simple replication of western European itineraries. To begin with, long-distance travel was physically tolling, with low-quality lodgings, bad roads, harsh climes described by generations of travelers, from Radischev to Chekhov.³⁴⁵ The first railway was only constructed in Russia in late 1837, the line connected Petersburg with its fashionable suburbs. The

³⁴⁵ A characteristic excerpt from Anton Chekhov's letters and notes about his 1890 journey to the island of Sakhalin illustrates the physical hardships accompanying any long-distance travel across Russia. The journey from Moscow to Sakhalin took three months. From Moscow to Yaroslavl' Chekhov traveled by train, then down the Volga and Kama rivers to Kazan and Perm' on board the ship, and across Siberia by horse-driven carriages taking another ship from Sretensk to Sakhalin. By the time of the journey Chekhov was already struggling with TB and the bad roads and harsh weather only worsened his condition: "When in Tiumen' I was told that the first steamer to Tomsk will arrive on the 18th of May. Therefore I had to travel [there] on horseback. During the first three days all my muscles and joints were hurting, but later on I got used to the discomfort and did not feel any pain. Due to the lack of sleep and constant hustle with the luggage ... and miniscule rations I started coughing blood and it spoilt my mood, which was not much cheerful anyway. It was bearable during the first couple of days, but later on the wind turned cold, it began to rain heavily, and the swollen rivers flooded the fields and the roads. One had to change from carriage into boat all the time. ... My big boots turned out to be too wide and I was wearing felt-boots [*valenki*] in the mud and water, and they [soaked so much] as to look like a jelly. The road is so disgusting, that during the last day of my "voyage" I covered only 70 versts. [i.e. 70 km]."

"В Тюмени мне сказали, что первый пароход в Томск идёт 18 мая. Пришлось скакать на лошадях. В первые три дня болели все жилы и суставы, потом уже привык и никаких болей не чувствовал. Только от неспанья и постоянной возни с багажом, от прыганья и голодовки было кровохарканье, которое мне портило настроение, и без того неважное. В первые дни было сносно, но потом задул холодный ветер, разверзлись хляби небесные, реки затопили луга и дороги. То и дело приходилось менять повозку на лодку...Мои большие сапоги оказались узкими... я по грязи и по воде ходил в валенках и... валенки мои обратились в студень. Дорога так гнусна, что в последние два дня своего вояжа я сделал только 70 вёрст. Letter to A.S. Suvorin (May 20th, 1890) in Anton Chekhov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol.11 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1956), 453-4.

new means of transportation turned out to be enormously popular with the public: between 1838 and 1839 over 700 000 passengers had traveled by rail.³⁴⁶ The large-scale construction of railways, however, does not start until the 1860s, when the government of Alexander II wrote off the debts of major railway companies thereby encouraging the rapid expansion of communication network. The railways connected southern grain-growing regions with the capital cities and the seaports, but had left large pockets of the interior hardly accessible for travelers. Furthermore, the European part of Russia did not have anything analogous to the Swiss Alps and waterfalls, spas of Vichy, or Cote d'Azur. All of the most appealing tourist destinations, such as Piatigorsk in the Northern Caucasus, the Crimean and Baltic coasts, were located in the non-Slavic fringes of the empire and their cultural appropriation was accomplished, among other things, by the russification of their original geographical names.³⁴⁷ The rather homogenous landscape of the Slavic interior was often described by foreign and local travelers alike as dull, monotonous and unpopulated compared to the remarkable diversity of western European countries. Christopher Ely illustrates this point in his study of the emergence of Russian landscape aesthetics:

As readers of Nikolai Gogol's *Dead Souls* (1842) and Vladimir Sollogub's *Tarantas* (1845) will have observed, Russian travelers during the reign of Nicholas I typically conceived of the provincial landscape as a vast expanse of unappealing territory. While western Europe presented a spectacle of unsurpassed natural beauty and historical importance to visiting Russians, their native countryside seemed an un-differentiated mass of flat and monotonous terrain, an environment with its own quiet beauty perhaps, but unspectacular, unpicturesque, and ill-suited to scenic tourism. One of Sollogub's tarantas passengers expresses this indifference concisely: "People travel in foreign

³⁴⁶ Yurii Leving, *Vokzal – Garage – Angar: Vladimir Nabokov i Poetika Russkogo Urbanizma* [Train station: - Garage – Hangar: Vladimir Nabokov and the Poetics of Russian Urbanism] (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Ivana Limbakha, 2004), 63.

³⁴⁷ For more on this, see Louise McReynolds, *Russia at Play: Leisure Activities at the End of the Tsarist Era* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 156-157 and Susan Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 36, etc.

countries, in those German places. But what kind of travelers are we? Just gentlemen going back to our country homes." ³⁴⁸

Unlike the symbolic geography of religious pilgrimage that retained its centers of attraction despite the changing fortunes of the very practice of pilgrimage, Russia's secular map was virtually bare, its would-be tourist sights were yet to be "marked" through the entrenched tradition of travel and tourism on the one hand and on the other, through a symbolically established connection between the sight and the *local* historical and cultural discourse as were western travel destinations.

As I have argued in Part I, the development of landscape aesthetics and the emergence of the very concept of "picturesque" are one of the important markers of modernity and modern consciousness. Picturesque tourism in Britain was shaped, among other things, by the galloping industrialization that solidified the boundary between the industrial urban civilization and the "as-yet-untouched" countryside and that established the urban moderns' urge to enjoy natural beauty as a necessary attribute of modern sensibility. Modern perception of landscape as an object of scenic, aestheticizing gaze, argues Ely, is based on several preconditions, such as the detachment from the practical use-value approach to land in favor of its purely non-practical – i.e. aesthetical qualities; the spread of easy and frequent travel (tourism) that allows travelers to build the basis for aesthetical comparison; the development of non-practical, non-utilitarian philosophy of travel that celebrates travel for pleasure and enjoyment, rather than for any rational, productive goal, that in turn is associated with the rise of bourgeois middle-class.³⁴⁹ By the mid-nineteenth century, none of these conditions existed in Russia, that by then was still an essentially agricultural

³⁴⁸ Christopher Ely, "The Origins of Russian Scenery: Volga River Tourism and Russian Landscape Aesthetics", *Slavic Review*, vol. 62, no. 4: Tourism and Travel in Russia and the Soviet Union, (Winter, 2003): 666-682, 667.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 668.

society, with poorly developed system of communication, small and inconsequential bourgeoisie, etc. As a result, it was not until the last third of the nineteenth century that Russian authors of travel guidebooks and travelogues were able to elaborate an independent vision of Russian space and travel scenery that would not be entirely dependent on western models on the one hand, and one the other, would be relatively free from a sense of inferiority vis-à-vis foreign picturesque sights.

There was yet another challenge confronting Russian traveler on interior routes that has been flagged out earlier. Aptly formulated by none other than the “unsympathetic traveler” de Coustine himself, it touched on the core of the ambivalent, unstable subject position of a Europeanized, educated members of the elite venturing into the interior of their semi-modernized country. In *Empire of the Czar*, de Coustine writes as follows:

Do you know what it means to travel in Russia? For a superficial mind it means to feed itself on illusions. But for someone perceptive, for someone possessing an independent mind and character, it is a difficult, ungrateful task. At every step such a traveler discerns [...] two nations fighting against each other: one of these nations is Russia *comme elle est*, and the other one is the Russia as it wants to be perceived in Europe.³⁵⁰

Russia *comme elle est*, the country beyond the European look-like facades, was still mostly uncharted by the Russian travelers and thinkers, and the blank spots on the map of Russian interior betrayed the vagueness of the country’s conception of its own identity.³⁵¹ Travel and travel writing alone, although certainly critical for the physical

³⁵⁰ De Coustine, *Rossiiia v 1839 godu*, 134.

³⁵¹ I deliberately exclude ethnographic travel and geographical expeditions that certainly were producing their own travelogues. Consider, for example, F.P.Vrangel’ (1796-1870) *Journey Along the Northern shores of Siberia and the Arctic Sea(sic!)*, 1820-1824, a travelogue widely-read at its time, that had influenced Ivan Goncharov’s description of Siberia in *Frigate “Pallas”* (1858). Less “exotic” realms that were closer to home, paradoxically, garnered much less attention from the travelers with notable exception of]; Fyodor Glinka’s provincial tour of 1810; Gavriil Gerakov’s 1828 *Putevye zapiski po mnogim rossiiskim guberniiam*, 1820 [Travel notes across many Russian provinces, 1820]; Iosiof Berlov’s 1851 *Putevye zametki po vostochnoi evropeiskoi Rossii* [Travel notes and impressions

exploration and description of the country, could not accomplish the giant task of articulating a comprehensive conception of Russian national character. This mission fell to the emerging tradition of realist fiction and its major form, the novel.

Some of the reasons accounting for this inability as well as for the gradual decline of Russian travelogue since 1840s are innate to the structural features of Russian travel writing itself. Roboli distinguished between the two main types of literary travel writing that had originated in the west and were imported to Russia in the second half of the eighteenth century. Most of the travel writing gravitates to either of the types that each embodies one of the two main impulses of travel writing – poetic and documentary.³⁵² The first one can be roughly termed “Sternian”, since it uses travel as a pretext for the author’s numerous digressions and personal reflections, a structural device for organizing the narrative, without focusing exclusively (or even sufficiently) on the actualities of the journey or landscape descriptions. Like Sterne’s talkative and whimsical traveler Yorick, narrators of this kind of travelogue use the format of the journey to talk about anything and everything – politics, mores, fashions, nature, love, literature, arts, etc. Obviously, a journey announced in the title of the travelogue could have as well been imaginary, or a recollection, rather than a documentary description.

of eastern European Russia]; etc. Christopher Ely quotes Nestor Kukol'nik, who in 1837 complained that travel books guiding prospective travelers to the domestic sights were published "in France, England and even in Switzerland; but we ... translate and reprint the old ones, so that we only respect foreigners and are all the more convinced we have nothing good of our own." *Khudozhestvennaia gazeta*, 1837, no. 2:32. Quoted in Ely, “The Origins of Russian Scenery”, 670. Sara Dickinson refers to the prominent literary critic Vissarion Belinsky who in 1845 lamented the paucity of travel accounts describing Russia’s interior: “We have absolutely no works of *belles-lettres* that would in a form of a journeys, trips, sketches, stories, [or] descriptions acquaint us with the different parts of boundless and diverse Russia. If there have been attempts at compositions of this type, all of them, from Prince Shalikov’s sentimental *Journey to Malorossia* [1803] to [Besstuzhev-Marlinksy’s *A Trip to Reval* [1821] can be considered immaterial.” Quoted in Sara Dickinson, *Breaking Ground*, 233-4.

³⁵² T.A. Roboli, “Literatura puteshestviia” [Travel literature] in B.Eikhenbaum and Yu.Tynianov, eds., *Russkaia proza* [Russian prose] (Leningrad: Academia, 1926), 48.

The other, hybrid, type, of which the travels of Dupaty are an apt example, seeks to be as informative as possible, interspersing ethnographic, geographical, sociological and historical information with the author's personal stance. According to Roboli, throughout the end of the eighteenth century and the first three decades of the nineteenth, the heyday of Russian travelogue, this hybrid type of travel writing was gradually losing its literariness partially to the professional scientific journey and partially to the popularizing epigones of western travel writers, such as Aleksandr Orlov, Nikolai Grech, Mikhail Pogodin, Faddei Bulgrain, etc. who were beginning to address their work to middle-class readers. Alongside the change in target readership, equally critical for the changing fortunes of the genre was the shift in the authorship of literary travel writing engendered by the crises in elite culture under the oppressive and xenophobic Nicholaevan regime.³⁵³ The popularity of the genre eventually cost it its high literary status, since it had been routinely prescribed to young aspiring literati as a venue for trying out their pen. As the number of practitioners grew, hybrid travelogues had become heavily inter-textual, where each traveler and writer was struggling to clear the space for themselves in this overpopulated terrain, bound to cite his or her predecessor and to collate his own experiences with those already described before. By the 1840s Russian travel writing was quickly losing its originality, literary qualities, and earlier prestige.

The other type of Russian travelogue had proved more fortunate and fertile for the development of realist prose genres, especially the novel for it left more space to the author's imagination, to allegory and stylization. Like hybrid travelogues, "Sternian" travelogue was essentially elastic in structure – i.e. could subsume all manner of subjects and narratorial personae. Seeds of other genres and prose forms

³⁵³ Sara Dickinson, *Breaking Ground*, 234.

contained in this expandable structure (e.g. epistolary novel, literary review, philosophical essay, newspaper satire [газетный фельетон], etc.) had eventually extricated themselves from the travelogue and gained independent status in journals and magazines, thereby narrowing the horizon of travel writing both theme-wise and form-wise.³⁵⁴ Being less standardized and dependent on the beaten routes and prescribed sights than the chronological, fact-driven formulaic travelogues *a la* Dupaty, “Sternian” type of travelogue allowed for a more dynamic engagement between the self and the world. With the waning of Sentimentalism this elasticity of travelogue was critical for the emergence of a more spontaneous, auto-reflexive and realistic authorial personage of realist prose.

The influence of structural and stylistic features of the travelogue can also be discerned in the plot structure and narrative of prose fiction in the first half of the nineteenth century. In chapter 2 I have mentioned the lasting legacy of Radischev’s *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow*, which had established travel not only as a structural device helping to “move” the action and organize the plot, but also as a powerful symbolic motive that expressed the social pathos of Russian ideological novel: “travel as a quest for truth and justice” (see, for example, Nekrasov’s *Who is Happy in Russia?* or Platonov’s *Chevengur*). Romanticism introduced “aimless wandering” (usually of a disenchanting outcast of the high society) as an alternative and equally enduring trope. Its distant echoes and renditions reverberate, for example, in decisively anti-heroic/anti-climatic Il’f and Petrov’s *Golden Calf*, Nabokov’s *Lolita*, or Venedict Erofeev’s *Moskva-Petushki* [*Moscow to the End of the Line*], etc. Even outside of these straightforward thematic and structural parallels, it is, perhaps, not accidental, that most of the best-known Russian nineteenth century novels are

³⁵⁴ T.A. Roboli, “Literatura puteshestviia”, 63.

either organized around travel and road motive or contain references to the protagonists' peregrinations: e.g. Onegin's travels in Eugene Onegin, Pechyorin's Southern wanderings in *The Hero of Our Time*, Chichikov's domestic tour in search of the dead souls, Turgenev's *Notes of a Hunter*, *Asya*, and *Smoke*, Leskov's *Enchanted Wanderer*, most of Dostoevsky's novels, Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, *Kreizer's Sonata*, etc.³⁵⁵ A far-away journey is certainly one of the most ancient and archetypal plots that can be traced to Russian folklore sagas and fairy tales. It would seem that the persistence of this plot and the ease with which the travel writing's subject had been translated into a traveling protagonist of prose fiction reflects something of Russia's affinity for transient, unstable mode of being, and of the ethos of "eternal wandering."

Finally, landscape description that has long been a standard feature of literary travelogues was to play a crucial role in the nascent tradition of Russian prose fiction. It is, perhaps, paradoxical that a great part of the nineteenth century Russian novels had been written during their author's sojourn in Europe. Yet this distance was more productive for the semiotization of the space than a closer, facts-bound look could have been. Writing the *Dead Souls* intermittingly in Italy and France Nikolai Gogol', for example, confessed being "overwhelmed by the feeling of being still in Russia:" "I see before me landowners, our officials, our officers, our peasants, our huts – in a word, the whole Orthodox Russia. I cant' help but laugh when I think I am writing *Dead Souls* in Paris."³⁵⁶

³⁵⁵ For a comprehensive study of the poetics of urbanism and modernism - i.e. the influence of new means of transportation and communication on the turn of the century-and early twentieth century Russian literary discourse, see Yurii Leving, *Vokzal – Garage – Angar: Valdimir Nabokov i Poetika Russkogo Urbanizma* [Train Station –Garage – Hangar: Vladimir Nabokov and the Poetics of Russian Urbanism] (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Ivana Limbakha, 2004).

³⁵⁶ Quoted in John Glad, *Russia Abroad*, 58.

Being less standardized – i.e. less restricted thematically, less dependent on well-established (western) styles and aesthetical models, travel itineraries, types of authorial personae and references to other texts and travels – than the travelogue, realist novel became the chief medium on which was waged the debate over the national destiny. Turning attention towards internal routes, Russian novelists worked to establish a symbolic nexus between the specific features of geographical space and the Russian character, turning them into metaphors of one another, with tenor and vehicle thoroughly blurred. In what follows I shall briefly discuss the main properties of Russian physical space and the features of national character associated with them as imagined by thinkers and literati. The country's sheer vastness and the natural diversity enclosed within its borders certainly could not fail to leave their mark on its history, national character and psyche. As we have seen in the Chapter 1, the metaphorical potential of spatial notions has a particular importance for the study of religious, cultural, ethical, social, and ideological facets of a world-view.³⁵⁷ The analysis of spatial metaphors and symbolisms that I now shall turn to reveals the centrality of space in the cultural construct of Russianness and adds up to the lexicon of cultural tropes – “constants” - that I have been referring to throughout this work.

Self-sufficiency, universality

The late sixteenth and early seventeenth century expansion eastward, first towards the newly conquered Kazan and further on beyond the Volga and the Urals into the vast expanses of Siberia, had turned the Muscovite/Russian Empire into a special kind of overland geo-political formation, its sheer size bolstering the notion of universal

³⁵⁷ Katharina Hansen Löve, *The Evolution of Space in Russian Literature: A Spatial Reading of 19th and 20th Century Narrative Literature* (Amsterdam-Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1994).

empire.³⁵⁸ The abundance of resources and the geographical diversity created a sense of perfect completeness and suggested, in the words of the nineteenth century historian Mikhail Pogodin, that Russia is in and of itself “a whole world, self-sufficient, independent, absolute.”³⁵⁹ In Goncharov’s Frigate “Pallas” one of the author’s fellow travelers on the round-the world voyage and a journey through Siberia remarks: “The world is small but Russia is vast” [«Свет мал, а Россия велика»].³⁶⁰ The tropes of universality and self-sufficiency, the importance of integrity [целостность] and enclosure have been crucial to Russia’s cultural history, its national character, and Russia’s ambivalent relationship to the outside world. They certainly have an important bearing on the ideology and practice of travel and travel writing.³⁶¹

Space vs. place; “enclosure”

In his celebrated study of Gogol’, Robert Maguire looks at Russia’s folk epics, tales, legends and historical chronicles and formulates the fundamental myth of the “ideal enclosure” as an antithesis of turmoil and disintegration that are always likely to plague a space so enormous, so untamed, and so difficult to control and administer.³⁶² Russian obsession with walls and fences of all sorts is a common place of cultural anthropology: from the rural community to urban institutions, houses, vegetable plots,

³⁵⁸ Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire*, 15.

³⁵⁹ Quoted in Nicholas Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 3.

³⁶⁰ Ivan Goncharov, *Sobranie sochinenii v vos'mi tomakh*, vol. 3 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1953), 398.

³⁶¹ Diane Koenker, “Travel to Work, Travel to Play: On Russian Tourism, Travel and Leisure”, *Slavic Review*, volume 62, no. 4 (winter 2003): 657-732; Sergei Medvedev, “A General Theory of Russian Space: A Gay Science and a Rigorous Science” in Jeremy Smith, ed., *Beyond the Limits: The Concept of Space in Russian History and Culture* (Helsinki: SHS, 1999), 15-48, etc.

³⁶² Robert Maguire, *Exploring Gogol* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 3-4.

public parks and gardens, churchyards, even graves are usually fenced off. It is noteworthy that the very terms for “foreign” and “abroad” in Russian contain reference to the frontier or cordon that separate the inside from the outside: *за граница/zagranitsa* (literally: beyond the border), *за кордоном/za kordonom* (colloquial, literally: beyond the cordon). In medieval Rus’ the opposition of the walled-in town-fortress and the open landscape implied a quite literal sense of confrontation and menace, as the nomadic tribes (e.g. the Pechenegs, the Polovtsy, the Cumans, the Khazars, the Mongols) that frequently assaulted the Slavs often came from the steppes. The vulnerability of such an expansive and open territory to foreign intrusion and the difficulty of controlling the borders have bred a tendency to isolationism, suspiciousness, and even hostility towards strangers, typical of Russian cultural matrix. Paradoxically, Russians tend to pride themselves in being extremely hospitable, in having a “wide and warm soul,” and hospitality is routinely named as one of the chief national virtues. This hospitality, however, is applied rather selectively, to those who are recognized as part of the inner circle – e.g. family, friends, familiar guests, rarely to complete strangers as is, for example, the social norm for the traditional cultures of Georgia or Armenia. Lotman’s semiotic analysis of the concept of space in Russian culture highlights the significance of the boundary as its organizing element. Boundary structures binary oppositions between the “inside” and the “outside”, “one’s own” [*свой*] and “alien” [*чужой*] ascribing meaning to the respective opposites that may vary in time, but remain staunchly contrasted.

Border – Order

For all the importance of the concept of “enclosure” for Russian culture, the country’s physical frontiers, however, are rather ephemeral. Most of the borders are natural –

they run along the shorelines of the northern seas that freeze over, or across the distant unpopulated areas, mountain ranges, etc. This has meant to the Russian consciousness a certain weakness of spatial awareness. In the country that revels in its “boundless”, “unlimited”, “inexhaustible” lands and resources the practical sense of distance, size, frontier, etc. are bound to remain erratic and vague. A proverbial exclamation of a provincial town head in Gogol’s play *The Inspector General* (1836) catches just this mind-bugling vagueness of distances: “From here, one can be galloping for three years and without reaching any country” [«Отсюда хоть три года скачи, ни до какого государства не доскачешь.»]³⁶³ In another famous scene in *Dead Souls* (1842) the landowner Nozdrev shows his guests the symbolic border of his estate – a little wooden post and a narrow ditch – and pointing to both sides of the border declares that “it’s all his”:

--Here’s the border! – said Nozdrev. – Everything that you see on this side of it is mine; and even what you see on the other side, the forest over there and everything behind that forest is mine, too.³⁶⁴

The dichotomy of the ordered, walled-in place and the boundless, uncontrolled space outside is expressed through both real and symbolic denotations (i.e. the root “to gather” [*собирать/sobirat*’] yields both “the church” [*собор/sobor*] and “the spiritual communion”, “conciliarity” [*соборность/sobornost*].³⁶⁵ It may be extended to other forms of organization of Russia’s social, cultural and political space, but the unresolved tension between the elements of this juxtaposition would remain intact. For example, the tension between the sedentary peasant life typical of the majority of the country’s population, and the veneration of nomadic unbounded spirit of the

³⁶³ Nikolay Gogol’, *Sobranie sochinenii v shesti tomakh*, vol. 4 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literature, 1949), 89.

³⁶⁴ « -Вот граница! – сказал Ноздрев. – Все, что ни видишь по эту сторону, все это мое и даже по ту сторону, весь этот лес, который вон синет, и все, что за лесом, все мое.» Nikolai Gogol’, *Sobranie sochinenii v shesti tomakh*, vol. 5 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literature, 1949), 77.

³⁶⁵ Amy C. Singelton, *Noplace Like Home*, 19-40.

Cossacks and the Roma, that is persistent motive in the national culture and mentality. It is perhaps, not accidental, that the Romantic idealization of the free-roaming Roma and the rebellious, unfettering Caucasian mountaineers endured in Russian cultural imagination well beyond the Romantic period. A noble's escape with the Gypsy camp, an allegory of a liberating flight from the duties and strictures of the "civilized" society, has remained a tenacious fantasy of Russian cultural imagination ever since Pushkin's *Aleko (Gypsies)*, 1824) or Tolstoy's Protasov (*Living Corpse*, 1900) who eschew their social status and abandon their families for love of a Gypsy woman and a simpler way of life. In a true romantic fashion the so-called "gypsymania" [«цыгановицина»] that engulfed Russia since the mid-nineteenth century with the spread of Gypsy choruses and orchestras performing in restaurants and theaters was accompanied by a string of bankruptcies and suicides of those nobles who had wasted their entire fortunes on Gypsy singers and lavish parties accompanied by Gypsy musicians.³⁶⁶

It would seem that the excesses of passions and unconstrained movement over the vast expanses of territories commonly attributed to nomadic "noble savages" and outlaws unrestrained by the norms of civilized society expresses the deep-seating nostalgia for the unruly, capricious, "natural" existence. Its popular manifestations – the songs and folk ballads about the noble criminals [«благородные разбойники»] reflect, among other things, the deep-seated memory of the seventeenth and eighteenth century popular rebellions of Razin and Pugachev. Gogol's famous metaphor of the troika speeding across the unending steppes - "Is there a Russian who does not like heedless speed?" - speaks to this very ideal of total abandon and recklessness beyond the constraints of "normal" civilized behavior. Corollary to this cultural constant are

³⁶⁶ For more on this, see Louise McReynolds, *Russia at Play: Leisure Activities at the End of the Tsarist Era* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 200-240.

the habits of reckless driving, binges of heavy drinking, sudden outbursts of violence, careless gambling, love of showy wasting of money, etc. that are mostly seen as socially acceptable and pardonable – i.e. the very concept of *кураж / courage*.³⁶⁷ Deriving from the French *le courage*, the term celebrates pointless and headless demonstrations of fearlessness and skill – consider, for instance, the famous episode from Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*, in which Dolokhov and an Englishman Stevenson make a bet that Dolokhov would drink a bottle of rum while sitting on the windowsill of the third floor with his legs hanging from out of the window, etc.

The tension between enclosure (order, organization, society, civilization) and the unbridled open space is reflected in yet another dichotomy of liberty *воля/volya* (“a feeling of freedom”, “free spirit”, “permissiveness” and in one of the meanings also “a vast open space”) and *свобода/svoboda* (liberty). The former is usually conceived of as more organic and spontaneous and the latter as more political in nature, more constrained and structured. Consider the Russian wanderers [*странники*] described by Teffy and referenced earlier who, like flocks of migrating birds, are prompted by some mysterious forces of nature to break free [*«голоса...звуют...на волю и уводят»*] and who leave their homes every spring.³⁶⁸ In general, the opposition between these categories highlights the tension between the idea of a state and of governmental control as such (always imagined as vertical in a

³⁶⁷ Elena Hellberg – Hirn, “Ambivalent Space: expressions of Russian Identity”, 56. Also see Milan Kundera’s famous essay “An Introduction to a Variation” that identifies Russian national mentality with Dostoevskian “rational irrationality”, “a universe where everything turns into feeling, [and] where feelings are promoted to the rank of value and of truth”, a universe of “overblown gestures, murky depths, and aggressive sentimentality” that had not been tamed by the rationality and law of European Renaissance and Enlightenment. *Cross Currents* 5, (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1986), 469-476.

³⁶⁸ Teffy, “Volya”, *Biblioteka mirovoy novelly*, 327

heavily centralized country) and the popular - horizontal – dimension of Russian social space.³⁶⁹

Symbolist poet Viacheslav Ivanov speaks about the Russians' love for borderless expanses as inherited from their alleged nomadic ancestors and incomprehensible to the west (“borders are for *you* to bicker about”):

The wild Scythians do not feel at home
Within the walls of liberty and rights,
To you Guillotine was teaching law.
[but] the chaos is free, the chaos is right!

....
We, formless ones, need our willfull freedom.
We need our nomadic life! We need our open spaces!
We need our boundlessness! We need our expanses!
Borders are for you to bicker about.³⁷⁰

Most of the Russian travelers to western Europe discussed here remark on the orderliness and rationality characteristic of western societies. Aleksandr Ostrovsky, for instance, lamented that the neat cultivated fields, well-maintained roads and the general level of comfort that he had seen in Germany or Italy were still unfamiliar to Russia. Yet the flip side of this admiration, also quite typical of less enthusiastic travel accounts, is the common perception of western societies as “soulless”, “too orderly

³⁶⁹ Elena Hellberg – Hirn, “Ambivalent Space: Expressions of Russian Identity” in Jeremy Smith, ed., *Beyond the Limits: The Concept of Space in Russian History and Culture* (Helsinki: SHS, 1999), 49-69, 66-7; Alaina Lemon, “Telling Gypsy Exile: Pushkin, India, and Romani Diaspora” in Domnica Radulescu, ed., *Realms of Exile: Nomadism, Diasporas, and Eastern European Voices* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Lexington Books, 2002), 29-48, 32.

³⁷⁰ Viacheslav Ivanov, “Skif pliashet,” [A Scythian Dancing] in *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1978), 75-76, English translation quoted from Marc Bassin, “Asia”, N.Rzhevsky, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 57-84.

Стена Вольности и Прав
Диким скифам не по нраву
Гильотин учил вас праву.
Хаос волен, хаос прав!

В нас заложена алчба
Вам неведомой свободы:
Ваши веки — только годы,
Где заносят непогоды
Безымянные гроба.

and pragmatic” as to be completely devoid of authentic feeling, creativity and spontaneity, which Russia is credited with. This is, of course, a typical juxtaposition between modernity and traditional, patriarchal ethos, but as we have seen before, in the Russian case it is also buttressed by a complex combination of cultural, religious and historical factors. These factors account for the resilience of this trope until this day, which seems to betray something more than the country’s incomplete modernization and its lasting inferiority complex vis-à-vis the “West.”

Interestingly enough, the longing for the Russian “creative chaos” and disdain for the European “bourgeois boredom” is a leitmotif of most memoirs and fiction written by Russian émigrés who settled in Paris and Berlin ousted out of the country by one of the manifestations of this “creative chaos” gone too far – i.e. by the 1917 revolution. Obviously, personal circumstances of most of these emigrants (e.g. dramatic loss of social status, poverty, etc.) determine their unenthusiastic reaction to their host societies. But even so, it strikes one as paradoxical that escapees from the anarchy, hunger, and unbridled violence of the post-1917 Russia would complain that in “boring Eden of Germany”, “the crowd of workers on strike does not trample on the grass lawns, flowers beds and gardens”, and that during the floods “the German rivers do not quit their shores without a governmental degree.”³⁷¹

Amorphous space – amorphous character?

Contained within these nebulous borders, Russian space is often imagined as amorphous and monotonous, in striking contrast to the densely populated and naturally heterogeneous western European countries. Russian historian Vassily

³⁷¹ «Я люблю весь этот добротный скучноватый рай – Германию. [...] Из германских берегов реки без приказа не выходят.» Roman Gul’ quoted in G.A. Tiime, “O Fenomene russkogo literaturnogo puteshestviia v Evropu. Genezis i lietaraturnyi’ zhanr” [On the phenomenon of Russian literary travel to Europe: genesis and the literary genre] in *Ruskaia literature*, no. 3 (2007): 3-18.

Kluichevsky (1841-1911), whose *celebrated Course of Russian History* begins with the detailed description of the climate, physical landscape and nature of the country, emphasized the psychological and cultural implications of the Russian geography for the national mentality and character. Imagining a certain Russia traveler on tour in Western Europe and his impressions, Kluichevsky essentially presents a cultural, rather than a geographical analysis:

Everything that [the Russian traveler] sees around himself (sic!) in the West persistently imposes on him a sense of border, limit, of definite certainty, of strict distinctness, and of continuous and ubiquitous human presence with the impressive signs of resolute and unremitting labor. The traveler's attention is constantly captured and enthused. He recalls the dullness of the native landscape of some Tula or Orlov area in early spring: he sees the flat empty fields [...] with scattered groves and a black road on the fringe – and the same picture accompanies him from north to south, from one province to another, as if the same place is moving with him for hundreds of miles. [...] There is no sign of human dwelling anywhere and the observer is taken over by a terrifying feeling of the never-interrupted tranquility, of heavy slumber and bareness, of isolation that invites abstract gloomy contemplation devoid of concrete and clear thought.³⁷²

Kluichevsky's observations are echoed by Nikolay Berdiaev who similarly theorized the relationship between the Russian space and the national character as its correlate in a rather Herderian manner. His choice of anthropomorphic vocabulary is noteworthy: Berdiaev consistently stresses amorphousness, shapelessness, meekness and boundlessness of the “Russian element” [*«русская стихия»*] that like some primordial protoplasm is yet to be given its shape and structure and that embodies the

³⁷² «Все, что он видит вокруг себя на Западе, настойчиво навязывает ему впечатление границы, предела, точной определенности, строгой отчетливости и ежеминутного, повсеместного присутствия человека с внушительными признаками его упорного и продолжительного труда. Внимание путешественника непрерывно занято, крайне возбуждено. Он припоминает однообразие родного тульского или орловского вида ранней весной: он видит ровные пустынные поля, которые акак будто горбятся на горизонте подобно морю, с редкими перелесками и черной дорогой по окраине, - и эта картина провожает его с севера на юг из губернии в губернию, точно одно и тоже место движется вместе с ним сотни верст. [...] Жилья не видно на обширных пространствах, никакого звука не слышно кругом – и наблюдателем овладевает жуткое чувство невозмутимого покоя, беспробудного сна и пустынности, одиночества, располагающее к беспредметному унылому раздумью без ясной отчетливой мысли.» Vassily Kluichevsky, *Collected Works in 8 Volumes*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1956): 69-72.

essence of the national psyche and mentality. The key geographical metaphor in his analysis is the plane [«равнина»]:

Russia is a great plane with boundless distances. There are no sharply drawn forms and no borders on the face of the Russian land. There is no diversity and complexity of mountains and valleys, no boundaries that give shape and structure to each part. The Russian element is spread over the plane, it always reaches into the infinity. The geography of the Russian space corresponds to the geography of the Russian soul.³⁷³

Drawing socio-political conclusions from the particular attributes of Russian geographical space, contemporary cultural critic and semiotician Sergei Medvedev tackles both the issues of national character/mentality and the specificity of the country's socio-historical development:

[I]t's the same space that has prevented Russia from developing civil institutions, civic society and the rule of law (Rechtsstaat) - in fact, from developing the entire concept of civility, from civitas as a specific Western way of development by urbanization. In Russia there has been little need to settle down and work on a plot of land. Endless space is forgiving and undemanding, irresponsible and indiscriminating: its human embodiment is a weak-willed Illiya Illiyich Oblomov from Ivan Goncharov's classical novel, a Russian archetype. If we accept the old German differentiation between culture and civilization, space is about culture, not civilization. Russia has good literature and bad roads.³⁷⁴

Nomadism; Homelessness

Kluichevsky is aware of the subjectivity of the deterministic approach to the relationship between the geographical space and the particular cultural and

³⁷³ «Россия есть великая равнина с бесконечными далями. На лице русской земли нет резко очерченных форм, нет границ. Нет в строении русской земли многообразной сложности гор и долин, нет пределов, сообщающих форму каждой части. Русская стихия разлита по равнине, она всегда уходит в бесконечность. И в географии русской земли есть соответствие с географией русской души. Строение земли, география народа всегда бывает лишь символическим выражением души народа, лишь географией души... Не случайно народ живет в той или иной природе, на той или иной земле. Тут существует внутренняя связь, сама природа, сама земля определяется основной направленностью русской души. Русские равнины, как и русские овраги – символы русской души.» Nikolay Berdiaev, "Mirosozertsanie Dostoevskogo" [Dostoevsky's way of looking at the world], chapter VII "Russia", available at <http://www.vehi.net/berdyaev/dostoevsky/07.html>, April 2008.

³⁷⁴ Sergei Medvedev, "A General Theory of Russian Space: A Gay Science and a Rigorous Science" in Jeremy Smith, ed., *Beyond the Limits: The Concept of Space in Russian History and Culture* (Helsinki: SHS, 1999), 15-48, 16.

psychological leanings of the national character that mimic it or that are shaped by it. The “signs of human presence” within this abstract natural landscape, however, yield a much more factual knowledge about the mentality of the people that inhabit it. While the Russian traveler in western Europe is impressed by the permanence and solidity of the material, man-made reality, his imaginary western counterpart passing through the Russian villages is taken aback by the primitive peasant settlements that lack even the most basic facilities and that look much rather like temporary impromptu camps of the nomads. Kluchevsky attributes this perennial “contemptuous indifference” to the domestic settled comforts to the frequent natural disasters and the deeply entrenched spirit of vagabondism [«переселенческая бродячестъ»].³⁷⁵

Kluchevsky’s conclusions echo Berdiaev’s discussion of the eschatological in Russian culture referred to earlier that similarly underlined Russian nomadic restlessness and rejection of positive materiality as opposed to Western concern with progress and civility. Whereas Berdiaev looks at the historical fate of Russian thought and the cultural meanings introduced into it by the Russian Orthodox theology, Kluchevsky is concerned with the interrelation between nature and man, between the geographical factors and their socio-historical implications. It is not my intention here to assess the validity of each of these discursive claims, but rather to explore the forms of rationality that in each case sustain the conceptual clusters of geography-history,

³⁷⁵ One may also add to these factors the absence of the historically legitimized tradition of private property and privacy as a culturally legitimate concept. Ibid, p.71-72. This indifference towards making one’s domestic space comfortable and cozy certainly gains additional aspects during the Soviet period and the ethos of collectivism (or rather, anti-individualism) that it was ruthlessly propagating and the low quality and constant shortages of goods and services available to the Soviet people. Anthropological studies on the everyday life in Soviet communal apartments reveal the inhabitants’ remarkable disinterest in maintaining more than the necessary minimum of cleanness and order in the shared spaces of these apartments. See, for example, a fascinating study by Illiya Utekhin, *Ocherki Kommunal’noy byta* [Essays on Communal Living] (Moscow: O.G.I., 2004). A remarkable features of most Soviet travelogues is the author’s fascination with the solidity, permanence and diversity of western material culture, and with the ritualization of everyday social practices, clearly bread by the austerity and plainness of life at home.

space – psyche, space – soul, space – power, and holograph particular “spatial” cultural tropes.

The feeling of “being (at) home” expresses the highest degree of security (“definiteness”) of one’s identity and belonging and anchors individuals in the world ontologically and cognitively. “Home” is a “null-point in our system of coordinates,” as a structure built on the basis of shared experiences and assumptions and maintained through the well-established routine that ascribes meaning to the world.³⁷⁶ In her study of the relationship between the concepts of domesticity and “home” and Russian cultural/national identity characteristically entitled *Noplace Like Home*, Amy Singleton offers an interesting reading of the tropes of restlessness and nomadism. She argues that they express Russia’s sense of alienation from the spiritually integrated “home” of its pre-Petrine traditions, an exile from its true self.³⁷⁷ Hence, the peaceful scenes of domesticity romanticized by Russian novelists throughout the nineteenth century were essentially meant to reconstitute that mythological harmony of the past, to piece together a solid and stable home in order to mend and sustain the bifurcated national consciousness .

The longing for the “higher home” and the binary of the transient nomadic earthly existence and the solidity of the “true world to come” is central Orthodox theology, and it is also an important theme in Romanticism (although Romanticism places more emphasis on the mythologized past than on the future.) In the Russian cultural and historical context, restlessness and incessant search for “home” also express frustrated attempts at forging a cohesive national identity on the one hand, and

³⁷⁶ Alfred Schuetz, “The Homecomer”, *The American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 50, no. 5. (March 1945): 369-376, 369.

³⁷⁷ Amy C. Singelton, *Noplace Like Home: The Literary Artist and Russia’s Search for Cultural Identity* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), 26-37.

on the other, discontents with the alien social forms and practices that bound Russians to the “Europeanized” alien “home” of *civilitas*.

Feminine discourse of Russian space

An interesting argument can be made about the role of grammatical gender in the symbolic juxtaposition of spatial phenomena with power. While the land is frequently given feminine, maternal, diminutive epithets, the institutions of power are usually incarnated through male figures or derive their names from male roots. The symbolic identification of Russia with the feminine figure of a bride, and of power – with a groom, is reflected in the Russian rite of coronation (*венчание на царство*) that beginning with the mid-sixteenth century coronation of Ivan the Terrible literally imitates the wedding ceremony, with the Tsar “marrying” Russia-the bride.³⁷⁸ This feminine discourse obviously suggests a wide range of semiotic interpretations that revolve around the notions of submissiveness, passivity, lack of structure, humility, meekness, amorphousness, irrationality, suffering, self-sacrifice, etc.

Yuri Stepanov identifies the two streaks in the narrative of essential femininity of Russian space. On the one hand, there is the discourse of Russia’s specific religiosity with the veneration of Virgin Mary, *Bogoroditsa*, at its core. Philosopher Vassily Rozanov (1856-1919) spoke about the two Russias, the visible one – Russia as an imperial state, a national and legal entity, and the invisible “Holy Russia,” “Mother Russia” that knows no laws, that has no definite shape, and that is governed by providence: the organic Russia of essences [*«Россия существенностей»*], and of boundless faith - such as the Russia of the schismatics.³⁷⁹ On the other, there is

³⁷⁸ Sergei Medvedev, “A General Theory of Russian Space”, 19-20, 28-31.

³⁷⁹ Vassiy Rozanov, *Religia, Filosofia, Kultura* [Religion, Philosophy, Culture](Moscow: Respublika, 1993), 33. Quoted in Yuri Stepanov, *Konstanty*, 174.

Aleksandr Blok's poetic catalog of feminine figures – the belle dame/whore, Sophia, the unconnue, and finally wife as in his 1908 exclamation: “Oh, my Rus’! My wife!” [«*O Русь моя! Жена моя!*»] that metonymically identifies Russia with the universal, all-embracing suffering soul.

Contemporary philosopher and cultural critic Boris Groyce examines those essentially feminine attributes through the psychoanalytical grid and argues that Russia is not the domain of subject-ness, is not a subject, or consciousness.

The space of Russia is the space of losing space, of losing spatial certainty, individuality. [...] Russia does not “create” anything, because creativity is only possible in the chronotope of the individual, or collective, conscious experience; all creations of other nations dissolve within her, losing their certainty and enter into random combinations...³⁸⁰

“Russia is a dream” concludes Groyce or, as the title of his 1989 essay suggests, it is the subconscious of the “West”:

The time of Russia is the time of losing time, losing history, memory, “consciousness”. [...] all creations of other nations dissolve within her, losing their certainty, and enter into random combinations: Russia as a dream, as the space and time of a dream...³⁸¹

The above passage explicitly evokes Chaadaev's thesis of Russia's a-historical existence. According to Chaadaev, Russians “are one of these nations which does not seem to form an integral part of humanity, but which exists only to provide some great lesson for the world.” Groyce rereads *Lettres philosophiques* (1836) as a foil for his discussion Russian philosophical tradition and its relationship to Western philosophy. Echoing Chaadaev, Groyce describes Russia as a territory of subconscious that possesses no agency of its own outside of western projections. He, too, can only define his subject through the consistent denial of concrete adjective: as a “no-

³⁸⁰ Boris Groyce, *Utopia i obmen* [Utopia and Exchange] (Moscow, 1993), 246.

³⁸¹ Boris Groyce, “Rossiia kak podsoznanie zapada” [Russia as the subconscious of the West] in *Isskustvo utopii* (Moscow: Khudozhestvenny zhurnal, 2003), 150-167.

subject”, “no-character,” “no-consciousness” beyond and outside temporal and spatial coordinates. Russia’s essence is feminine, while the “West” is imagined as an active, conscious and corporeal – male – substance. In his reading of Slavophiles and Westerners, Russian religious philosophers and contemporary thinkers, Groyce discerns the same persistent motive: Russia is presented as the realm of fantasies and projections of the western Eros and simultaneously as a spiritual savior of the overly rational western civilization.³⁸² Groyce’s use of psychoanalytical terminology results in a peculiar elasticity of meaning: the “Russia” that he talks about may not only be standing in for the country’s physical space, but also for the national character and psyche, and the two can be read as interdependent and metaphorically expressible through each other.

The nexus of space and psyche or space-soul is best expressed in the very choice of the adjectives that are routinely attached to the word “soul”[*душа/dusha*] in the Russian language and that suggests that the breadth of the country’s space has imparted its qualities on the national character. Russians tend to think of themselves as people with the “broad”, “wide-open”, soul [*широкая душа*], the opposite of which is “shallow, or “little” soul [*мелкая душонка*] – a generic term for a gamut of negative attributes, from tightfistedness to meanness. Corollary to this idealized perception is a wide range of self-stereotypes that present Russians as people of passionate feelings, of hospitality, kindness, warmth, generosity, but also unruliness,

³⁸² The use of gendered metaphors for the discussion of the relationship with the “West” is hardly a Russian invention. Projections of femininity (understood as essential powerlessness) onto the exotic realm is a common place of “Orientalist” narratives, amply theorized by contemporary post-colonial studies and gender studies. It is also quite prominent in post-socialist discourse of East Central Europe, that also discusses the complicated entanglement between the hopeful post-socialist East and the initially curious but ultimately disappointed West though a metaphor of a frustrated love affair between East Central Europe as the dream bride and the masculine West (see, for example, Dubravka Ugresic, Svetlana Boym, Slavenka Drakulic, Magdalena J.Zaborowska, etc.) Unlike other objects of “Orientalist” rhetoric, Russia insists on its femininity and embraces it, for it’s a product of home-bred discourses.

irrationality and total abandon discussed earlier. In a curious reversal of this celebratory myth, that has both domestic and foreign roots, Dmitri Karamazov's famous utterance: "Man is broad, too broad. I'd have him narrower," is routinely - and erroneously - cited by Russians as referring to Russians only ("Broad is a *Russian*, I'd have him narrower.") despite universal appellation in the original text.

In his celebrated speech delivered on the occasion of the unveiling of the Pushkin monument in Moscow in 1880, Dostoevsky argued that the Russianness of Pushkin's genius lies in the poet's capacity to embrace and harmonize any foreign influence while completely reincarnating oneself into any foreign identity.³⁸³ This "universal responsiveness" [«*всемирная отзывчивость*»], according to Dostoevsky, impels Russia's messianic role in uniting the European continent and turns the Russian national character into a sort of supra-national essence – an all-encompassing man [«*всечеловек*»]. Dmitri Karamazov, and especially Nikolay Stavrogin of *The Possessed*, are, of course, primary examples of such breadth in the contradictions and polarities that their characters encompass. At the same time, from outside of Dostoevsky's conservative nationalism, the idea of "universal responsiveness" can, too, be read as a marker of amorphousness, rootlessness and superficiality, where the talent for mimicking the foreign reveals the indistinctness of one's own.

³⁸³ "And in this very period of his work our poet represents something miraculous even, never heard of or seen anywhere or with anyone before him. To be sure, there were artistic geniuses of immense magnitude in European literatures before – Shakespeares, Cervanteses, Schillers. But point to even one of these geniuses who could possessed such an aptitude for universal responsiveness as our Pushkin. And this very capability, the major capability of our nation, he precisely shares with our people, and by virtue of this, he is preeminently a people's poet. Even the greatest of the European poets were never able to embody in themselves with such strength as Pushkin did the genius of an alien, perhaps a neighboring nation, its spirit... and its yearnings ... Pushkin alone of all world poets has the virtue of reincarnating himself wholly into an alien nationality." F. M. Dostoevsky, "Pushkin" in *Sobranie sochineni v desiati tomakh* [Collected works in ten volumes] (Moscow, 1958), 442-459; 454-5.

Feminine space – feminine soul?

Nikolay Berdiaev scathingly sums up this feminine discourse in his 1914 essay “On the always-womanish in the Russian soul” [«О вечно-бабьем в русской душе»], where the choice of the Russia derogatory word *баба/baba*, [a peasant, usually older woman] instead of the more neutral *женщина/zhenschina*, inverts and deflates the lofty female myth of Russian nationhood so beloved by conservative and nationalist thinkers. Berdiaev is responding to Rozanov, who just then published his book *The War of 1914 and the Russian Revival*, full of almost hysterical infatuation with the attributes of authority and strength. As Rozanov watches the cavalry galloping through the streets of Petrograd before their departure to the front, he admits to being possessed by an almost mystical awe at the site of such an explicit manifestation of masculinity and might: they overwhelm him as they would have an impressionable and weak woman. This masochistic eagerness to be impressed and domineered by the state power, according to Berdiaev, constitutes the essence of the womanish = slavish [*бабье =рабье*] in the Russian character:

The Russian people are endowed with a special gift of meekness and compliance of an individual in the face of the collective. The Russian people do not think of themselves as a “man” or “husband”, but are forever playing a ready-to-marry “bride”, pretending to be a “woman” in front of the colossus of the statehood; she is thrilled by “strength”...

.....

The great misfortune of the Russian soul [...] is its womanish passivity [...] its lack of manliness, and readiness to marry a strange husband. The Russian people are too much rooted in the national-primordial collectivism, and are not yet too conscious of the rights and self-respect pertaining to an individual. This can be explained by the long history of German presence within the state institutions that came to be rejected by the common folk as an alien rule.³⁸⁴

³⁸⁴ «У русского народа есть государственный дар покорности, смирения личности перед коллективом. Русский народ не чувствует себя мужем, он все невестится, чувствует себя женщиной перед колоссом государственности, его покоряет "сила", он ощущает себя розановским "я на тротуаре" в момент прохождения конницы.»
And later:

«Великая беда русской души в том же, в чем беда и самого Розанова, — в женственной пассивности, переходящей в "бабье", в недостатке мужественности, в склонности к браку с чужим и чуждым мужем. Русский народ слишком живет в национально-стихийном

Berdiaev expresses a rather common sentiment, found in the works of many turn-of-the-century Russian thinkers who similarly lamented the absence of manly, masculine essence within Russia's national fiber, associated with the active, creative potential, dignity, rationalism, and individualism. In the eyes of the Russians, the Germans have been the nation that embodied these male attributes. Due to the prominence of the Germans among the upper echelons of the Russian military, in the upper governmental and bureaucratic offices and diplomacy, as well as the German lineage of the Romanovs, the Germans in Russia came to be identified with the state administration. Geoffrey Hosking suggests that the German role in imperial administration worked to deepen the rift between the ideal of organic folk community and the rationalist secular state, but it also helped to define the essence of Russian communal identity against its perceived opposite: the German national character:

[Russians] feel themselves to be warm, humane, informal, chaotic but able to get things done by community spirit, in contrast to Germans whom they see as cool, impersonal, formal, orderly, and addicted to bureaucratic methods.³⁸⁵

Besides perceiving themselves (and being perceived by the Russians) as the typical embodiment of the imperial regime, the Germans also played an important role as agents of modernization since their arrival to Petrine Russia through their involvement in commerce, industrialization, engineering projects, medicine, science, etc. They were seen as overly pragmatic, hardworking, ambitious, overly rational and not prone

коллективизме, и в нем не окрепло еще сознание личности, ее достоинства и ее прав. Этим объясняется то, что русская государственность была так пропитана неметчиной и часто представлялась инородным владычеством. "Розановское", бабье и рабье, национально-языческое, дохристианское все еще очень сильно в русской народной стихии. "Розановщина" губит Россию, тянет ее вниз, засасывает, и освобождение от нее есть спасение для России. По крылатому слову Розанова, "русская душа испугана грехом", и я бы прибавил, что она им ушиблена и придавлена. Этот первородный испуг мешает мужественно творить жизнь, овладеть своей землей и национальной стихией». Nikolay Berdiaev, "O vechno-babiem v russkoj dushe" [On the ever-womanish in the Russian soul] in *Tipy Religioznoj Mysli*, Collected Works, vol. 3 (Paris: YMCA Press, 1989), 714.

³⁸⁵ Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire*, 161.

to sentiment, which the famous dialectical couple of Oblomov and Schtolz reflects so accurately. The soft-hearted and inert Oblomov, this quintessential Russian, cannot find a good reason to get out of bed in the morning and spends the days in idle contemplation wearing his tattered house-robe. His is a sensitive – effeminized – soul, that recoils from responsibility and action, no matter how many blows and losses Oblomov has to sustain through his indecisiveness and meekness. Oblomov’s neighbor, Tarant’ev, formulates the difference between the Russians and the foreigners, whom he abhors, without much distinguishing among different nationalities: “In his eyes, the French, the German, the Englishman were all synonyms of a cunning person, scoundrel, cheater, and bandit” [*«В глазах его француз, немец, англичанин были синонимы мошенника, обманщика, хитреца или разбойника»*]. He despises Schtolz for making a fortune, for being hard-working and full of pragmatic energy that he invests in many fields:

--To respect a German? – said Tarant’ev with the greatest contempt. – What for?

[...] A real Russian person would never do anything like this. A Russian would only chose [one vocation] and even so would take it slowly and easily in a careless manner [...] A court councilor would never bother to study!³⁸⁶

Power - space relationship

According to Berdiaev, the almost Freudian relationship between the passive, mystical feminine essence of the Russian national character and the masculine domineering state power encapsulates “the enigma of Russian philosophy of history.” Elsewhere he writes about the paramount importance of space in this relationship, stressing that as much as the vast size of the country, its “boundless fields and snows” give the

³⁸⁶ «Разве настоящий русский хороший человек станет все это делать. Русский человек выберет что-нибудь одно, да и то не спеша, потихоньку да полегоньку, кое-как... Станет надворный советник учиться!» Ivan Goncharov, *Sobranie sochinenii v vos'mi tomakh*, vol. 4 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1953), 44-45.

Russians a sense of security, they exhaust and suppress the creativity of the Russian soul, that is entirely bound for the organization of the huge state that such space requires. Yet the “Russians always place their hopes on the native land”, identifying their Mother-Russia with the God’s Mother, *Bogoroditsa*.³⁸⁷

The nexus of power and space generates the tension that runs throughout the Russian history since the beginning of its territorial acquisitions - the tension between the desire to attain, symbolically and practically, the “perfect enclosure” and simultaneously to expand geographically even further. The relationship between the vast, diverse and under-populated territory open for far-flung migrations, and the authorities’ need to populate, settle, and govern while retaining control over the movements of population, endows every political action with a spatial meaning.³⁸⁸

Vassily Kluichevsky spoke about the two alternating impulses, the centripetal and the centrifugal, that underlie the history of state building in Russia. The “spatial”(feminine) impulse of “spreading over”, of massive migrations and geographical explorations is invariably succeeded by a (masculine) period of governmental temporality with “stopovers” and administrative crystallization. The alternation of migration and settlement form the leitmotif of Russian history – incessant colonization. A hundred and fifty years after Chaadaev’s indictment of Russians “as squatters and strangers in their own homes and families”, and a hundred

³⁸⁷ «...не раз уже указывали на то, что в судьбе России огромное значение имели факторы географические, ее положение на земле, ее необъятное пространство. Географическое положение России было таково, что русский народ принужден был к образованию огромного государства. ... Огромные пространства легко давались русскому народу, но нелегко давалась ему организация этих пространств в величайшее в мире государство, поддержание и охранение порядка в нем. На это ушла большая часть сил русского народа... Требования государства слишком мало оставляли свободного избытка сил. Вся внешняя деятельность русского человека шла на службу государству. И это наложило безрадостную печать на [его] жизнь. Русские почти не умеют радоваться. Нет у русских людей творческой игры сил. Русская душа подавлена необъятными русскими снегами...»
Nikolai Berdiaev, “O vlasti prostranstva nad russkoy dushoi” [On the power of space over the Russian soul] in *Sud’ba Rossii* (Moscow: Sovetsky Pisatel’, 1990), 65-7.

³⁸⁸ Sergei Medvedev, “A General Theory of Russian Space”, 21.

years after Kluchevsky, Petr Vail' reflects on the various expressions of the nomadic essence of Russian character and culture in his 2003 travelogue *Karta Rodiny* [Map of the Motherland]:

...extensive use of resources up to their complete exhaustion; fetishization of intangible life of spirit; disdain of tangible materiality; romantization of wandering and vagabondism; endless road songs; [Baba Yaga's] hut on two chicken legs; dependence on the nature's elements; aggressive pinning of cultural values against the achievements of civilization; easy meddling with the affairs of the neighbors; the perceived vagueness of all and every boundary – be it state, legal, or moral boundary, etc.³⁸⁹

Vail's inventory of the cultural and behavioral tropes that he believes are produced by Russia's spatial orientation takes us back to Chaadaev, Berdiaev and Kluchevsky and their discussion of nomadism and restlessness in Russian culture and mentality. Vail's critical tone and his unflattering conclusions would certainly be rejected by conservative and nationalist thinkers and are clearly bound up with a particular ideological outlook. Yet he certainly tackles the cultural constants whose importance for the national history and mentality can hardly be questioned.

Thus, the influence of socio-historical and geographical factors on the development and specific character of Russian travel is obvious. In Russia where geography often is history, the country's vast territory, its geographical remoteness and self-seclusion do not merely define the nature and scope of travel, making lengthy travel abroad both costly and physically tolling, and the accurate knowledge of the foreign lands among the population quite rare. They also shape the Russians' perception of their country in relationship to the outside world and are vital to keep in

³⁸⁹ «...разработка любых ресурсов до полного истощения, фетишизация неощутимой духовности, презрение к осязаемой материальности, романтизация бродяжничества, бесконечные дорожные песни, избушка на курьих ножках, зависимость от стихий, агрессивное противопоставление ценностей культуры достижениям цивилизации, легкость вмешательства в соседские дела, размытость всех и всяческих границ – государственных, правовых, моральных.» Petr Vail', *Karta Rodiny* [*The Map of the Motherland*] (Moscow: Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 2003), 190.

mind while reading Russian accounts of foreign, but also domestic travel. The very act of journeying and travel writing confronts the meanings of space, border, center and periphery at every turn, both virtually and symbolically, so that the culturally-given, literary subtext in these texts plays out against the literalness of the context.

Travel writing in the second part of the nineteenth century

I have spoken earlier about the decline of Russian travel writing since the 1840s. This is not to say, however, that the genre lost its popularity with the reading audiences of various social strata. Rather, it had lost its earlier prestige within the Russian cultural matrix to the ascendancy of realist novel. In his 1857 review of V. Botkin's then republished travelogue *Letters from Spain*, Nikolai Chernyshevsky argued that although travel writing universally remains the audiences' favorite kind of reading everywhere, in Russia the genre had gone into eclipse. Chernyshevsky discusses nine travelogues that had been published between 1836 and 1846 and he considered noteworthy – most of the authors in this list are obscure for a contemporary reader. In the subsequent decade the number of notable texts is even lower – Chernyshevsky selects mere three travelogues published between 1847 and 1857.³⁹⁰ At the same time, the gradual amplification of the authorial voice within the economy of the travel narrative and the political or ideological conception that framed the description of the journey, oftentimes at the expense of its documentary accuracy, have naturally led to the erosion of the genre's boundaries. Imaginary journeys, travelogues with little description of the actual journey, arm-chair journeys, or journeys woven into memoirs

³⁹⁰ These are some of the works mentioned by Chernyshevsky: N.S. Vsevolozhsky's *Puteshestvie v Mal'tu, Siziliuu, Italiuu, Yuzhnuuu Franziiu i Parizh* [Journey to Malta, Sicily, Italy, Southern France and Paris]; N.A. Popov's *Puteshestvie v Chernogoriiu* [Journey to Montenegro]; I.M. Simonov, *Zapiski i vospominaniia o puteshestvii po Anglii, Franzii, Bel'gii i Germanii* [Notes and Memoirs of a Journey Through England, France, Belgium and Germany]; M.P. Pogodin, *God v chuzhikh kraiaxh* [A Year in Foreign Lands]; V.D. Iakovlev's *Italiia* [Italy], etc. Nikolai Chernyshevsky, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v shestandzati tomakh*, vol. 4 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1948), 222-3.

or bigger narrative contexts not only grew away from the earlier rather formulaic conventions of the genre and closer to a novel. They have rendered these conventions formalistic by turning the actual journey into a narrative strategy, a means of organizing the plot and a pretext for expressing the author's political or aesthetical views.³⁹¹

The discussion of the nineteenth century Russian travel writing would have been incomplete without the mentioning of three important travelogues written in the second half of the century: Ivan Goncharov's *Frigate "Pallas"*, (1858), Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* (1863) and Anton Chekhov's *From Siberia and Sakhalin Island* (1893). All of the three could not be more different in style, purpose, and the locales described, as well as in the ideological stance of the traveling narrator.

Ivan Goncharov, Frigate "Pallas" (1858)

Goncharov was and remains one of the best traveled among the Russian literati. In October 1852 he joined the round-the world naval expedition as a secretary of Admiral Putiatin. Over the next two and a half years (1852-1855), Goncharov visited England, South Africa, Java, Singapore, the Philippines, Hong Kong, China and Japan and crossed Siberia on his way back to the European part of Russia when the course of the expedition was interrupted by the Crimean war. Throughout the entire journey Goncharov kept a log journal and frequently corresponded with his friends at home. Both the observations that he began to put down during the expedition and his many letters served as a preliminary draft for the would-be travel notes, that were first

³⁹¹ Tiime, G.A., "O fenomene russkogo puteshestvia v Evropu. Genezis i literaturny zhanr." [On the phenomenon of Russian Travel to Europe: Genesis and the Literary Genre]. *Russkaia literatura*, no.3 (2007): 3-18.

serialized in journals, before being collected in a two-volume travelogue in 1858 following insistent requests from Goncharov's enthusiastic readers. The 1879 third edition also contained an afterworld entitled "Twenty Years Later", that filled in the details of the 1854 Japanese earthquake that had destroyed one of the Russian frigates.

Goncharov's travel account is divided into chapters, each dealing with a particular location, dated like diary entries and addressed to his friends. The epistolary form of the travelogue helped justify the author's preoccupation with himself and his often ironic, informal attitude.³⁹² Despite the formal devices of travel writing employed in his narrative, it reads like an adventure novel, with ample descriptions, a set of well-drawn characters, dialogues and a consistent plot. Critics are variously defining *Frigate "Pallas"* either as a "geographical novel" (V. Nedzevitzky), or "literary travel" and "pre-novel" (E. Krasnoschekova)³⁹³: it is clearly more documentary and factitious than a typical fiction prose, yet at the same time, Goncharov's account succeeds in breaking the formulaic and citational conventions of travel writing by foregrounding what he calls his own "poetic, epic voice."³⁹⁴ The sensitive and attentive narrator of this travelogue is fashioned in the liking of a literary character, whose moods and musings are at least as important as are his adventures

³⁹² «Форма письма оказалась необходимой для того, чтобы мотивировать нахождение путешественника в центре повествования и его домашнее отношение к самому себе» Viktor Shklovsky, "Goncharov kak avtor "Fregata 'Pallada'" ["Goncharov as the author of frigate Pallas] in *Zametki of proze russkikh klassikov. O proizvedeniakh Pushkina, Gogolia, Lermontova, Turgeneva, Goncharova, Tolstogo, Chekhova.* (Moscow, 1955), 231.

³⁹³ V.A.Nedzevitzky, "Geograficheskii roman ("Fregat 'Pallada'") in *Romany Goncharova* ["Geographical Novel (Frigate "Pallas") in *Goncharov's Novels*] (Moscow, 1996); Elena Krasnoschekova, "I.A.Goncharov i N.M.Karamzin (Fregat 'Pallada')", Conference paper, Ulianovsk, (1994): 91-102.

³⁹⁴ In his study of *Frigate 'Pallas'* Boris Engelgardt questioned the factitiousness of Goncharov's record. He undertook a comparative reading of the documentary sources related to Putiatin's expedition and of Goncharov's record and concluded that the *Frigate* should be read first and furthestmost as an example of literary prose writing, and not just as a record of a journey. B.Engelgardt, "Fregat "Pallada"" in *Literaturnoe nasledstvo* [Literary Legacy] (Moscow: 1935), 22-24, referenced in Elena Krasnoschekova, *I.A.Goncharov: Mir tvorchestva* [I.A.Goncharov and his creative world] (St. Petersburg: "Pushkinskii fond", 1997), 134-219.

and who abandons any pretence for objectivity to offer his own, unmediated opinions and impressions. Parenthetically, the mid-nineteenth century literary critics that were concerned with the decline of Russian travelogue, usually lamented precisely the absence of a vivid, charismatic and open-minded narrator who could entertain the readers (by then well used to the factual; descriptions of the foreign countries) by inscribing the mundane details of the trip and other personal idiosyncrasies into the lifeless and rigid framework of travel account. In the preface to the third edition of the travelogue, Goncharov “pleads guilty” for talking so often about himself as to become the reader’s ever-present companion, and for being unable to completely absent himself from the narrative.³⁹⁵ This disclaimer seems to imply the exceptionality of such an ego-centric modality of travelogue. Indeed, Goncharov’s skillful shift between different rhetorical registers – confessional, dialogical, reflective, documentary, etc. holographs the figure of a traveling narrator whose auto-reflexivity had thus far been unprecedented for Russian travel writing.

The obvious literary precursor often referred to in relation to *Frigate “Pallas”* is Karamzin’s sentimental leisure traveler, albeit the latter is obviously much more stylized to fit his Sternian whimsical posture, and much more dependent on the literary and aesthetic conventions of his time for the modes of looking at/seeing the world, and of expressing his sentiments. Equally important, for all the similarity between the epistolary structure of both accounts, is the temporal relationship between the actual journey and its retelling. Karamzin’s *Letters of a Russian Traveler* were written after the journey was completed, although some parts were drafted even before Karamzin had actually left home. Goncharov’s voluminous account is based on the

³⁹⁵ «Пересматривая ныне вновь и вновь этот дневник своих воспоминаний, автор чувствует сам, и охотно винится в том, что он часто говорит о себе, являясь везде, так сказать, неотлучным спутником читателя.» Ivan Goncharov, *Sobranie sochinenii v vos'mi tomakh*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1952), 6.

authentic letters that he had been sending to his friends from various seaports.

Goncharov's innovation, then, is in the dual focus of his lens that captures both the outside world and the inner self of the narrator while conveying the impression of immediacy and intimacy.

What brings the two travelers closer together is their "Russianness", the ease with which the authors combine a cosmopolitan outlook with an ability to assert their national identity confidently, yet respectfully. A prominent scholar of Goncharov, to whose study of Karamzin I have referred in the previous chapter, Elena Krasnoschekova also offers a comparative reading of the two texts, while suggesting that "Goncharov's Universe, the creation of which followed Karamzin's "Europe," was no less cohesive, but more global due to the sheer scale of the [represented reality]", and it was also rooted in Goncharov's vision of both contemporaneous Russian and world history.³⁹⁶ Indeed, the scope of the journey and the diversity of impressions that Goncharov had collected during the expedition allowed him to probe questions of global historiosophical significance, and to consider Russia's own pressing issues within the broader dialectics of civilization and traditionalism, progress and backwardness. Hence, Goncharov's thoughtful descriptions of seemingly remote societies ultimately offer glimpses of Russia's prospective historical path as part of the increasingly interconnected world.

The relationship between global and local, foreign and native is central to Goncharov's inquisitive gaze in the *Frigate*. He consistently reminds his readers that the goal he pursues in his journey is to establish a "parallel between things foreign and

³⁹⁶ «Гончаровская Вселенная, созданная вслед карамзинской "Европе", выросла в образ не менее цельный, но более глобальный и в силу масштабности картины, и благодаря глубокой укорененности концепции в современной писателю русской и мировой истории.» Elena Krasnoschekova, "Fregat "Pallada": putshestvie kak zhanr" [*Frigate "Pallas": journey as a genre*] in *Russkaia literatura*, no. 4 (1992): 30.

one's own" [*«искомый результат путешествия – параллель между чужим и своим»*]. For instance, contemplating the many technical inventions and comforts that he discovers in England, Goncharov draws a portrait of a "typical Englishman" and his daily routine wondering whether "life has really become more comfortable since these comforts became available?" If convenient it did become, suggests Goncharov, it is also more mechanical and less spontaneous, turning a "typical Englishman" into an automaton, akin to the many devices he employs and the machinery of the socio-economic system of which he is but a thinking cog:

...content with the thought that he had lived through his day comfortably, that he had seen many interesting things, that he now has ... steamed chickens, that he had sold profitably a shipment of cotton blankets on stock market, that he had sold profitably his voice in the parliament, [the Englishman] sits down to have a diner. When rising unsteadily from the table he hangs special locks on his closet and bureau, takes off his boots with the help of a special device, puts on an alarm clock and goes to sleep. The entire machine is falling asleep.³⁹⁷

From Britain, Goncharov's thought quickly moves back to the native realm, where "a typical Russian", much resembling his famous Illiya Illyich Oblomov is sleeping into late hours, indifferent to any call of duty. When at last he wakes up, it takes another hour to fetch the missing servants who arrange his dress, and others who serve his late breakfast. This "Oblomov" is in no hurry and takes time to have a long plentiful meal, etc. The rest of the day passes in idle conversations and daydreaming, amidst the disorderly household and poorly governed estate, the owner's laziness corrupting his family and idle servants. "And many years pass in this manner, and hundreds of rubles are wasted on "something", but this lethargic slumber and apathy continue to engulf Russia that knows not the European pragmatism, robust activism and order. This

³⁹⁷ «...покойный сознанием, что он прожил день со всеми удобствами, что видел много замечательного, что у него есть... паровые цыплята, что он выгодно продал на бирже партию бумажных одеял, а в парламенте свой голос, он садиться обедать и, встав из-за стола не совсем твердо, вешает в шкафу и бюро неотпираемые замки, снимает с себя машинкой сапоги, заводит будильник и ложится спать. Вся машина засыпает.» I. Goncharov, *Sobranie sochineniii*, 67.

superimposition of the familiar onto the strange and incessant comparison is characteristic of Goncharov-the traveler, for he admits to be seeing “familiar roofs, windows, faces and customs in front of [his] eyes” wherever his voyage takes him:

Once I see something new, I immediately relate it [to the life back home.] [...] We have grown such deep roots at home, that no matter how far and for how long I travel, I will take the soil of my native Oblomovka on the soles of my shoes and no oceans would be able to wash it off! ³⁹⁸

Elsewhere he observes the Negroes (sic!) playing cards and recognizes both the game itself and the way the players were arguing and fighting: “just like street vendors in Moscow or Petersburg that sell buns and rolls!”, etc. ³⁹⁹

The opposition between “waking” and “sleep” (and also “infancy” vs. “maturity”, “isolationism” vs. “expansion”) thus metaphorically organizes Goncharov’s view of the relationship between capitalist economic expansion and the somnolence of the more “primitive” societies. Approaching the Cape Verde Islands, near the coast of western Africa, Goncharov records an overwhelming sense of lassitude and stasis that confronts him here:

Everything [here] is sleeping, everything is growing dumb. It matters not that you are here for the first time for you can see that this is not a temporary repose [...] but a deathly unshakable stillness, that never changes.[...] This eternal silence, eternal numbness, eternal sleep surrounded by the vast desert of an ocean is truly horrifying. [...] A man flees this realm of slumber that binds human energy, reason, and feeling and turns all the living creatures into ... stone. ⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁸ «Виноват: перед глазами все еще мелькают родные и знакомые крыши, окна, лица, обычаи. Увижу новое, чужое и сейчас в уме прикину на свой аршин. ... Мы так глубоко вросли корнями у себя дома, что куда и как надолго бы я ни заехал, я всюду унесу почву родной Обломовки на ногах, и никакие океаны не смоют ее!» Ibid, 73.

³⁹⁹ Ibid, 119.

⁴⁰⁰ «Все спит, все немеет. Нужды нет, что вы в первый раз здесь, но вы видите, что это не временный отдых, награда деятельности, но покой мертвый, непробуждающийся, что картина эта никогда не меняется. ... Ужасно это вечное безмолвие, вечное немение, вечный сон среди неизмеримой водной пустыни. ... Человек бежит из этого царства дремоты, которая сковывает энергию, ум, чувство и обращает все живое в подобие камня. ... [Г]лядя на эту безжизненность и безмолвие, ощущаешь что-то похожее на ужас или на тоску. Ничто не шевелится тут; все молчит под блеском будто разгневанных небес. » Ibid, 114-115.

Stillness as death is a common trope of “Orientalist” discourse and so is the perception of the “primitive Other” as numb and stagnant. However, in order to salvage Goncharov’s travelogue from post-colonial deconstructions, it is important to look beyond the immediate referential level at the author’s declared objective: his search for a “parallel between things foreign and one’s own. In this sense, incipiently present behind the exotic scenery described in the *Frigate* is another object of the author’s mental gaze - his country - that turns the foreign into the receptacle for his thoughts about the native.

The reading of Goncharov’s travel account alongside his fiction helps to expose this telescopic vision. For instance, the juxtaposition of passivity and activism is also at the core of *Oblomov* (1857), which Goncharov had commenced before joining the Putiatin’s expedition and which he completed two years after his return. The “overture” of the novel – “Oblomov’s dream” - was written in 1849 and bears a striking resemblance to the tableau of the tropical lethargy that Goncharov presents in *Frigate*. In it Illiya Illiyich Oblomov is having a dream of himself as a little boy spending summer in his family estate. The very landscape of the area reflects the pastoral tranquility of these provincial backwaters: “there is no sea, no mountain cliffs, no mountain precipices, no dense forests – nothing grandiose, wild or gloomy. And what would we need it for, this wilderness or grandiosity?”⁴⁰¹ Although nature is kind to the inhabitants of this region, they show little passion or curiosity for anything – be it work, study, or travel. Heavy slumber is their preferred pastime, the only “true passion” shared by both peasants and the landowners:

It is the middle of a hot day [...]. The air no longer moves and hangs still. Neither trees nor water move; an unwavering silence lays over the village and the field – everything seems to have died out. [...] A dead silence reigns in the

⁴⁰¹ «Нет ... там моря, нет высоких скал и пропастей, нет дремучих лесов – нет ничего грандиозного, дикого и угрюмого. Да и зачем оно, это дикое и грандиозное?» Ivan Goncharov, *Sobranie sochinenii v vos'mi tomakh*, vol. 4 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1953), 102.

house. It is the hour of the afternoon nap...One could walk through the entire house and not meet a single soul. [...] That was an all-engulfing all-conquering sleep, a true likeness of death. Everything is dead, but from each nook and corner there comes snoring of diverse pitch and tone.⁴⁰²

Interestingly, not only Goncharov superimposes the image of the sleepy Oblomovka on the stagnant *tableau* of tropical sluggishness, but also he himself assumes the typically Oblomovean features that distinguish him from the typically active tourists and bashing explorers. Goncharov is decisively passive and somewhat too cautious; he prefers to observe rather than to actively participate, remaining comfortably ensconced in his memories of home and in the little “Russian arch” on board the expedition ship. Therein, perhaps, lies the attractiveness of this all-too human and all-too national traveler for Goncharov’s audiences since he did not overwhelm the staying-at-home reader with heroic self-dramatization and daring escapades.

Goncharov is far from Rousseaudian romantization of traditional cultures, but neither is he contemptuous of them, idealizing neither the European colonizers, nor the colonial societies. In fact, his travelogue consistently rejects Romantic clichés of “exotica” by then still deeply entrenched in travel literature. Goncharov’s outlook is decisively rationalist and spared any ambivalence towards the effects of modernization: the economic expansion of the technologically superior west is unavoidable; the question is whether international trade would bring not only commodities, but also true progress and “enlightenment of the spirit.” Contemplating the stillness and lavishness of tropical nature, Goncharov foresees the arrival of the “mighty knight” who “would wake this sleeping beauty to life by bringing her active

⁴⁰² «Полдень, день знойный... Воздух перестал струиться и весит без движения. Ни дерево, ни вода не шелухнутся; над деревней и полем лежит невозмутимая тишина – все как будто вымерло... И в доме воцарилась мертвая тишина. Наступил час всеобщего послеобеденного сна. ...Можно было пройти по всему дому насквозь и не встретить ни души... Это был какой-то всепоглощающий, ничем непобедимый сон, истинное подобие смерти. Все мертво, только изо всех углов несется разнообразное храпенье на все тоны и лады.» Ibid, 116-117.

labor, arts and civilization.»⁴⁰³ The propelling force behind progress, he argues, should no longer be the pursuit of riches and *opulence*, but the quest for the broader availability of *comfort*:

The purpose of international trade is to make all these commodities cheaper and to make sure that all the facilities and comforts that are common in one's native country are available anywhere and everywhere. This is rational and just and it would be ridiculous to doubt the success of this mission. Trade has grown to be truly global and continues to expand, bringing the fruit of civilization to the distant corners of the world.⁴⁰⁴

One of these “distant corners” – the Loo-Choo islands – reveals itself to the Russian travelers as an idyllic relic from the ancient world that still lives in a Golden Age. Goncharov is amazed by the beauty and peacefulness of the islands, and by the developed material culture of the inhabitants. He is told by the locals that the Americans have “taken the island under their patronage [«*взяли под свое покровительство*»], and anticipates that this “new civilization” would alter the life of the island community. Through conversations with the Christian missionary Goncharov gets a soberer description of the local mores: the Loo-Choo people, whom he just had praised for their diligence, modesty and orderliness, are said to be drinkers, gamblers and scoundrels. Gradually, Goncharov abandons his earlier enthusiasm for the “idyll, Golden Age and Odyssey” [«*идиллия, золотой век и Одиссея!*»]. He argues that the well-developed material culture alone does not suffice to create a moral and reflexive human being:

Theirs is not a dirty, vulgar, lazy and violent life of savages, and neither is it a true life of spirit: there are no traces of enlightened mode of being here.... The cultivated field, the cleanness of the huts, the gardens, piles of fruits and

⁴⁰³ «Я припоминал сказки об окаменелом царстве. Вот оно: придет богатырь, принесет труд, искусство, цивилизацию, разбудит и эту спящую от века красавицу, природу, и даст ей жизнь.» Ibid, 115.

⁴⁰⁴ «Задача всемирной торговли и состоит в том, чтобы удешевить эти предметы, сделать доступными везде и всюду те средства и удобства, к которым человек привык у себя дома. Это разумно и справедливо; смешно сомневаться в будущем успехе. Торговля распространилась всюду и продолжает распространяться, разнося по всем углам мира плоды цивилизации.» Ibid, 286.

vegetables [...] – everything speaks of the highest degree of material well-being, [but also of the fact] that [the islanders’] concerns, passions and interests remain focused on their few everyday needs; that the mind and spirit are still engulfed by the sweet slumber of a new-born... This life has approached the threshold, behind which there begins the realm of the spirit but it did not go any further...⁴⁰⁵

The above quoted passage belongs to several historiosophical and ideological discourses at once that organize Goncharov’s geopolitical thought throughout the book. Elsewhere he laments the backwardness of Japan, which he believes to have been thrown into stupor and ignorance by its politics of isolationism. Explicitly identifying with the “enlightened part of humanity,” Goncharov speaks of the Japanese as children, whose “growth” was hindered by the self-imposed seclusion and parochialism and who need to confide themselves to the patronage of the “mature” nations [*«как детям отдаться под руководство взрослых»*], such as the Russians or Americans.⁴⁰⁶ On the one hand, by infantilising Loo-Choo or Japan Goncharov reproduces the vision of a “historical queue” constructed by the nineteenth century western theories of social evolutionism that imagined “more primitive” societies as lingering at the back of a linear evolutionary vector, and the more historically “evolved” and “mature” ones - at its front. On the other hand, the dichotomy of spirit and matter is a staple of Russian cultural and theological discourses, which includes both domestic and imported (i.e. German idealism and romanticism, etc.) elements. Goncharov is rather ambivalent about the implications of western expansion to the island. He seems to place hopes on religion that “humbly awaits the awakening of the infants, rays of lights and a cross in hand”, but he knows of the mutual animosity

⁴⁰⁵ «Это не жизнь дикарей, грязная, грубая, ленивая и буйная, но и не царство жизни духовной: нет следов просветленного бытия. Возделанные поля, чистота хижин, сады, груды плодов и овощей, ... - все свидетельствовало, что жизнь доведена трудом до крайней степени материального благосостояния; что самые заботы, страсти, интересы не выходят из круга немногих житейских потребностей; что область ума и духа цепенеет еще в сладком младенческом сне, как в первобытных языческих пастушеских царствах; что жизнь эта дошла до того рубежа, где начинается царство духа, и не пошла далее...» Ivan Goncharov, *Sobranie sochinenii v vos'mi tomakh*, vol 3. (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1952), 198.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid, 48.

between the Christian missionaries and the inhabitants of Loo-Choo that makes the possibility of peaceful conversion unlikely. At the same time, the influx of foreign merchants is unavoidable, for “the people of the United States with cotton and woolen fabrics, guns, cannon and other tools/weapons of modern civilization” are already “waiting at the door.”⁴⁰⁷

The pun of weapon/tool [«орудия цивилизации»] is hardly accidental. While in Manila, Goncharov was discussing with a Portuguese bishop the prospects of Christian missions in Japan. When the Russian traveler expressed hope that the spread of Christianity would work to open Japan to the Europeans, the bishop replied: “A coups des canons, monsieur, a coup des canons!” [“With the help of canons, monsieur, with the help of canons!”]⁴⁰⁸ Russia, too, had obvious commercial interests in the region, which it planned to carry out by diplomatic means propped by military force, although by then it was losing some of its confidence because of humiliating defeats in the Crimean war. Admiral Putiatin carried out secret negotiations with the Japanese government regarding a trade agreement between the two countries. Japan was simultaneously negotiating with the United States that threatened to shell its shores lest the agreement was signed. Ultimately Russia had to withdraw. In his description of Japan Goncharov clearly speaks from the position of power and of geopolitical aspirations that had to be pursued by all means necessary: “The Russian bayonet, although *for now still* peaceful and harmless, is shining in the rays of Japanese sun, is for now a guest here... *Avis au Japon!*”⁴⁰⁹ (emphasis mine.)

⁴⁰⁷ «Но все готово: у одних дверей стоит религия с крестом и лучами света, и кротко ждет пробуждения младенцев; у других – «люди Соединенных Штатов», с бумажными и шерстяными тканями, ружьями, пушками и прочими орудиями новейшей цивилизации...» Ibid, 198.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid, 255.

⁴⁰⁹ «Русский штык, хотя еще мирный, безобидный, гостем пока, но сверкнул уже при лучах японского солнца на японском берегу раздалось *вперед?* *Avis au Japon!*» Ibid, 48.

Goncharov's journey home, his four-month "Odyssey" as he calls it, took him from the coast of the Pacific Ocean through Siberia all the way to Petersburg. Contemplating the vast distances he had covered during this physically tolling trip, Goncharov defines himself as a real "traveler", a rarity in the age of modern means of transportation that had created a new kind of traveling persona – a "passer-by" [«*проезжий*»].⁴¹⁰ Railways and improved roads, he says, have made traveling almost effortless: people no longer need to "conquer" the space and to suffer discomfort; they pass through the surroundings without as much as looking at them through the window of their wagon-lit. Traveling in Siberia, however, with its enormous unpopulated landscapes and rudimentary infrastructure brings back the real meaning of the world "travel" (from the French *travail* - "work" and "torment".) Yet, few travelers come to Siberia to explore it, most pass through it [«*проезжают пространства, не замечая их*»] on the way someplace else. Thus, Goncharov sets out to describe the living conditions of Russian settlers (some of them Old Believers) and indigenous tribes, in a sense, extending the documentary, quasi-ethnographic thrust of his travel notes to his native soil.

The sense of distantiation implicit in Goncharov's description of Asia or South Africa that are represented in a series of *tableaux vivants* on the verge of being invaded and altered by the westerners, persists in the chapters written about Siberia. His perception of this semi-isolated territory seems to be predicated upon the idea of distance, both spatial, and temporal. Like the tropical lands overcome by silence and stasis, the areas traversed by Goncharov in the Far East and in Siberia similarly seem to linger in prehistory, where distances and time cannot be assessed by a common measure:

⁴¹⁰ Ibid, 398.

One is crossing these numb deserts with a heavy heart. I wish I could ask these surrounding mountains when they and everything around us first saw the light of day; I wish I could ask something from someone; I wish I could talk...with our guide, the Yakute. If you ask him the question you have learnt in the Yakutsk language: “kas’ birosta yam?” (How many miles are left to the station?), he will reply, but you will not understand: either “gra-gra” (far) or “chuges” (soon), and afterwards you continue to ride in complete silence....⁴¹¹

Here, the failure to communicate is caused not so much by the lack of common language, as by the differences in the mental structures of the modern traveler and the “primitive” Yakute hunter as perceived by the “modern”.

The earlier pages of this Siberian Odyssey convey a palpable sense of anxiety and melancholy: not knowing what to expect Goncharov expects the worst, although his fears are rarely confirmed. Not only does he regard the indigenous inhabitants of Siberia as a more primitive “Other”, but he also ascribes some animal attributes to them. At first, he believes the Yakute yurtas to look like animal burrows [*«я думал хуже о юртах, воображая их чем-то вроде звериных нор»*] but as it turns out later, they almost look like traditional Russian *изба/izba* [hut] only cleaner. The Yakutes and the Chukchas wear animal skins and furs, and their women are often undistinguishable from men if not for the earrings. At night, the Yakute oarsmen make bear-like roars to alert the night guards on the pier who light the fire for the late boat. The local tribes give to the locales the “terrible” names that resemble some strange animal sounds and are completely unpronounceable to the Russian travelers.⁴¹²

Alongside zoological metaphors, Goncharov again speaks about the indigenous tribes

⁴¹¹ «Тоска сжимает сердце, когда приезжаешь эти немые пустыни. Спросил бы стоящие по сторонам горы, когда они и все окружающее увидело свет; спросил бы что-нибудь кого-нибудь, поговорил хоть бы с нашим проводником, якутом: сделаешь заученный по-якутски вопрос: «*кась бироста ям?*» (сколько верст до станции). Он и скажет, да не поймешь, или *гра-гра* ответит (далеко), или *чугес* (скоро, тотчас), и опять едешь целые часы молча. ...Надо быть отчаянным поэтом, чтоб на тысячах верст наслаждаться величием пустынного и скукой собственного молчания, или дикарем, чтоб считать эти горы, камни, деревья за мебель и украшение своего жилища, медведей – за товарищей, а дичь – за провизию.» Ibid, 345.

⁴¹² Ibid, 342, 353.

as “savage children of the humankind” [«дикие младенцы человечества»] that are waiting to be embraced by the giant Russian family [«с огромным русским семейством слить горсть иноплеменных детей»].⁴¹³

Later in his journey, Goncharov makes acquaintance with Russian settlers, traders and missionaries who alter his earlier perception of Siberia and of its inhabitants. Through these encounters Siberia emerges as a unique frontier country, where Russians come into contact with the local tribes, absorb some of their culture and language and spread their own:

I have learnt that life here is not still and sleepy, that it does not at all resemble the usual life in the provinces. I have learnt that there are many heroic deeds hidden in the activity [of the local Russians] that would be publicized widely elsewhere but which are silenced in our press, out of modesty.⁴¹⁴

According to Goncharov, Russians (that in Siberia are regarded as “Europeans”) bring with them agriculture, trade, cattle-breeding and Christianity. A staunch proponent of enlightenment, Goncharov polemicizes with the authors of other travelogues who fear that the arrival of the Russians would corrupt and ultimately destroy that traditional lifestyle of Siberia’s indigenous tribes. “One cannot remain savage forever”, asserts Goncharov, and praises the Russian settlers, merchants and missionaries in Siberia who do not bring vodka with them (!) not to accustom the locals to hard drinking but, instead, compile grammar books and writing systems for the vernacular languages, translate the Gospels, etc. He speaks about the many governmental officials who undertake physically tolling journeys into the wilderness of Siberian taiga, propelled by the sole desire to “enlighten the savages” and “make them live like humans do”

⁴¹³ Ibid, 387.

⁴¹⁴ «Но кто бы ожидал, что в их скромной, и, по-видимому, неподвижной жизни было бы не меньше движения и трудов, нежели во всяких путешествиях? Я узнал, что жизнь их не неподвижная, не сонная, что она нисколько не похожа на обыкновенную провинциальную жизнь; что в сумме здешней деятельности таится масса подвигов, о которых громко кричали и печатали бы в других местах, а у нас, из скромности, молчат.» Ibid, 388-9.

[«вывести их из дикости, заставить жить по-человечески»]. He contrasts the noble Russian merchants and explorers with the Americans or Englishmen on their tropical safaris who brag about their daring and hardiness, unlike their Russian counterparts who remain modestly anonymous. There is no profit or gain to be held from their civilizing activity, he asserts, [«все даром, бескорыстно, с них (с чукчей – КР.) взять нечего»] but further in the chapter he mentions fur trade and gold mines that attract settlers and merchants to the region. In place of corruption and suppression of traditional lifestyles feared by the authors of other travelogues, Goncharov sees integration and cohabitation between the “colonizers” and the colonized, which is for him a sign of Russia’s unique civilizing mission, very different from the European colonial incursion into Asia that he had observed during his voyage [«зародыш не Европы в Азии, а русский, самобытный пример цивилизации» emphasis in the original].⁴¹⁵

Anton Chekhov, From Siberia and Island Sakhalin (1890-1894)

Goncharov’s portrayal of Siberia presents it as a land of opportunity, ample resources and unbending human characters, a place where Russia had a chance for a “fresh start” as a bearer of civilization and enlightenment. His is one of the many contrasting images of the region that had been circulating in Russian society since the sixteenth century.⁴¹⁶ Equally prevalent was and still is the perception of Siberia as a place of exile, imprisonment and hard labor that had been given a horrific new twist under the Soviet regime. In 1854, when Goncharov began his return trip home, another Russian writer, Fyodor Dostoevsky, was completing his penal sentence in one of Siberian

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ For the wide range of popular and cultural perceptions of Siberia, see, for example, Galya Dement and Yuri Slezkine, eds., *Between Heaven and Hell: The Myth of Siberia in Russian Culture* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1993).

prison stockades near Omsk that he described in *Notes from the Dead House* (1860). Five years after Goncharov's journey across Siberia, the island of Sakhalin was turned into a yet another place of penal servitude. Crossing Siberia 45 years after Goncharov, Chekhov not only observed the reality of Russian colonization of the region described by his literary predecessor, but also examined its dark side - the situation of the many exiles and convicts.⁴¹⁷

There is another important literary coincidence in the date and route of Chekhov's travel. He embarked on his journey to Sakhalin in 1890, one hundred years after the publication of Aleksandr Radischev's *Journey from Petersburg to Moscow*. More than that, Chekhov's itinerary through Siberia coincided with Radischev's route to the place of his imprisonment in Illimsk to which the latter was condemned by the empress Catherine II after the release of his "travelogue." The leitmotif of Chekhov's description of Sakhalin penal colonies echoes the opening lines of Radischev's *Journey* almost verbatim ("I looked around myself and my soul was wounded by the suffering of humankind" [*«Я взглянул окрест меня — душа моя страданиями человечества уязвлена стала...»*]): "I see the utmost, extreme degree of man's humiliation by man" [*«Я вижу крайнюю, предельную степень унижения человека, дальше которой нельзя уже идти»*].

A lot has been written about the reasons behind Chekhov's journey.⁴¹⁸ Shortly before his trip he wrote a necrology to Nikolay Przhevalsky (1838-1888), in which he talks about *подвижники/podvizhniki*— selfless devotees of a cause or an idea. To Chekhov, Przhevalsky was obviously a fine example of such *podvizhnichestvo*; having

⁴¹⁷ To add a yet another literary coincidence: one of the few political convicts that Chekhov met on Sakhalin was Ivan Yuvachev ("Miroliubov"), a member of the People's Will and father of the future absurdist poet and playwright Daniil Kharmis (1905-1942).

⁴¹⁸ See, for example, Donald Rayfield, *Anton Chekhov: A Life* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University press, 2000.); Janet Malcolm, *Reading Chekhov: A Critical Journey* (Granta Publications, 2004); Ernest J. Simmons, Ernest, *Chekhov: A Biography* (University of Chicago Press, 1962), etc.

dedicated his life to the exploration of earth's most remote regions, such as Tibet, Central Asia, and Siberia. "In our sick times", charges Chekhov, "when the European societies are plagued by laziness, boredom and lack of principles", "when even the best of us are indulging their passivity and corruption with the lack of definite aim or goal, *podvizhniki* are needed like sun."⁴¹⁹ Both in the necrology to Przhevalsky and in his later fiction, Chekhov develops the notion of ethical responsibility realized through practical action:

[W]e neither see nor hear those who suffer and that, which is frightening in life happens somewhere behind the curtain. Everything is quiet and calm and it is only the numb statistics that protests [that silence]: this many people have gone mad, this many buckets [of vodka] have been drunk, this many children have died of malnutrition. [...] There should be a man with a little hammer in his hands standing behind each happy person's door and reminding him about the miserable ones with the knocking of his hammer.⁴²⁰

Frustrated search for the real vocation and for personal integrity (for what Nikolay Stepanovich from Chekhov's "A Dreary Story" calls "the general idea"/«общая идея») haunts the characters of most of Chekhov's plays and short stories.⁴²¹ They

⁴¹⁹ «В наше большое время, когда европейскими обществами обуяла лень, скука жизни и неверие, когда всюду в странной взаимной комбинации царят нелюбовь к жизни и страх смерти, когда даже лучшие люди сидят сложа руки, оправдывая свою лень и свой разврат отсутствием определенной цели в жизни, подвижники нужны как солнце.» Anton Chekhov, *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh*, vol. 10, 390.

⁴²⁰ «Но мы не видим и не слышим тех, которые страдают, и то, что страшно в жизни происходит где-то за кулисами. Все тихо, спокойно и протестует только одна немая статистика: столько-то с ума сошло, столько-то ведер выпито, столько-то детей погибло от недоедания...Надо, чтобы за дверью каждого довольного, счастливого человека стоял кто-нибудь с молоточком и постоянно напоминал бы стуком, что есть несчастные...» Anton Chekhov, "Kryzhovnik" ["Gooseberry"] in *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh*, vol. 8 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1956), 306-307.

⁴²¹ "My passion for science, in my desire to live [...] and my striving to know myself, all my thoughts, feelings and judgments that I make about everything do not contain any common, general idea that would tie them all together. Every feeling and every idea live in me separately and a skillful analyst won't be able to discover what is called a general idea or a god of a living person in all of my judgments about science, theater or literature [...].
«В моем пристрастии к науке, в моем желании жить [...] и в стремлении познать самого себя, во всех мыслях, чувствах и понятиях, которые я составляю обо всем, нет чего-то общего, что связывало бы все это в одно целое. Каждое чувство и каждая мысль живут во мне особняком, и во всех моих суждениях о науке, театре, литературе [...], даже самый искусный аналитик не

live in the conditional tense, longing for the endless unrealized potentialities, for the life that is always “elsewhere,” like the three Prozorov sisters who are yearning to leave for Moscow, yet never do.⁴²² Few of Chekhov’s characters actually work; most are preoccupied with passionate polemics or daydreaming, lamenting boredom and pining for a more active and socially useful application for their ambitions, for a fuller, more meaningful mode of being. In fact, boredom or ennui [«скука»] is, perhaps, among Chekhov’s most frequently employed topoi and it appears in the titles of at least two of his stories – “The Dross of Life” (1886, «Скука Жизни») and “A Dreary Story” (1889 «Скучная история»). Such persistent use renders it a cultural constant of sorts for the description of the turn of the century Russian life, a marker of an ideological crises and dissatisfaction.

The juxtaposition of intelligentsia’s abstract narcissistic good will with the practical creative effort is the central thesis of Chekhov’s necrology to Przhevalsky, in which he explicitly contrasts “the people that out of boredom write mediocre novels, useless projects and cheap dissertations, [...] the skeptics, mystics, psychos, Jesuits, philosophers, liberals and conservatives” on the one hand and on the other, people like Przhevalsky, pursuers of “clear goal, heroic deeds and faith.”⁴²³ These passionate philippics can have both an idiosyncratic, personal, and more general reading. On the one hand, it sums up the peripetia of Russian public discourse in this period that

найдет того, что называется общей идеей или богом живого человека.» Anton Chekhov, “Skuchnaya istoriia” [A Boring Story] in *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh*, vol. 6, 324.

⁴²² Petr Vail and Aleksandr Genis, *Rodnaya rech* in *Sobranie sochionenii v dvukh tomakh*, vol.1 (Ekaterinburg: Y-Faktoria, 2004), 261.

⁴²³ «...подвижники нужны, как солнце. Составляя самый поэтический и жизнерадостный элемент общества, они возбуждают, утешают и облагораживают. Их личности – это живые документы, указывающие обществу, что кроме людей, ведущих споры об оптимизме и пессимизме, пишущих от скуки неважные повести, ненужные проекты и дешевые диссертации, развратничающих во имя отрицания жизни и лгущих ради куска хлеба, что кроме скептиков, мистиков, психопатов, иезуитов, философов, либералов и консерваторов, есть еще люди иного порядка, люди подвига, веры, и ясно-осознанной цели.» Anton Chekhov, *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh*, vol. 10, 390.

following the crises of 1881 was increasingly preoccupied with the reassessment of intelligentsia's attitudes, its social and political role and responsibility, veering away from the subversive rhetoric of the previous two decades towards the practical routine work advocated by the proponents of the so-called "small deeds theory" [*«теория малых дел»*]. Chekhov's distancing from the public ideological debates of his time had made him a constant target for some literary critics who denounced his "political nonpartisanship" and "social apathy."⁴²⁴

On the other hand, declared skepticism towards empty intellectualism betrays Chekhov's own frequently expressed insecurity about the usefulness of his literary work, which he half-mockingly regarded as an act of adultery with his "lover" literature and betrayal of his "lawful wife," medicine. In the passage from the necrology cited above, Chekhov similarly contrasts the positive types and role models generated by literature and those real ones, created by life itself.⁴²⁵ Elsewhere he claims that although he does not expect to make a valuable contribution either to science or literature, the expedition would mean half-a year of intense mental and physical effort:

Even if the trip gives me nothing, but can it really be so that throughout the entire journey there won't be two or three days that I would be remembering throughout my whole life with joy or bitterness? [...] Not longer than 25 – 30 years ago our Russian people that were exploring Sakhalin were accomplishing amazing feats worthy of admiration and worship; but we do not need that, we do not know these people and keep sitting duck within the four walls lamenting the imperfection of the divine creation of man.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁴ In March 1890, for instance, the journal *Russkaia Mysl'* referred to Anton Chekhov as a "priest of unprincipled writing", an accusation, which Chekhov debunked in his letter to the journal's publisher Vakul Lavrov (April 10, 1890). Anton Chekhov, *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh*, vol. 11, 429-431.

⁴²⁵ «Если положительные типы, создаваемые литературою, составляют ценный воспитательный материал, то те же самые типы, даваемые самой жизнью, стоят вне всякой цены.» Ibid, 390.

⁴²⁶ «...поездка – это непрерывный полугодовой труд, физический и умственный, а для меня это необходимо, так как я хохол и стал уже лениться. Надо себя дрессировать.[...] Пусть поездка не даст мне ровно ничего, но неужели все-таки за всю поездку не случится таких 2-3 дней, о

To a large extent the many clichés produced by the Soviet literary criticism that celebrated Chekhov-the-humanist and the social pathos of his writing continue to hold together the fabric of critical discourse about his Journey to Sakhalin and have proven to be especially difficult to unstuck from. This is not to say that all of them are completely redundant, but rather that they should not trivialize the complexity and ambiguity of the personality that they tend to flatten into a type. The fear of falling into one of these worn out clichés notwithstanding, it still appears important to stress the multiple rationales that propelled Chekhov's decision to leave home and to undertake his difficult mission on Sakhalin: e.g. his striving for self-discipline, for a testing, emotionally invigorating experience; a response to his critics and detractors at home; an attempt to attract public attention to the plight of the convicts; collecting of research material for his dissertation, etc. Most importantly, however, Chekhov's decision to leave for Sakhalin seems to reflect a craving for the meaningful and socially useful vocation, for the "true" ideals to animate the boredom and apathy of the "sick times" [*«наше больное время»*].

Literary critics Petr Vail and Aleksandr Genis connect Chekhov's search for the "higher purpose" with the writer's striving for a "bigger" literary form. Between 1888 and 1889 – i.e. after he had been awarded the prestigious literary Pushkin prize, Chekhov's letters to his family and friends are replete with references to the draft of his novel then in progress. Russian literary canon has traditionally been rigidly divided between the "serious", "thought-provoking" and "socially sensitive" literature and the so-called "light reading" - low-brow popular entertaining fiction. Within this

которых я всю жизнь буду вспоминать с восторгом и горечью? [...] Не дальше, как 25-30 лет назад наши же русские люди, исследуя Сахалин, совершали изумительные подвиги, за которые можно боготворить человека, а нам это не нужно, мы не знаем, что это за люди, и только сидим в четырех стенах и жалуемся, что Бог дурно создал человека.» Letter to A.S. Suvorin (March 9, 1890) in Anton Chekhov, *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh*, vol. 11, 416.

hierarchy, novelists enjoy most of the prestige and recognition, while the “big” literary form denotes the highest form of literary writing as well as the significance of the theme addressed. Chekhov had never succeeded in completing the fragmented draft, although traces of potential plots and subjects for the never-written novel can be discerned in several of his short stories. In the eyes of Chekhov’s detractors and critics the absence of a novel translated into the writer’s failure to take an ideological stance, a professional complex thus spelling an ethical problem. With this in mind, Vail and Genis suggest that one of the impulses behind the Siberian journey and Chekhov’s preoccupation with Sakhalin (his «*Mania Sachalinosa*» as Chekhov called it) is precisely the search for the “bigger” theme that would allow him to proceed to a “bigger” prose form – i.e. “to accomplish a serious step, that is to write a novel.”⁴²⁷

A place of “unbearable suffering,” Sakhalin clearly offered the writer a theme of pressing social and ethical importance that deserved much more public attention and concern than it then had. Sakhalin should become a place of pilgrimage, writes Chekhov, “like a Mecca for Turks” [«*в места, подобные Сахалину, мы должны ездить на поклонение, как турки ездят в Мекку*»]:

In the most barbarian manner, we have allowed millions of people to rot in prisons in vain [...]; we have sent them in shackles in the cold across tens of thousands of kilometers; we have infected them with syphilis, corrupted them, bred criminals [...]. The glorious [18]60s did nothing for the sick and the inmates and have thereby transgressed the chief commandment of the Christian civilization.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁷ «Пока не решусь на серьезный шаг, то есть не напишу романа...» Quoted in Petr Vail and Aleksandr Genis, *Sobranie sochinenii v dvukh tomakh*, vol. 1, 250.

⁴²⁸ «Сахалин - это место невыносимых страданий, на какие только бывает способен человек вольный и подневольный. [...] [М]ы сгноили в тюрьмах миллионы людей, сгноили зря, без рассуждения, варварски; мы гоняли людей по холоду в кандалах десятки тысяч верст, заражали их сифилисом, развращали, размножали преступников. [...] Прославленные шестидесятые годы не сделали ничего для больных и заключенных, нарушив таким образом самую главную заповедь христианской цивилизации.» Letter to A.S. Suvorin (March 9, 1890) in Anton Chekhov, *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh*, vol. 11, 417.

If Chekhov's journey to Sakhalin did not result in his writing a novel, its practical implications are nevertheless obvious. Upon his return Chekhov initiated fundraising to help the children of Sakhalin's inmates, collecting money, books and clothes and petitioning authorities to open orphanages and schools on the island. Over the next fifteen years the government has launched a series of reforms aimed at improving the living conditions of the convicts and their families. The reforms included the abolition of corporal punishment, abolition of life sentences for exiles, etc. The penal colonies of Sakhalin were abolished in 1906. Last but not least, one of the tasks that Chekhov's set for himself in his journey was a census of the island's convict population (approximately 10,000 entries.) He had spent three months daily crossing the island back and forth on foot or in saddle making acquaintance with convicts and exiles. The composition of *Island Sakhalin* reflects the systematic research that Chekhov carried out among the convicts. The first four chapters contain general information about the geography and history of the island and details of Chekhov's travel and accommodation. In chapter III he describes the structure and logistics of his census-taking project that had proved remarkably challenging. Even the simplest of questions that he addressed to the convicts returned confusing information: many convicts did not know their exact age or lied about it in so as to be eligible for the government-issued support; some did not speak Russian and Chekhov could not spell their Tatar or Armenian names properly, etc. Still others adopted strange names and refused to tell their own: e.g. Chekhov met a convict who claimed he was called Napoleon, another took a German name Charles, while the vagabonds went by given nicknames, etc. The rest of the book examines different aspects of the convicts' everyday existence: family structure and sexual relationships, children, education, food supplies, alcoholism, prisons, barracks, types of hard labor, diseases and medical care, hygienic conditions,

clothing, churches, escapees, forms of corporal punishment, prostitution, vagabondism, crime, etc. Chapter VI, the only one with a title [“Egor’s Story” /«*Рассказ Егора*»], offers a story of one of the convicts sent to Sakhalin on (supposedly) false charges of murder.

Although ultimately not a novel, *Island Sakhalin* is nevertheless a complex and interesting text that is hard to place squarely within any one of the genres. Chekhov’s multifaceted authorial identity – of a writer, physician, census-taker, traveler, researcher, etc. – pulls different rhetorical modes into the narrative. *Island Sakhalin* is more than a travelogue because it involved several months of extensive preparatory research and because it attempts systematic conclusions with implications for policy making on the basis of Chekhov’s private venture. Due to the multiplicity of sources that went into the preparation of the manuscript (i.e. background reading on matters of geography, history, penitentiary system, criminology, etc.; private diary notes, field research, conversations with the locales, other travelogues and newspaper journalism, etc.) and that blended in immediate impressions with the brought-in knowledge and the chapters written at home, the text constantly veers away from the ego-centric, intimate modality into the decisively journalistic and scientific orientation. It is thus more than a novel, since it shifts between stylized literary language, colloquial language, scientific and journalistic languages. The short novella “Egor’s Story”, for example, stands out of the rest of the text as it offers a stylized, generic portrayal of a typical convict on the basis of a true life story. The monologue of the illiterate Egor conveys the impression of “low-brow” spoken speech that employs folk idioms and specific syntax. Yet Chekhov confessed to have reworked Egor’s original narration to adapt it to the morphological and grammatical standards of literary language.

The very subject matter of *Island Sakhalin* compelled the author to strike a delicate balance between a journalist's detachment and a writer's emotionality so as to avoid sensationalism, trivialization or embellishment. The reality of penal colonies that Chekhov discovers on Sakhalin is all the more horrendous as the suffering endured there by thousands of convicts is completely pointless: instead of "improving mores" and "preventing crime" by way of isolating the deviant from the society, the authorities created a community of convicts, exiles, and settlers that had been thoroughly corrupted by the unbearable conditions of their sentence:

Among the convicts, one observes the vices and perversions characteristic primarily of people who are deprived of freedom, enslaved, hungry and bound by constant fear. Mendacity, cunning, cowardice, informing on one's fellow inmate, theft, all sorts of secret vices... [...]. Not only the arrested ones are made more coarse and cruel by the corporal punishment, but also those who administer these punishments and those who watch them.⁴²⁹

Note the impersonal syntax in the above quoted passage that signals the journalistic and scientific/documentary mode and that works to objectify the horror by downplaying moralizing enthusiasm and sentimentalization. Egor's story, too, is chosen out of many more striking and sensationalist ones (e.g. the story of the famous con-artist Sofia Blyuvshtein, better known as Son'ka the Golden Hand; of the former baroness Gamebrook, of the mysterious convict Kolosovsky, etc. that are mentioned in Chekhov's drafts and letters but had been edited out of the final draft) for a reason: it is both absurd and utterly ordinary. The dim-witted Egor is hardly a picture villain, he cannot even tell what happened to the person he is accused of murdering. His story, however, encapsulates the essence of Sakhalin's penitentiary: "the utmost, extreme

⁴²⁹ «У ссыльных наблюдаются пороки и извращения, свойственные по преимуществу людям подневольным, порабощенным, голодным и находящимся в постоянном страхе. Лживость, лукавство, трусость, малодушие, наущничество, кражи, всякого рода тайные пороки [...]. От телесных наказаний грубеют и ожесточаются не одни только арестанты, но и те, которые наказывают и присутствуют при наказании.» Anton Chekhov, *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh*, vol. 10, 331-332, 345.

degree of man's humiliation by man" [«крайняя, предельная степень унижения человека»], careless waste of lives, imperfect legal system that cares not for the legitimacy of the severe sentences that it metes out, etc. More than that, for contemporary readers familiar with the twentieth century memoirs of the former prisoners of the Gulag the details of Egor's sea journey to Sakhalin, his incomprehension at the face of the life sentence that his carelessness has earned him is strikingly familiar. Thus, to the many other texts, travels and literary names woven into Chekhov's route and travelogue (e.g. Radischev, Dostoevsky, Goncharov, etc.) one should probably add another corpus of travelogues engendered by Russia's historical experience in the twentieth century – camp literature.⁴³⁰

Already in *From Siberia* Chekhov describes the territories behind the Ural mountains as a separate world, very different and very distant from the life in Russia [«как далека здешняя жизнь от России!»].⁴³¹ The local inhabitants he talks to similarly distinguish between the “here, in Siberia” and the “there, in Russia.” Through the interplay of the familiar (brought in by the Russian authorities or settlers) and the utterly strange (indigenous tribal cultures, different natural scenery, etc.) Siberia emerges as a domain of diverse projections, some of them starkly contrasting, but all revealing something of Russia's own fears and hopes.

To begin with, merciless - “inhuman” - climate contributes to the prevailing mental image of Siberia as a Northern hell. Chekhov begins his journey in May, when in Russia proper gardens are already in bloom. In Siberia, however, he sees leafless forests, frozen lakes and snow-covered riverbanks. The journey across this

⁴³⁰ See, for example, Yevgenia Ginzburg's celebrated *Krutoi Marshrut* [A Journey into the Whirlpool]; Yulii Margolin's *Puteshestvie v stranu ze-ka* [A Journey to the Land of Ze-ka] or Andrei Amal'rik's *Nezhelannoe puteshestvie v Sibir'* [Involuntary journey to Siberia], etc. I am grateful to Olga Zaslavskaja of the OSA for attracting my attention to this motif.

⁴³¹ Ibid, 40.

inhospitable terrain requires a constant struggle against the elements – the roads are flooded, wheeled carts are drowning in mud, boats are hard to come by; the traveler has to combat cold winds, soaked boots, fits of blood coughing, uncomfortable lodgings, etc. Siberia's severe climate and vast distances are its primary markers of difference that construct it as a separate impenetrable realm.

Yet the implications of Siberia's separateness and isolation are dubious, its geographical and symbolic map - far from homogenous. Chekhov's letters home that he wrote during the trip present observations that do not bear out the unflattering portrayal of life in Siberia that we shall see in *From Siberia* and *Island Sakhalin*. Just like Goncharov before him, Chekhov describes wealthy households, attempts at making life comfortable and civilized, solidity and permanence altogether atypical to the peasant households in Russia proper. Russians has often conceived of Siberia as a *tabula rasa* that offers a chance for a new beginning for those fleeing state persecution and control (i.e. Old Believers, former serfs, etc.) Unlike the European part of Russia, Siberia knew not the influence of westernization, or the ills of serfdom, and was thus often believed to sustain a radically different, perhaps, more authentically Russian, way of life. Its severe natural conditions forged a stronger and more defiant human character; its distance from the oppressive mainland offered a chance for a more dignified and independent existence.

However, this image of Siberia explicit in Chekhov's correspondence is barely present in *From Siberia*. I shall argue that one of the reasons for this discrepancy between the letters and the travel account is the larger structure of the travelogue that constructs Chekhov's travel to the island prisons as a symbolic reenactment of katabasis. Upon returning from Sakhalin, Chekhov wrote to friends that he had journeyed to hell and the trope frequently repeats itself on the pages of *Island*

Sakhalin.⁴³² Sakhalin that met the traveler with the crimson glow of gigantic bonfires, “icy moon” and white-clad silhouettes of convicts seems to float outside and beyond the world of the living: when Chekhov reaches the Pacific Ocean he feels he had reached the end of world. He compares himself to Ulysses lost in the mysterious waters who anticipates meeting sirens and sea monsters. Sakhalin, too, turns out to be populated by fantastic creatures: pigs wear shackles on their necks, dogs and roosters are tied by their legs and the local inhabitants explain: “On Sakhalin everybody is chained, everybody wears shackles.”⁴³³ The word choice in the passage that conveys Chekhov’s first impression of the island is noteworthy:

The frightening sight, cut out roughly from the darkness, mountain silhouettes, smoke from the flame and fiery sparks seemed fantastic. On the left side there burn monstrous bonfires, above them – there are mountains with the crimson glow of distant fires [...] and everything is engulfed in smoke like in hell.⁴³⁴

He compares his gradual descent into the hell of Sakhalin – his travel across Siberia – to a long and difficult illness.⁴³⁵ The essence of this metaphor is fleshed out in

⁴³² Letter to N. A. Leontiev (Scheglov) (December 10, 1890) «Доволен по самое горло, сыт и очарован до такой степени, что ничего больше не хочу и не обиделся бы, если бы трахнул меня паралич или унесла на тот свет дизентерия. Могу сказать: пожил! Будет с меня. Я был и в аду, каким представляется Сахалин, и в раю, т. е. на острове Цейлоне» in Anton Chekhov, *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh*, vol. 11, 485.

⁴³³ «Зачем у тебя собака и петух привязаны? – спрашиваю хозяина.
- У нас на Сахалине все на цепи, - острит он в ответ. – Земля уж такая.» In Anton Chekhov, *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh*, vol. 10, 71.

⁴³⁴ «Страшная картина, грубо скроенная из потемок, силуэтов гор, дыма пламени и огненных искр, казалась фантастическою. На левом плане горят чудовищные костры, выше них – горы, из-за гор поднимается высоко к небу багровое зарево от дальних пожаров [...]. И все в дыму как в аду.» Ibid, 53.

⁴³⁵ «Путешествие, особенно через Сибирь, похоже на тяжелую, затяжную болезнь; тяжело ехать, ехать и ехать, но зато как легки и воздушны воспоминания обо всем пережитом!» Anton Chekhov, *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh*, vol. 11, 485.

And elsewhere: « While I was still living on Sakhalin, my innermost being was only feeling a certain bitterness, like that caused by rancid butter. Now, judging by the recollections, Sakhalin appears to me to be a complete hell.»

«Пока я жил на Сахалине, моя утроба испытывала только некоторую горечь, как от прогоркшего масла, теперь же, по воспоминаниям, Сахалин представляется мне целым адом.» Letter to A.S. Suvorin (December 9, 1890), Ibid, 482.

Chekhov's description of Eastern and Central Siberia that exhausted and depressed the traveler not only physically but also mentally.

In *From Siberia* Chekhov depicts a vast wasteland waiting to be connected to the rest of the country, and awoken to a meaningful and productive existence. He focuses on the physical remoteness, unnerving natural conditions, on the poorly developed infrastructure and on the sense of isolation deadening to both the exiles and a good part of the locales who drink, gamble and indulge in debauchery only to combat boredom and apathy. The nexus between the boring, cold landscape and the dullness and dreariness of people's lives in these climes is obvious: in such G-d forsaken land what else is left for these people to do, Chekhov seems to suggest. Escaping the boredom and apathy of life at home (i.e. the "cold blood" to use the title of his 1887 story); Chekhov finds ever more of it in Siberia. "It is dark, it is cold, it is boring, I want to sleep" [«Темно, холодно, скучно, спать хочется»]⁴³⁶ is a leitmotif of the entire journey, the monotonous landscape reflecting the monotony and gloom of people's existence in these climes. In both of the travelogues and in his letters home Chekhov again and again speaks about boredom [«скука»] and yearning [«тоска»]: e.g. "it's a little bit cold and a little bit boring" [«холодновато и скучновато»]; "Siberian women are as boring as the local nature" [«женщина здесь также скучна как сибирская природа»]; "they live in apathy...the exile drinks out of boredom" [«живется им скучно...от скуки пьет...ссылный»]; "boredom, boredom! With what shall one animate one's soul?" [«Тоска и тоска! Чем развлечь свою душу?»]; "on your way from Russia to Siberia you will be bored all the way from the Urals

⁴³⁶ Anton Chekhov, *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh*, vol. 10, 29.

until Yenisei [«едучи из России в Сибирь вы проскучаете от Урала вплоть до самого Енисея»], etc.⁴³⁷

It may seem that Chekhov's assessment of Siberia and its inhabitants is to a large extent shaped by the natural scenery that he observes around him. He argues that the first two thousand kilometers of his journey have been utterly unremarkable because the landscape was so dull and monotonous: "cold plane, crooked birch trees, little puddles, lakes here and there, snow in May and the desert, gloomy shores of Ob"" was all he saw.⁴³⁸ With the change of landscape beyond Yenisei, however, Chekhov's melancholy cedes place to enthrallment with nature's grandiosity: the breadth of the river, its stony banks and the foggy mountain peaks beyond it, and the endless mysterious taiga all contain promise of a happier, heroic future prompting the traveler to exclaim: "What a full, intelligent and courageous kind of life would shine in its times over these shores!"⁴³⁹ As I have argued earlier, fascination with the potential future, rather than the dreary "here and now" is the grammatical tense inhabited by Chekhovian characters who only live fully and happily in the moment that they daydream about the world-to-come where all people have purpose and

⁴³⁷ Letter to M.N.Chekhova from board the ship on Volga (April 23, 1890) in Anton Chekhov, *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh*, vol. 11 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1956), 432 and vol. 10 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literature, 1956), 21, 27, 35, etc. Eighty years later, writer Andrei Bitov travelled across Western Siberia and described a similarly monotonous, almost maddening landscape: «Проснулся. Взглянул в окно – редколесье, болото, плоскость. Корова стоит по колено в болоте и жуёт, плоско двигая челюстью. Заснул, проснулся – редколесье, болото, корова жуёт по колено. Проснулся, на вторые сутки –болото, корова. И это был уже не простор – кошмар.» ["Woke up. Looked through the window – occasional trees here and there, marshes, flatness. A cow is standing knee-high in a marsh and chews, her jaw moving horizontally/flatly. Fell asleep, woke up – rare trees, marshes, a cow knee-high in a marsh. Woke up on the second day - marshes, a cow. And this no longer was an open space, but a nightmare." Andrei Bitov, "Uroki Armenii: Puteshestvie iz Rossii." ["Lessons of Armenia: A Journey from Russia."] in *Kniga Puteshestvii po Imperii* [Book of Journeys Across the Empire] (Moscow: Olimp, 2000), 424.

⁴³⁸ «Если пейзаж в дороге для вас не последнее дело, то, едучи из России в Сибирь, вы проскучаете от Урала до самого Енисея. Холодная равнина, кривые березки, лужицы, кое-где озера, снег в мае да пустынные, унылые берега притоков Оки – вот и все, что удастся памяти сохранить от первых двух тысяч верст.» In Anton Chekhov, *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh*, vol. 10, 35.

⁴³⁹ «Я стоял и думал: какая полная, умная и смелая жизнь осветит со временем эти берега!» Ibid, 35.

“Russia becomes one blooming cherry orchard.”⁴⁴⁰ The rift between boredom and purposeful vocation, between idle yearning and activism, between unrealized potentialities and meaningful existence can thus be metaphorically expressed through the dichotomy of bare wasteland or steppe and orchard/forest. It surfaces in several of Chekhov’s plays and novellas, most importantly, of course, in *Uncle Vanya* (1890 – 1897) with Astrov’s forestry and *The Cherry Orchard* (1903-1904). The steppe and the forest encapsulate the two paradigms of Russian history, its nomadic (extensive) and settled (creative, administrative) phases (see earlier discussion of Kluchevsky.) They can also be read as metaphors of death (wasteland) and life (forest, garden), of devastation and rootedness. The tundra-covered Sakhalin, too, is a wasteland, neglected and miserable, where people rarely come voluntarily and where they strike no roots. The dwellings of both the convicts and the free settlers that Chekhov had a chance to visit looked like temporary, transit lodgings, even if occupied for tens of years. The households lacked traditions and even a semblance of comfort and permanence: scarce furnishings, lack of coziness, dirt and poverty. And everywhere – boredom and apathy.

If “boredom” seems to be easily translatable across cultures, «то́ска» is more nuanced, meaning both boredom and frustrated longing, the notion analogous to Czech “*litosť*”, Polish “*tesknota*” or Portuguese “*saudade*”. While boredom is situational and can be healed by the change of place or circumstances, «то́ска» in its broader sense is always existential; it has no easily defined object and no easy treatment. On the way to Tomsk Chekhov is forced to wait for the next boat at a little station. In the house where he stays he sees a local fool, employed as a helper by the

⁴⁴⁰ «Чеховские персонажи живут в полную силу, только когда грезят о будущем, о мире, в котором люди станут великанами, Россия – садом, и человеку, уже сверхчеловеку, откроются десятки новых чувств, делающих его бессмертным.» Petr Vail and Aleksandr Genis, *Sobranie sochinenii v dvukh tomakh*, vol. 1, 267.

master of the house. The sight of the fool carrying buckets of water under the pouring rain and the strange noises he makes agonize Chekhov, who confesses he may as well go mad himself was he to stay in that place, although there is no going back for him either:

Such boredom! In order to entertain myself in my mind I travel to the native country where it is spring already and where there is no cold rain beating against the windowpane [...] but all I remember of all things is a languid, gray, purposeless life; it seems that there too [a fool] is screaming “Me-ma! be-ba!” I am not at all eager to go back.⁴⁴¹

Yet the locals look at Chekhov as a visitor from a different world, their yearning gaze fixed on the European part of the country where people, they believe, are spared the misery and dullness that they have to bear. Chekhov’s crucial questions that had prompted his journey are now returned to him by a Siberian farmer:

--This is what I would like to explain to you. Here in Siberia, the local people are ignorant, and untalented, wretched, [...] they do not know how to do anything, [...] not even how to fish. A boring folk, G-d forbid such a boring folk! [...] Ask them: what are they living for? [...] [A man] should understand what the purpose that he is living for is. They sure do understand that in Russia!

--No, they do not.

--This is not possible. [...] We do not have truth anywhere here in Siberia. If there was ever any truth here, it had gotten frozen. That is why man should be searching for this truth.⁴⁴²

⁴⁴¹ «Какая скука! Чтобы развлечь себя, переносюсь мыслями в родные края, где уже весна и холодный дождь не стучит в окна, но, как нарочно, мне вспоминается жизнь вялая, серая, бесполезная; кажется, что [...] и там кричат «Me-ма! бе-ба!...» Нет охоты возвращаться назад.» Anton Chekhov, *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh*, vol. 10, 21.

⁴⁴² « - Я вот что хочу вам объяснить...[...] Народ здесь, в Сибири, темный, бесталаный. Из России везут ему сюда полушубки, и ситец, и посуду, и гвозди, а сам он ничего не умеет. [...] Даже рыбы ловить не умеет. Скучный народ, не лай бог какой скучный! Живешь с ними и только жиреешь без меры, а чтобы для души и для ума – ничего, как есть! [...] Спросите его: для чего он живет?

- Человек работает, сыт, одет, - говорю я. – Что же ему еще нужно?
- Все-таки он должен понимать, для какой надобности он живет. В России, небось, понимают!
- Нет, не понимают.
- Это никак невозможно, говорит Петр Петрович, подумав. [...] Примерно, у нас по всей Сибири нет правды. Ежели и была какая, то уж давно замерзла. Вот и должен человек эту правду искать.» Ibid, 21-22.

«Скука» and «тоска», boredom and longing, seem to be among the most tenacious cultural constants that persist even when the traveler enters the region that seems completely foreign. Sailing down the Amour river in the Far East, Chekhov feels as if he were not in Russia, but in some distant exotic land, “like Texas or Patagonia.” Not only does the local nature look strange, but the ways of the local population strike the traveler as completely at odds with what he was familiar to in Russia: “Pushkin and Gogol’ are hardly comprehensible for the people here and thus are hardly needed, our history is boring, and we, the visitors from Russia seem like foreigners.”⁴⁴³ The locals are equally disinterested in matters of politics, art or religion; local priests eat meat and dairy during the Orthodox fasts, wear white silk robes and are said to rival their parishioners in greed and scamming. The prevailing mores also reveal a very special perception of ethics that would have seemed unacceptable to the Russians from the mainland:

A courtly, knight-like treatment of a woman is highly esteemed here; yet it is not considered immoral to sell one’s own wife to a friend; or better still: on the one hand, there are no class prejudices here – people treat the exiled settlers as their equals, but on the other hand – it is not considered blameworthy to shoot a Chinese escapee in the forest like a dog [...].⁴⁴⁴

Chekhov describes Siberia as a true frontier region and it is hardly accidental that he compares it to Texas or Patagonia of all places: it is both a refuge for the persecuted and the misfits and a place where the resourceful and the enterprising come to try their luck in the still underdeveloped but fabulously rich land beyond the reach of the government or police. At the same time, for all the abundance of natural resources, the

⁴⁴³ «Пока я плыл по Амуру, у меня было такое чувство, как будто я не в России, а где-то в Патагонии или в Техасе; не говоря уж об оригинальной, не русской природе, мне все время казалось, что склад нашей русской жизни совершенно чужд коренным амурцам, что Пушкин и Гоголь тут непонятны и потому ненужны, наша история скучна, и мы, приезжие из России, кажемся иностранцами.» Ibid, 41.

⁴⁴⁴ «И нравственность здесь какая-то особенная, не наша. Рыцарское обращение с женщиной возводится почти в культ и во то же время не считается предосудительным уступить за деньги приятелю свою жену; [...] с одной стороны, отсутствие сословных предрассудков – здесь и ссыльные держат себя, как с ровней, а с другой – не грех подстрелить в лесу китайца – бродягу, как собаку [...].» Ibid, 41.

region clearly is still a backwater, dependent on the European mainland for supplies and virtually cut off from the “civilized” world. The adventurous frontier spirit is irrevocably tainted by the region’s proximity to prisons and colonies and by the presence of a large proportion of convict and exiles among the population. Where Goncharov celebrated the enlightened (and sober!) character of Russian colonization of Siberia and the Far East Chekhov sees corruption and abuse. On his return trip that took him to Hong-Kong, Ceylon and India, Chekhov observed the relationship between the British colonialists and the local populations, exasperated by his Russian fellow travelers’ claims for moral superiority over this “dire colonial exploitation”:

I thought: yes, an Englishman does exploit the Chinese, the Sipahi, and the Indians. Yet at the same time he gives them roads, plumbing, museums, and Christianity. You [the Russian] exploit as well, but what do you give?⁴⁴⁵

On Sakhalin he encounters the tribe of the Giliaks that the Russian authorities attempted to russify. Questioning the purpose of such an invasion into the traditional lifestyle of the indigenous peoples Chekhov argues that the Russian presence has only brought them depravity and alcoholism, noting empty vodka bottles in the yurtas of the Giliaks that they got in exchange for expensive furs. The authorities also adopted a habit of hiring the Giliaks as guards in the colonies and prisons and paying them for catching and killing the escapees. Such proximity to prison and instruction in baseness and cruelty, concludes Chekhov, shatters the moral structure of the Giliaks and co-opts them into the state-sponsored violence that Russia breeds in its penal colonies.

Ironically, in the early nineteenth century the island of Sakhalin, by then only partially explored by the Russian and foreign travelers, was chosen by the would-be Decembrists as a place for the realization of their utopian project. They planned to

⁴⁴⁵ «Я думал: да, англичанин эксплуатирует китайцев, сипаев, индусов, но зато дает им дороги, водопроводы, музеи, христианство, вы тоже эксплуатируете, но что вы даете?» Letter to A. Suvorin (December 9, 1890) in Anton Chekhov, *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh*, vol. 11, 483.

found a special autonomous colony on the island that would be governed by the ideals of the French Revolution. The project had obviously never been implemented, and in place of the More's *City of Sun* Russian authorities found their own – *penal* – colonies. Chekhov's travel through Siberia to Sakhalin and the two travelogues that he had written about it capture the reality that seemed like a cruel reversion of the Decembrists' idealistic vision. Without attempting any large-scale social project but selflessly carrying out his private mission Chekhov had filled in the blank spots on Russia's geographical and ethical map, calling on the public to hear and to see those who suffer.

Fyodor Dostoevsky, Winter Notes on Summer Impressions (1863)

Dostoevsky's itinerary and agenda are very different from both Goncharov's and Chekhov's. Between June and September of 1862, he traveled around Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy and England. It is noteworthy, that the title emphasizes that the text was written *after* Dostoevsky's return from Europe and, thus, veers away from the documentary (ethnographic, historical, etc.) modality of travel account and the expectations of truthfulness and informativeness implicit therein. For all the multiplicity of travel impressions suggested by the itinerary, *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* yield little description of the actual journey. Instead, Dostoevsky uses his first trip abroad as a pretext to deliver a vehement denunciation of western bourgeois societies and of the westernized elites at home whose adopted foreign ways of life had alienated them from the masses of common people.

The account is not structured either chronologically or geographically. In keeping with the conventions of Russian travelogue, it simulates a form of dialogical engagement with some anonymous friends, who had allegedly prompted the writer to

embark on his trip and on its subsequent recounting. In place of descriptive narrative, Dostoevsky indulges in lengthy reflections, which move from domestic to foreign subjects and back and which are barely illustrated with his actual experiences of the European trip. Instead of recording his encounters with the French or the Germans and ruminating over cultural differences and similarities, Dostoevsky discusses “the” Europeans by way of fictionalized portraits of the French bourgeoisie, of all these typical “*Jacques Bonhommes*”, “*Gustaves*”, “*les epouses*”, «брибри и мабишь» [Fr. “*bribri*” and “*ma biche*”], whom he finds pretentious, ignorant, selfish, greedy, etc. The list of negative adjectives is potentially endless. Everywhere he goes he sees nothing else but philistine mediocrity, petty swindling, hypocrisy, capitalist exploitation and lack of authentic, selfless feeling. Some of the accusations leveled at the French, for instance, are ridiculous, not unlike Ostrovsky’s loathing of that anonymous Prussian officer he had met during the European tour. For instance, Dostoevsky lampoons the Parisians’ habits of going to the seashore [«*потребность voir la mer*»] and “rolling on the grass” in the countryside [«*потребность se rouler dans l’herbe*»], apparently suggesting that the bourgeois are unable to sincerely appreciate nature’s beauty, etc.⁴⁴⁶ In Cologne he cannot help admiring the new bridge but immediately stops himself and proceeds to accuse the city dwellers of too much vanity and pride in this new construction:

The bridge is certainly superb and the city is rightfully proud of it, but I sensed that it is too proud. Obviously, this has gotten me angry all at once. Also, the tollgate keeper on this bridge should not have charged me with this reasonable fee with such a look on his face that seemed to suggest that he was charging me with a fine for some sort of misdemeanor unknown to me. I do not know, but it seemed to me that the German was poking fun of me. [...] “Do you see our bridge, you miserable Russian, [he seemed to be saying] – against that bridge and against any German you are a worm, because you do not have such a bridge.” You should agree, that this is offensive. The German certainly did

⁴⁴⁶ Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*, in *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 4, 127.

not say anything like it...but what difference does it make? I was sure he meant it and I burst out.⁴⁴⁷

The mixture of quick temper, arrogance and insecurity evident in this passage is typical of Dostoevsky's offended and hectoring tone in the remainder of the text as well as in his other non-fiction. It certainly expresses the deep-seated structures of Russian attitude to Europe: never indifferent or self-possessed. Particularly charged is his almost apocalyptic description of London (chapter V is tellingly entitled "Baal") that Dostovsky portrays as the seat of dehumanizing avarice and moral corruption. He talks about the slums of White Chapel and the Hay-Market, about mothers selling their daughters, about beggars and child prostitutes that seem imported from the pages of *The Crime and the Punishment* or the novels of Charles Dickens, about Catholic missionaries whom he accuses of hypocrisy, etc.

Dostoevsky's anti-Catholic (anti-Polish, anti-German, anti-French, anti-Swiss, antisemitic, etc.) views are no surprise to his attentive readers, especially to those familiar with his *Diary of a Writer*. Indeed, it is a paradox worth pondering: for all the venom and aggressiveness of his rhetoric, Dostoevsky's indebtedness to Europe is beyond question. Not only did he experience a profound aesthetic and ideological influence of western European literature and thought, but he also spent lengthy periods of time abroad either at spas and sanatoriums treating epilepsy or at gambling tables. He also owes a good part of his posthumous fame to the non-Russian

⁴⁴⁷ «Мост, конечно, превосходный, и город справедливо гордится им, но мне показалось, что уж слишком гордится. Разумеется, я тотчас же на это рассердился. Притом же собирателю грошей при входе на чудесный мост вовсе не следовало брать с меня эту благоразумную пошлину с таким видом, как будто он берет с меня штраф за какую-то неизвестную мне мою провинность. Я не знаю, но мне показалось, что немец куражится. «Верно, догадался, что я иностранец и именно русский», подумал я. По крайней мере его глаза чуть не проговаривали: «Ты видишь наш мост, жалкий русский, ну так ты червь перед нашим мостом и перед всяки немецки человек, потому что у тебя нет такого моста.» Согласитесь сами, что *это* обидно. Немец, конечно, этого вовсе не говорил, даже, может, и на уме у него этого не было, но ведь это все равно: я так был уверен тогда, что он именно это хочет сказать, что вскипел окончательно.» Ibid, 65.

audiences. Despite his vehemently anti-western views often bordering on xenophobia, Dostoevsky is one of the best-known and much esteemed Russian cultural imports, a towering influence behind French existentialists, the “father” of contemporary psychological novel, etc.

Joseph Brodsky made an interesting argument when he pointed out that the plot in many of Dostoevsky’s novels is in fact a culmination of the events that had happened abroad: e.g. Petr Verkhovensky (*The Possessed*, 1872) and Ivan Karamazov (*The Brothers Karamazov*, 1880) bring their nihilist ideas from abroad; prince Myshkin (*Idiot*, 1869) becomes completely insane in Switzerland, the entire plot of *The Gambler* (1867) is set in Germany and France, etc. Europe is thus symbolically mapped as a territory of vice and temptation, a hot-bed of conspiratorial ideas that is not only an unnatural, but also a dangerous and potentially destructive environment for his Russian characters.⁴⁴⁸ It is certainly note worthy that all of these novels – in fact, all of Dostoevsky’s best known novels - were written after his first trip to Europe and the publication of *Winter Notes*. In an important sense, then, this travelogue signals Dostoevsky’s coming of age as an *ideological* novelist and anticipates the tonality, structure and ideological leanings of Dostoevsky’s later prose and journalism.⁴⁴⁹

The rhetorical modality of the *Winter Notes*, the self-deprecating sardonic narratorial persona that he foregrounds on its pages would resurface, for instance, in the *Notes from Underground* (1864) and his *Dairy of a Writer* (1873-1881). In the opening chapter Dostoevsky presents a seemingly simple-minded narrator, who is

⁴⁴⁸ Solomon Volkov, *Dialogi s Iosifom Brodskim* [Dialogues with Joseph Brodsky] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 1998), 174.

⁴⁴⁹ Joseph Frank, “Dostoevsky: The Encounter with Europe” in *Russian Review*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Jul., 1963), 237-252, 252.

being urged by his friends to commit his travel impressions to paper and who pledges to be sincere and artless in whatever he describes – a conventional device used by most travel writers in order to symbolically legitimate the very act of their writing. This coy narrator admits to having been infatuated with the tales of Europe as a “land of holy miracles” [«страна святых чудес»] (expression of Slavophile thinker Alexei Khomiakov) since his childhood. The rather clichéd turn of the phrase is hardly accidental. Both in the *Winter Notes* and his other writings, Dostoevsky identifies romantic attraction to Europe as an attribute of juvenile, immature consciousness, both individual and collective (national.)⁴⁵⁰ Having undertaken his first journey at the age of forty, he naturally expected much from it, but instead, registers disappointment at every turn.

At first, his tone is apologetic. He stresses his subjectivity and unreliability and then proceeds to carp about the linden trees in Berlin that disappointed him, the women of Dresden whom he finds unattractive, the cathedral in Cologne that looks like “lace, lace and nothing but lace, a haberdasher’s trifle, like a giant desk *pressepapier*”, etc. In the end of this inventory of disappointments, Dostoevsky’s narrator is ready to admit that he had been, perhaps, too harsh and unfair and blames it all on his sick liver that stirred his misanthropy. Too late: the judgment is made and recorded on the pages of his travel account, and it is not much at odds with the rest of the account. Further in the text, Dostoevsky uses this half-mocking, half-apologetic tone that seems to anticipate if not provoke the negative reaction of the reader, in order to deliberately blur the boundary between the judgments that are purely a matter of idiosyncratic liking or disliking and those that are prompted by a particular ideological position that he espouses. Here the professed aesthetical dislike of cathedrals, bridges, linden trees,

⁴⁵⁰ For more on the subject, see, for example, William C. Brumfield’s article “The West and Russia: Concepts of Inferiority in Dostoevsky’s *Adolescent*” in Robert L. Belknap, ed., *Russianness: Studies on a Nation’s Identity, 1918-1978*. (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1990), 144 – 152.

fashions, etc. serves as a smokescreen for an aversion much more profound as it stems from a worldview, not taste.

Half the way into the narrative, Dostoevsky abandons his mock-anxiety with the subjectivity and selectivity of his judgments; his tone becomes remarkably acerbic. *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* is, perhaps, one of the most spiteful of all Russian travelogues, the quality, which is a function of the text's ideological underpinnings. There is not a single word of genuine fascination or a warm sentiment in the narrative that would not be reversed in the next phrase with some sardonic remark: Dostoevsky virtually does not spare a single word of praise to anybody or anything during his trip. Dostoevsky's aversion to the Europeans that he meets is almost physical, he flattens vivid human characters into cardboard figures, caricatures of the "typical bourgeois" - "dull", "repulsive", "base", "vile", etc.⁴⁵¹ Even the positive facets of European mentality are interpreted in this text as signs of its artificiality and conformity. For instance, Dostoevsky takes an issue with the proverbial orderliness of French or German societies "the lull of order" [*затишье порядка*]] and "regulation! [*регламентация!*]]...that is not merely external, but also colossal internal, spiritual one, regulation coming from the very soul."⁴⁵² Clearly,

⁴⁵¹ In a letter sent to Nikolai Strakhov from Paris (June 26, 1862) Dostoevsky writes: "Paris is the dullest city ever, and if it were not for some really remarkable things in it one could die here of boredom. The French are indeed such a people as to make one sick to his stomach. You were talking about the smug, insolent, vile faces raging at our mineral water spas, but I swear that what you have here is as good. Our people are simply carnivorous scoundrels and for the most part, conscious ones, but here they all are sure that this is how it should be. A Frenchman is quiet, honest, polite, but phony; money means everything to him. He has no ideals whatsoever. Do not ask him for convictions or reflections. The level of general education is extremely low" / «Париж прескучнейший город, и если б не было в нем очень много действительно слишком замечательных вещей, то, право, можно бы умереть со скуки. Французы, ей-богу, такой народ, от которого тошнит. Вы говорили о самодовольно-наглых и г<--->ных лицах, свирепствующих на наших минералах. Но клянусь Вам, что тут стоит нашего. Наши — просто плотоядные подлецы и большею частию сознательные, а здесь он вполне уверен, что так и надо. Француз тих, честен, вежлив, но фальшив и деньги у него — всё. Идеала никакого. Не только убеждений, но даже размышлений не спрашивайте. Уровень общего образования низок до крайности.» F. Dostoevsky, *Sobranie sochinenii v piatnadtzati tomakh*, vol. 15 (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 1996), pp. 215-217.

in an almost clichéd manner, Dostoevsky contrasts here the chaotic, spontaneous essence of Russian social organization and the breadth of *l'ame Slave* with insipid bourgeois social protocols and philistine “narrow-mindedness.”

Arriving to France at the time of the Second Empire Dostoevsky regards the flowering of the French bourgeois society as unabashed recoil from the ideals of the French Revolution, the proverbial *liberté, égalité, fraternité*. He makes a typically socialist argument suggesting that the first two are exclusive prerogatives of the wealthy classes and the French *liberté* is constantly infringed upon by the pervasive police surveillance. Upon arrival to a Parisian hotel, Dostoevsky was accosted by a nice elderly couple of the keepers who insisted on getting complete personal information about him for the police. Obviously, none of it was strange or altogether unfamiliar to a formerly persecuted writer arriving from the Romanovs' Russia and Dostoevsky devises an elaborate argument suggesting that Russian despotism is a historical rather than a cultural or psychological phenomenon: i.e. whereas in Russia the best part of the society denounced despotism, the French bourgeois society, on the contrary, embraced it as it expressed its innermost convictions and aspirations.⁴⁵³ Finally, Dostoevsky's discussion of *fraternité*, too, is heavily influenced by his socialist convictions. *Fraternité*, he suggests, is antithetical to the very essence of western civilization, which had betrayed this fundamental human value in the name of heartless materialism and egoism:

In the French nature, yes in the Western European nature brotherhood is absent. Instead, we find the personal principle, the principle of isolation, a vigorous self-concern, self-assertion, self-determination within the bounds of one's own ego. This ego sets itself in opposition, as a separate self-justifying

⁴⁵² «И какая регламентация! Поймите меня: не столько внешняя регламентация, которая ничтожна (сравнительно разумеется), а колоссальная внутренняя, духовная, из души произошедшая.» Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomakh*, vol.4, 92.

⁴⁵³ Joseph Frank, “Dostoevsky: The Encounter with Europe,” 241.

principle, against all of nature and against all other people; it claims equality and equal value with whatever exists outside of it.⁴⁵⁴

In Russia, on the contrary, the unique social body – the peasant commune – has managed to successfully reconcile the individual and the collective principles engendering, Dostoevsky believed, an authentically Christian kind of ethics based on the instinctive sense of brotherhood and solidarity, by far superior to West’s ruthless individualism. Valorization of the peasant commune, first advocated by the Slavophiles, was by 1848 taken over by the liberal Aleksandr Herzen, later becoming a staple of Russian radical thought. The ideal of the commune that posited Russia as a harbinger of a new social order for all of the humankind marked the point where Dostoevsky’s socialist convictions dovetailed with his nationalism and belief in Russia’s unique historical mission.

Dostoevsky’s ideological denunciation of Europe and his view of Russo-European relations are thus inseparably connected with his messianic vision of Russia’s national destiny and character. To the degenerate bourgeois Europe Dostoevsky juxtaposes the God-bearing Russia, which is to him the fullest incarnation of the Christian spiritual ideal that is one of his *idées maitresses*. Thus, his other critical concern in the *Winter Notes* - the tendency of the Russian elites to prostrate themselves in front of everything European thereby deepening their alienation from the “true Russia” of the common people. Fonvizin’s *Letters from France* (1777-1778), an obvious point of reference for Dostoevsky’s invectives against the French bourgeoisie, help to tie both themes together. While Fonvizin charged that “a Frenchman is devoid of reason and would consider it a chief misfortune of his life to

⁴⁵⁴ «А в природе французской, да и вообще западной, его в наличности не оказалось, а оказалось начало личное, начало особняка, усиленного самосохранения, самопромышления, самоопределения в своем собственном Я, сопоставления этого Я всей природе и всем остальным людям, как самоправного отдельного начала, совершенно равного и равноценного всему тому, что есть кроме него.» Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 4, 98.

have it” [*«рассудка француз не имеет, да и иметь его почел бы за величайшее для себя несчастье»*], Dostoevsky not only contemplates this “aphorism” as he calls it, but also reflects on Fonvizin’s times that saw the beginnings of Europeanization: “[Becoming] European was then easy; I mean it was physically easy. [Moral endorsement of Europe], however, did not go without lashings. [They] pulled on silk stockings and wigs, hang little rapiers – and voila, a European.”⁴⁵⁵

Gradually, however, as the “slavish” miming of the European ways (“flunkeyism” and “masquerade” to quote his words) took over, the modernized elites adopted an increasingly condescending attitude towards most other Russians, priding themselves in “having grown up to be European enough” [*«теперь уж мы вполне европейцы и доросли»*].⁴⁵⁶ With the sarcastic tone typical of the entire travelogue, that merges narratorial voice with the first persona plural “we” only to reject the collectivity, in the name of which he is talking, Dostoevsky charges pro-western liberal thinkers with the missionary complex in regards of the unenlightened common folk:

Even though not everything around us is beautiful yet, but the important thing is that we are so beautiful, so civilized and so European that the common folk get sick by only looking at us. The common people [*народ/narod*] takes us for foreigners and understands not a single words of ours, not a single book of ours and not a single idea of ours – consider it a sign of progress. [...] How self-assured we are now in our civilizing mission, how condescendingly we settle problems – and what problems! Nothing like a people or their native soil really exists. Nationality – only a certain system of paying taxes; the soul - a *tabula rasa*, a bit of wax, out of which you can form a real man, a universal-general man, a homunculus – all that’s necessary is to apply the fruits of European civilization and read three or four books!⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁵ «...тогда нам легко давалась Европа, физически, разумеется. Нравственно-то, конечно, обходилось не без плетей. Напяливали шелковые чулки, парики, привешивали шпажонки – вот и европеец.» Ibid, 78.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid, 77. Emphasis mine.

⁴⁵⁷ «Пусть все вокруг нас и теперь еще не очень красиво; зато сами мы до того прекрасны, до того цивилизованны, до того европейцы, что даже народу (sic!) стошнило на нас глядя. Теперь уже народ нас совсем за иностранцев считает, ни одного слова нашего, ни одной книги нашей, ни одной мысли нашей не понимает, - а ведь это как хотите, прогресс. Теперь уж мы до того

According to Dostoevsky, Russia's Europeanization has come at the cost of disrespect for everything Russian and a profound social schism. Yet this self-negation had also failed to win Russia Europe's sympathy and trust.

Commenting on Fonvizin's sardonic remarks about the French society, Dostoevsky muses that the writer's heart must have "tickled with pleasure" when he wrote such a phrase and that so do the hearts of his descendants, since the refusal to embrace Europe emotionally "even today contains something irresistible for us Russians." Both Fonvizin and Dostoevsky oscillate between the rational attraction to the achievements of European civilization and emotional rejection of Europe's perceived heartless materialism and superficiality. Their self-dramatization in their respective travelogues that weave together jeering sarcasm of an ideological critic and the curious, and engrossed gaze of a fascinated traveler captures a crucial aspect of Russia's relationship to the West, "a surreptitious revolt against what it most reveres on the level of reason."⁴⁵⁸

* * *

The travelogues discussed above form an interesting trio. All the four were written by prominent Russian writers and widely read at the time can be counted among the best known examples of Russia's nineteenth century travel writing. Out of the four texts, Goncharov's is certainly the most widely read one up to this day, a favorite of several generations of Russian and Soviet children. In a sense, it had set up a powerful model

глубоко презираем и начала народные, что даже относимся к нему с какою-то новою, небывалою брезгливостью . . . а ведь это, как хотите, прогресс. Зато как же мы теперь самоуверенны в своем цивилизаторском призвании, как свысока решаем вопросы, да еще какие вопросы-то: почвы нет, народа нет, национальность – это только известная система податей, душа - *tabula rasa*, вощичек, из которого можно сейчас же вылепить настоящего человека, общечеловека, всемирного, гомункула – стоит только приложить плоды европейской цивилизации да прочесть две-три книжки. . .» Ibid, 79.

⁴⁵⁸ Joseph Frank, "Dostoevsky: The Encounter with Europe", 240.

for the subsequent tradition of adventure and youth literature [*приключенческая литература; литература для юношества*] extremely popular in Russia since the nineteenth century, and especially during the Soviet times, when exotic journeys were hardly accessible so that reading offered an imaginary getaway from the strictures of the policed society.

Goncharov's *Frigate 'Pallas'* is also the only one of the three travelogues discussed here to closely follow the narrative and thematic conventions of travel writing, although it cannot be called strictly documentary either. Its popularity with the young audiences and the formal convention of travel writing that structure its plot has prevented generations of critics from reading *Frigate* as a full-fledged literary composition [*художественное произведение*] with a very particular stylistics, plot, governing system of ideas and meta-literary objectives. Elena Krasnoschekova has shown traces of *Frigate 'Pallas'*, especially of its "Siberian" chapters, in Goncharov's second novel *Oblomov*, which he had begun before leaving Russia with Putiatin's expedition and which he completed after his return having significantly altered the initial design. In earlier drafts to the novel, it was Andrei Shtolz who was supposed to grow into the main protagonist, a radically new social type, "a man of Progress" who brings civilization to the most backward provinces of the country.⁴⁵⁹ By 1857 Goncharov decided to rework the structure of the plot focusing on *Oblomov's* romance instead, but even so, the stylistic and compositional features of *Frigate 'Pallas'* traceable to his later novels and prose suggest that the literary travelogue served as a testing ground for Goncharov-the-novelist.

Dostoevsky's *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*, too, can be considered an overture to the major works of the writer, an overture both literary and ideological. On

⁴⁵⁹ Elena Krasnoschekova, *I.A. Goncharov: Mir tvorchestva* [I.A. Goncharov and his creative world] (St. Petersburg: "Pushkinskii fond", 1997), 217-219.

the one hand, Dostoevsky high-jacks the formal structure of a travel account as a yet another venue for his ideological lucubration on socialism and the relationship between Russia and Western Europe, the two subjects converging through the author's own stance. On the other hand, the expandable structure of the travelogue allowed Dostoevsky to accommodate many subjects within it, while also trying hand in elaborating his very own artistic palette for the description of outmost misery, degeneration and corruption (e.g. his chapter on London "Baal", etc.) that was to become his hallmark. In his mock travel account Dostoevsky presents a very specific kind of opinionated and cranky narrator that he would introduce again in his later ideological fiction and journalism, most notably for his underground man-narrator in the *Notes from the Underground* (1864) written soon after Dostoevsky's first European journey and in *The Diary of a Writer* (1873-1881). Finally, Chekhov's journey and the difficult project he undertook among the convicts of Sakhalin can be regarded as a search for the "larger theme" and "larger textual format" that could have facilitated the creation of a novel. For all the hybridity of *Island Sakhalin* as a literary text, an account of fieldwork, a travel journal, etc. there is, I have argued, a fundamental continuity of style, ideas, imagery, between this travelogue and Chekhov's plays and short stories.

Thus, the four texts discussed above foreground three very different types of narrators, different ideological stances of their authors and ultimately have attained very distinct readerships. What brings them together is both the elasticity of their structures, that has allowed the authors to expand both the range of the possible subjects and the scope of their outlook, as well as the function of these texts as creative laboratories for the three writers' subsequent work and thought.

Last but not, least, although the travel accounts of Goncharov, Dostoevsky and Chekhov attempt to map very different locales and for radically different purposes, all of them inevitably reflect Russia's continuous preoccupation with its self-definition and its relationship to the outside world. As in all the other Russian travelogues discussed here thus far – no matter where the journey takes the traveler, the insipient subject of the travel account is always the home place: the foreign country is, thus, truly but a metaphor of one's own.

Russian tourists at home and abroad

Dostoevsky is ever irritated by the European's perceived over-confidence in being an object of attraction for the rest of the world, and refuses to be impressed. At the same time, he is indignant with his compatriot's cultural insecurity and dependency on the European judging gaze: ("Lord, but what sort of Russians are we? ... Are we Russians indeed? Why does Europe have such a strong, magic, inviting impression over us?")

⁴⁶⁰ The apocalyptic pictures from Europe's major metropolises that he offers his readers are clearly meant to shatter the "magic" appeal of the "land of holy miracles." However, while condemning Russia's fascination with Europe from a higher moral ground Dostoevsky himself gets implicated in the same complex cluster of attitudes and anxieties towards western Europe that he accuses others to be enslaved by. The figure of a tourist (for he admits to be "a tourist and nothing else") that he cuts for himself in his narrative is plagued by insecurity and arrogance, which he so resentfully observes in most Russians traveling abroad. Consider, for instance, the episode at the bridge in Cologne, quoted above, and the near-paranoid mental

⁴⁶⁰ «Господи, да какие же мы русские? – мелькало у меня подчас в голове... Действительно ли мы русские, в самом-то деле? Почему Европа имеет на нас, кто бы мы ни были, такое сильное, волшебное, призывное впечатление?» Dostoevsky, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol.4, 68.

dialogues that Dostoevsky's narrator engages in with the tollgate keeper, ascribing to him the thoughts and judgments that the German might have never had in reality.

While the Russian travelers and tourists ridiculed by Dostoevsky obsessively follow their guides and guidebooks afraid to miss a single sight or curiosity, the splenetic narrator of *Winter Notes* invests as much energy in avoiding clichéd tourist attractions and guidebooks, and even more - suppressing his excitement with them.

Reflecting on the deeply internalized sense of cultural inferiority that confronts Russian travelers in Europe, Dostoevsky ridicules the Russians' anxiety to "pass", an anxiety to which he claims to be immune: "Mais moi c'est autre chose": "In general, once in a store, Russians are dying to show that they have endless amounts of money," an observation that still rings true today."⁴⁶¹ And elsewhere:

The Russians love the west, they do, and in case of extremity [mental, economic, or personal hardship], all of them go to the west. ... "*Mais moi c'est autre chose*".... [I]n a meanwhile, their faces express such yearning/anguish, [*«тоска»*]... Poor things! And what is this ever-present anxiety in these faces, what is this sickly, melancholy liveliness! They all walk around with guides and avidly rush to see the rarities in every city, and indeed, they do it as if they are obliged to do so....⁴⁶²

We have seen the same motive earlier in Fyodor Glinka's *Letters of a Russian Officer* (1808-1816), in Gogol's letters from western Europe (1836-39; 1840-41), and it is a cliché of countless other travelogues and fiction. Consider, for example, a confession made by the much-traveled protagonist of Ivan Turgenev's novel *Asya* (1858):

To tell the truth, I used to be reluctant to get acquainted with Russians while abroad. I used to recognize them from afar, by their way of walking, the cut of their dress, but most importantly, by the impression of their face. Smug and

⁴⁶¹ «Русским вообще ужасно хочется показать в магазинах, что у них необъятно много денег.» Ibid, 103.

⁴⁶² «Любят у нас запад, любят, и в крайнем случае, как дойдут до точки, все туда едут.... А между тем на их лицах такая тоска... Беденькие! И что за всегдашнее в них беспокойство, что за болезненная, тоскливая подвижность! Все они ходят смотреть с гидами и жадно бросаются в каждом городе смотреть редкости, точно по обязанности...» Ibid, 83, 84.

scornful, often peremptory, it would suddenly become cautious and timid... The person would suddenly become alert, his eyes troubled and shifty...”My goodness! ...are they not laughing at me?” this hastened look seemed to be saying... In a moment, the physiognomy would regain its greatness alternating with dull bewilderment. Yes, I was avoiding Russians...⁴⁶³

The Russians’ dislike and avoidance of other Russian travelers/tourists abroad is a common place of Russian cultural/popular discourse up to this day. The reasons for this aversion are not much different from those evoked elsewhere: lack of cultural sophistication, vulgarity, superficiality, urge to demonstrate their wealth, etc. The question, however, is as to which part of this trope belongs to the generic discourse of tourism (that describes parvenu-voyageurs, these yokels, as potentially insecure about the adequacy of their manners, taste, social status, etc.) and how much of it stems from the specificity of Russian socio-cultural context (in which a form of inferiority complex vis-à-vis Europe had pervaded even the higher ranks of the society becoming a cultural constant of sorts, all the more reinforced by the profound cultural, psychological and economic schism between the westernized educated and usually better-off part of the society and the “common people.”) In other words, it seems that the valences of tourism and all that goes with it (desire to possess the object of gaze, heavy reliance on “guides and guidebooks” – i.e. premeditated representations of and ideas about foreign culture, insecurity, inferiority complex, self-hatred, etc.) serves as a convenient metonymy for Russia’s uneasy entanglement with the West.

The very terms *мыпузм/turizm* and *мыпучм/turist*, transliterations from English and French analogues, have been confidently used by Russian travelers from

⁴⁶³ «Правду сказать, я неохотно знакомился с русскими за границей. Я их узнавал даже издали по их походке, покрою платья, а главное, по выражению их лица. Самодовольное и презрительное, часто повелительное, оно вдруг сменялось выражением осторожности и робости....Человек внезапно настораживался весь, глаз беспокойно бегал... «Батюшки мои! не соврал ли я, не смеются ли надо мною», - казалось говорил этот уторопленный взгляд... Проходило мгновение- и снова восстанавливалось величие физиономии, изредка чередуясь с тупым недоумением. Да, я избегал русских...»Ivan Turgenev, *Asya* in *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh*, vol. 6 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literature, 1955), 228.

the late 1830s on, both in reference to their own pursuits and to that of fellow travelers. The derogatory connotations of the terms, however, are not as immediately evident as they are in western European context. Susan Layton refers to travel accounts and letters of Petr Viazemsky (1838), Pavel Annenkov (1841), Aleksander Druzhinin (1855) that employ them in a seemingly neutral sense.⁴⁶⁴ This is not to say, however, that the distinction between tourists as *idiots de voyage* and solitary sophisticated travelers that is crucial for the western discourse of tourism did not percolate into the Russian usage. Both Viazemsky and Dostoevsky although referring to themselves as “nothing else but tourists” ridicule their compatriots abroad who heavily rely on guidebooks and fail to form independent opinions about their experiences. As in the western European discourses of tourism, Russian tourism spelled the possibility of “leveling upward” through the advantageous acquisition of sophistication and culture previously the privilege of the wealthy few.⁴⁶⁵

Despite earlier instances of the uses of the word, tourism as a cultural and economic phenomenon does not emerge in Russian until the 1960s, the era of the Great Reforms launched by Alexander II. Not only were earlier restrictions on foreign travel imposed by his predecessor abolished, but the ensuing economic reforms and a push to industrialization created both commercial and technological opportunities for the popularity of both domestic and foreign routes. Moreover, following the emancipation of the serfs and the land reforms of 1861, most land owners received monetary compensation and bonds for the loss of their servants and lands. They were willing to spend this money abroad, touring Europe, doing the sightseeing, gambling,

⁴⁶⁴ Susan Layton, “Russian Military Tourism: The Crises of the Crimean War Period” in Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker, eds., *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist Under Capitalism and Socialism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, year, 2006), 51.

⁴⁶⁵ Louise McReynolds, “The Pre-revolutionary Russian Tourist: Commercialization in the Nineteenth Century” in Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker, eds., *Turizm*, 25.

enjoying spas and often settling down for longer periods once they no longer had any oversight obligations at their estates. By the turn of the century the number of Russian expatriates in Western Europe, mostly in Paris, numbered in the tens of thousands.⁴⁶⁶

On the domestic scene construction of railroads connected the Caucasian and Crimean resorts to the two capitals contributing to the booming fashion for domestic recreational tourism since the 1870s. Commercial travel agencies followed suit. Interestingly, the first attempt at marketing an organized tour abroad undertaken as early as the late eighteenth century, offered the young Russian nobles an adopted version of a Grand Tour. In 1777 Veniamin Gensh, an educator and an accomplished traveler himself, published a newspaper advertisement calling on the applicants for a journey to one of the western European universities (Gottingen, Strasbourg, Leipzig or Turin) with a subsequent tour through Switzerland, Italy and France in order to study art, sciences, languages and also industrial production [«фабричное дело»]. Gensh promised to take over the logistics of the journey and the chaperoning of the traveling youngsters in exchange for a fee. There has remained no evidence, however, as to whether this initiative had been successful, but it had long remained an isolated incident of commercialization of travel.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, although the attraction of the educational and cultural pilgrimage to Europe had remained powerful, the emerging bourgeoisie began to articulate its own cultural and social demands that had set the mold for the new forms and routes of travel. A good part of popular tourist destinations, such as the Crimean coast or Caucasian mineral water spas, came into fashion due to the recreational habits of the Russian royals whose frequent visits or

⁴⁶⁶ John Glad, *Russia Abroad*, 55

summer residences at the site marked the place as worthy of attention: e.g. Catherine II's fondness for the Imatra waterfalls in Finland drew crowds of visitors from St.Petersburg since 1770s and the Romanov's palace in Livadia, near Yalta had similarly contributed to the enormous popularity of the place, etc. Another venue for "marking" sites for tourists and for organizing tourist experience could have been the spread of guidebooks that were pioneered in the west around the 1840s by John Murray III and Karl Baedeker. However, until the second half of the century, prospective Russian tourists wishing to travel abroad had few if any domestic guidebooks from which to seek advice on their trip and had to rely on foreign originals for information on sites and accommodation. Perhaps due to the lack of basic tourist infrastructure (affordable hotels, secure and well-maintained roads, professional guides available at the sites, etc.) domestic travelers who wished to divert from the well-beaten track of recreational tourism of the southern spas and resorts had no basic source of information to fall back on, as the only available commentary on the domestic sites merely described the cultural or natural significance of the given place instead of orienting the travelers on how to travel, where to stay and what else to see. It was not until 1875 that a Petersburg newssheet started publishing information about travel agencies, hotels and tourist destinations filling in, however partially, the near complete absence of comprehensive Russian guidebooks on the market.⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶⁷ Louise McReynolds, "The Pre-revolutionary Russian Tourist: Commercialization in the Nineteenth Century", 25.

CONCLUSIONS: “The foreign land as a metaphor of one’s own”

--Что делают в России?
 --Думают о России.
 --Я спрашиваю, что делают в России?
 --Я отвечаю – думают о России.
 --Вы меня не поняли. Я спрашиваю, что делают в России!
 Какими делами занимаются? Дело, дело какое-нибудь есть?
 --В России думают о России. Это главное дело России.

~Fazil’ Iskander⁴⁶⁸

--О, эти русские мысли о русском! Одни и те же. Они одинаковы. Что в русской деревне, что в Париже. Они кружат [...]: что с нами и зачем мы? У себя дома мы озираемся: где родина? — на Западе она торчит в нас, как кол.

~Andrey Bitov⁴⁶⁹

The historical study of practices and narratives of travel that I have attempted in this work helps illuminate processes of cultural, social and ideological change, of which travel and its retelling are both constituent agents and effects. A quintessentially interdisciplinary field of inquiry, the study of travel includes historical analysis of the evolution of paradigms of travel and tourism and of their cultural meanings; literary and historically-sensitive analyses of travel writing; anthropological exploration of

⁴⁶⁸ “--What do they do in Russia?

--They contemplate Russia.

--I am asking *what* exactly do they do in Russia?

--I am telling you, they contemplate Russia.

--You did not understand me. I am asking what do they do in Russia? In what sort of activity are they engaged? I mean, business, activity. Is there any in Russia?

--In Russia they contemplate Russia. This is their main activity in Russia.”

Fazil’ Iskander, “Dumaishchii o Rossii i amerikanez” [The one thinking about Russia and an American] in Iskander, *Rasskazy, povest’, skazka, dialog, esse, stikhi* [Short Stories, a novel, a fairytale, a dialogue, an essay, poems] (Ekaterinburg: Y-Faktoria, 1999),545.

⁴⁶⁹ Oh, those Russian thoughts about matters Russian! The same old thoughts. They are the same, whether one is in a Russian village or in Paris. They are circling around [...]: what is going on with us, what are we for? At home we are looking around: where is the motherland? – when we are in the West, it sticks from our very guts like a stake.” Andrey Bitov, “Vnuk 29 aprelya”. Quoted in Natalya Ivanova, “Zhertva geografii: russkii pisatel’ otkryvaet (i zakryvaet) mir” [Victim of geography: Russian writer discovers (and “shuns”) the world] in *Nevesta Bookera. Kritichesky Uroven’ 2003/2004* [Booker’s Bride. Critical Level 2003/2004] (Moscow: Vremia, 2005) 149-170.

touring practices and narratives, economic study in the construction/production and consumption of touring styles and tourist sites; sociology and semiotics of tourism within the discourses of modernity and mass-culture, etc. Although I could not have hoped to tackle all of the above in the already over-inflated structure of this work, I hope I have succeeded in reading the cultural history of Russian travel and travelogue in ways that complicate and deepen the understanding of Russia's historical and cultural engagement with the outside world and with its own elusive identity. Throughout this work I have sought to explore the evolution of practices and narratives of travel in Russian culture against the generic Western paradigms focusing on the mechanisms of cultural borrowing and translation as well as on the discontinuities between the borrowed and domestic cultural discourses and the attitudes of travelers that they shape. If travel is indeed "one of the principle cultural mechanisms, even a key cause for the development of modern identity", as I have sought to argue following Elsner and Rubies, then the peculiar trajectory of the historical development of Russian travel and travelogue attests to the emergence of a rather different modern identity there (or more precisely, a set of attitudes, behavioral codes and values).⁴⁷⁰ Whereas the history of Western travel and travelogue should be seen alongside the gradually emerging authorial subjectivity that privileges the discovery of the self over the discovery of the world, the Russian travelogue never quite develops similar full-fledged subjectivization of the authorial standpoint. Instead of discovering one's individuality and asserting its unique value through the exploration of the world, Russian travelers rather contemplate their place within a

⁴⁷⁰ Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubies, eds., *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), 4. I'm referring here to Foucault's understanding of modernity as *ethos* or *attitude*, rather than a period of history: "...[B]y "attitude" I mean a mode of relating to contemporary reality; a voluntary choice made by certain people; in the end, a way of thinking and feeling; a way, too, of acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task." Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment" in Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 39.

public body, discovering a collective, rather than an individual self through the encounter with the foreign. Hence, the title of my work borrowed from the travelogue of Petr Vail, a writer and ardent traveler himself who wrote his MA thesis (unfortunately lost to posterity) on the development of Russian travelogue: “the specificity of Russian travel is that the foreign country is a metaphor for one’s own.”⁴⁷¹

A comparative analysis of Russian practices and narratives of travel against even the most schematic outline of its Western European counterparts reveals important peculiarities of the Russian context that can be variously attributed to the country’s geography, political and social history, as well as its cultural and theological discourses that have been analyzed in Chapters 2, 4 and 5 of this work.

The most important of all factors, and in a sense, an offshoot of them all, seems to be the country’s belated arrival into European modernity after a long period of relative isolation. The top-down modernization of the state and society initiated by Peter I in the end of the seventeenth century that entailed an increased exposure to Western culture, technology and mores and their cultivation on the Russian soil had placed an unprecedented weight on travel and travel writing. As Russia struggled to reinvent itself as a European-style, secular modern empire while simultaneously seeking to grasp and define its national identity, travel in Europe and accounts of these journeys became crucial vehicles for broadcasting and translating foreign realities for the public at home as well. Travelogues also served as crucial media for and makers of the most vital social, cultural and philosophical debates of the day that centered on the country’s volatile sense of national self.

⁴⁷¹ «Особость русского путешествия: чужая страна – метафора своей.» in Petr Vail, *Karta Rodiny* [The Map of the Motherland] (Moscow: KoLibri. 2007), 439.

The travel writing of the Enlightenment Europe that reflected on the world made more accessible and knowable by colonial conquests, geographical explorations and the rise of natural sciences and ethnography, had laid the groundwork for a new set of cosmopolitan values defined in explicit juxtaposition with the non-European and/or “primitive” “Other” (e.g. Europe’s own medieval past).⁴⁷² Russia’s belated exposure to Western civilization accounted for the fact that its encounter and familiarity with these crucial developments had been cursory and incomplete, mostly brought about by the importation of Western philosophical and scientific debates. In the absence of a comparable autochthonous tradition of either scientific or educational journey and travelogue, Russia’s nascent literary travel writing had to accomplish several tasks simultaneously. It documented and commented on foreign realities in order to educate “sedentary” audiences at home. It played with specific textual and thematic characteristics and cultural models that it adopted from Western European literary travelogue (e.g. Grand Tour, Sentimental journey, etc.). Last but not least, it engaged competing Western cultural and philosophical discourses and their domestic renditions. These discourses varied in their assessment of Russia’s westernization and its recent medieval past (now regarded by some as the seed of the country’s national authenticity and uniqueness) and they were similarly divided in their perception of contemporary Western civilization. Thus, the evolutionary development of practices and narratives of travel that took centuries in Western Europe to evolve had to be compressed into mere decades in Russia. However keen the country was on adopting - transplanting - western cultural products and ideas, it inevitably had to tailor them to fit domestic socio-political realities and ideological exigencies.

⁴⁷² Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Ribies, eds. *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), 50.

Moreover, while Western encounter with the “Other” mostly worked to reaffirm cultural self-confidence of the traveler, Russian exposure to Western Europe forced a reflective travel writer to walk a fine line between uncritical emulation and praise for everything foreign on the one hand, and parochial and stubborn insistence on one’s own superiority and self-sufficiency on the other, which had been rendered problematic in view of Russia’s cultural and technological indebtedness to the West. This dilemma was aptly formulated by Denis Fonvizin in his address to Catherine II: “How can we exterminate two opposing and most harmful prejudices, “ he asked, “first, that in Russia everything is awful, but in foreign lands all is well; second, that in foreign lands everything is awful, but in Russia all is well?”⁴⁷³ However grotesque Fonvizin’s rendition of them, each position speaks volumes of Russia’s inability to ever entirely tear away from the West as either a model or an anti-model for what Russia ought to be, since the very discourses describing its condition from either a nationalist conservative position (“archaists”) or pro-western one (“modernists”) have been borrowed from the West. Penetrating to the core of society’s self-consciousness, the “West” (more as a discursive formation and a playground of the imagination, projections and fears, rather than a really existing geographical realm) functioned as a frame of reference or a contrasting foil against which Russia could assert its own identity⁴⁷⁴

Romanticism’s fascination with Asia/Orient that Russia “discovered” first in the Crimea and later in the Caucasus in the late eighteenth early nineteenth centuries allowed the empire to test its own Europeanness against the non-European “Other” by

⁴⁷³ Her reply was evasive: “With time and knowledge”. However, both of the extremes have continued to structure Russia’s political discourses up to this day. English translation quoted in Sara Dickinson, *Breaking Ground: Travel and National Culture in Russia from Peter I to the Era of Pushkin* (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2006), 23.

⁴⁷⁴ Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire* (1997), 277.

claiming Western civilizational standards as its own and casting itself in a civilizing, “Europeanizing” role traditionally associated with the West. Russia’s complex and protracted engagement with its newly colonized “Asian” provinces and the diverse poetic and political needs to which Romantic figurations of the “Oriental Other” were put, hologram the specificity of Russia’s Orientalism. Underwriting imperial conquest of the Caucasus or resisting it, romanticizing the newly colonized highlanders or identifying with them, as with the newly acquired subjects of repressive autocratic rule, the discourses of the Orient engendered by Russian Romantics never overcome the ambivalence and insecurity about Russia’s own volatile European identity. As I have sought to show in my discussion of the evolution of Romantic Orientalist idiom in the works of Pushkin, instead of delineating the border between barbarity and civilization, backwardness and enlightenment, Asia and Europe, Russian Orientalism revealed a border that was porous and thoroughly ideological, eluding a traveler’s grasp both literally (as the empire kept expanding) and metaphorically.

Travelogue, a literary genre that seems to be predicated on comparative reflection over cultural specificity of different societies, including one’s own, seems ideally suited to provide a palpable content to elusive Russianness. Moreover, the very evolution of this genre that involves a gradual foregrounding of a narratorial auto-reflective persona that represents a collective national “we” abroad, correlates with the rise of national awareness. While the growing popularity of literary travel writing had by the end of the eighteenth century produced a figure of a relatively confident “Russian abroad”, self-assured about his or her cosmopolitan sophistication, the actual content of the traveler’s “Russianness” was more often than not construed through the critique of foreign ways rather than through any affirmative articulation of Russian national essence. Thus, a common trope of much of Russian thinking about

the “West” juxtaposes technological and economic achievements of Western civilization with the corruptedness of its mores, which, in turn, is contrasted with Russia’s “unique spirituality”. Although such dichotomy itself is hardly a uniquely Russian invention and can be observed in the nationalist discourses of the societies that undergo belated modernization, its tenacity in Russian consciousness can be attributed to a complex cluster of historical and socio-cultural factors ranging from the specificity of Russian Orthodox precepts to the enduring sense of the country’s cultural inferiority in relation to Western Europe, etc.

Domestic travel that was just coming into vogue in Europe by the turn of the nineteenth century offered Russian travelers and travel writers a chance to distance themselves from Western protocols of travel and travelogue by pursuing internal itineraries, while working to valorize Russia’s domestic space by virtue of such journeys and their descriptions. Never quite so popular as travel in Europe, plagued by bad roads, substandard lodgings, harsh climes and vast distances, provincial travel or tourism did not garner too many enthusiasts in Russia until the second half of the nineteenth century. While in the eighteenth century Britain and France domestic tours drew on the concept of the “picturesque” that developed in response to the progressing industrialization of the western European countryside, the very notion of landscape aesthetics (applied to Russian domestic space) and the traveler’s scenic gaze itself like so many other western borrowings developed here much later. It was hindered, among other things, by a slower pace of economic development, weakness of the local bourgeoisie and low tourist interest in Russian provincial itineraries. In addition to these socio-economic reasons, domestic interest in Russian interior, traditionally conceived of as unspectacular, monotonous and desolate, suffered another setback

throughout the 1820s, when the Romantic rage for the newly “discovered” Crimea and Caucasus was dictating aesthetic and tourist fashions.⁴⁷⁵

Ultimately, it was not Russian literary travel writing that produced an aesthetically and nationally significant vision of and language for Russian domestic terrain. By the 1840s Russian travelogue have lost much of its former luster due to its reorientation to the lowbrow reading public and concomitant changes in authorship. Professionalization of scientific travel writing (e.g. ethnography, geography, etc.) on the one hand, and the proliferation of dilettantes and epigones of western travel writers that populized the genre on the other, both cost the genre its former originality and prestige. Being less standardized and formulaic than travelogue, and much less dependent on well-established western styles and conventions, realist prose became the chief arena for the debate over Russia’s national destiny, the country’s entanglement with the West, its own domestic geography, and the relationship between elite urbanites and disenfranchised rural population. The genre of a novel was also less bound by the necessity to uphold a documentary quality expected of travel writers, which was highly problematic in the repressive political climate of Nicholavean Russia, necessitating metaphorical language, double-speak and allegory. As Sara Dickinson explains:

Literary travel writing was incapable of either posing or answering questions such as the query about national destiny that concludes the first part of *Dead Souls*: “Rus, where are you racing?”. This possibility existed solely for prose fiction, whose importance soared as that of the travelogue fell. [...] By recasting actual tour description in terms of progress along more metaphorical roads, writers were both able to respond to demands for character development and to draft emplotted narratives with particular outcomes. Fictional forms permitted them illustrate the lessons accumulated from the experience of actual travel, to make rhetorical points about the importance of domestic landscapes, and to otherwise explain the significance of Russian and its native inhabitants. Following on the heels of literary travel writing, the fiction of Tolstoy, Goncharov, Dostoevsky and their contemporaries illustrates the continuing

⁴⁷⁵ Sara Dickinson, Sara. *Breaking Ground: Travel and National Culture in Russia from Peter I to the Era of Pushkin* (Amsterdam, New York: Editions Rodopi, BV, 2006), 178.

evolution of a native tradition in a process constituting the description and affirmation of the ‘national self.’⁴⁷⁶

Turning their attention towards interior landscapes, Russian novelists worked to establish a symbolic nexus between the specific features of geographical space and the Russian character, turning them into metaphors of one another. The spatial metaphors that I discuss in this work reflect the centrality of space in the cultural construct of Russianness and help map religious, cultural, ethical, social and ideological facets of Russia’s perception of itself and of the world. They also highlight important ruptures and continuities between medieval and modern concepts of space and place, of the domestic/native and the foreign/alien.

In his 1857 assessment of literary travel writing of his time Nikolai Cherkyshevsky argued that despite its continuous popularity with the reading audiences, the genre has notably gone into eclipse, or more accurately, have lost its former standing within the hierarchy of literary genres.⁴⁷⁷ At the same time, the gradual foregrounding of the narratorial presence with the economy of travel narrative and the dominant place of “digressions”: emotions, thoughts and personal quirks of the author, oftentimes at the expense of the documentary precision of the travel’s actual description, erode the genre’s boundaries and make the actual act of travel unnecessary for the production of a travel narrative. Imaginary, arm-chair journeys, or journeys woven into larger narrative contexts not only mark the point of departure from the once prescribed conventions of the genre, but they also render these conventions formalistic and obsolete but turning travel into a narrative strategy

⁴⁷⁶ Sara Dickinson, *Breaking Ground: Travel and National Culture in Russia from Peter I to the Era of Pushkin* (Amsterdam, New York: Editions Rodopi, BV, 2006), 237.

⁴⁷⁷ Nikolai Chernyshevsky, Review of *Pis'ma ob Ispanii* by V.P. Botkin. In *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v shestnadsati tomakh*, vol. 4 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1948), 222-245, 222-223.

that organizes the plot, helps “move” the action and introduces a powerful symbolic motive that permeates Russian ideological novel: quest for social justice and truth.

The four travelogues that conclude this work (Ivan Goncharov’s *Frigate “Pallas”*, Anton Chekhov’s *In Siberia and Island Sakhalin* and Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*) illustrate the complex processes of cross-fertilization between travel-writing and prose fiction and the porousness of the genre’s once stable boundaries. However different in form and ideological stance taken by each author, these travelogues served as creative laboratories for the three writers’ subsequent work and thought, a means to invent a personal aesthetics and as in Chekhov’s case, to test one’s ideas and values practically, to try one’s hand at larger literary form. They also prefigured the major themes and directions that would condition the subsequent development of travel literature, its different forms (urban travel writing, feuilletonistic form, journalism, and bordering genres (adventure literature/*приключенческая литература* or youth literature/*литература для юношества, научно-популярная литература, etc.*) Thus, building on a distinctly non-indigenous conventions of travel writing and infusing this tradition with new thematic, structural and stylistic possibilities, Russian nineteenth century novelists and fiction-writers bypassed travelogue’s standardized forms and patterns to describe the significance of Russian domestic space on its own terms and to address the concerns it aroused.

* * *

A particular (and obviously, too broad) chronological scope of this work that covers the ground from the earliest known written accounts of Orthodox pilgrimage in the eleventh century to the realist prose of the late nineteenth century, perhaps, requires an explanation. Thus, before final remarks, a disclaimer is due as to what was not

included in this project both thematically and chronologically and what prompted my engagement with the subject of travel and travel writing in the first place.

The initial impulse for this project came from my fascination with a rather controversial travelogue, separated by a gulf of the Soviet experience from the rest of the works that I have discussed here. It was written by a Nobel-prize poet Joseph Brodsky, many of whose poems and essays can be regarded as examples of fine “travel writing”; only it is a travel writing of a particular sort.⁴⁷⁸ On the surface level of things, Brodsky’s *Flight from Byzantium*, published in *New Yorker* in October 1985, seemed to describe the poet’s recent trip to Turkey and Greece.⁴⁷⁹ Brodsky’s contemptuous, splenetic tone alienated many a critic who denounced the work as “racist”, “orientalist”, an example of “imperial arrogance at its worst,” etc. In most of the reviews that followed the publication Brodsky predictably comes across as a smug and alienated western traveler who treats the Asian reality, -- “the dusty catastrophe of Asia”, to use his own formulation, -- a realm utterly devoid of any charm or significance, as a springboard for his own philosophizing, As a post-colonial studies’ cliché of exotic travel would have it, “a place where there is nothing to see but a lot to interpret.” As if anticipating these accusations, Brodsky admits:

⁴⁷⁸ Brodsky’s other famous prose travelogues include an essay on his journey to a conference in Brazil (“После путешествия, или Посвящается позвоночнику” [“After a Journey, or Homage to Vertebrae”] (1978); a much celebrated essay about his trip to Venice “Watermark” [“Fondamenta degli incurabili”/“Набережная неисцелимых»] (1989); and an arm-chair travelogue, imaginary evocation of his native Leningrad “A Guide to a Renamed City” (1979).

On geography and travel and exile in Brodsky’s oeuvre, see George L.Kline, “Variations on the Theme of Exile” in Lev Loseff and Valentina Polukhina, eds., *Brodsky’s Poetics and Aesthetics* (Houndmills: MacMillan, 1990); Petr Vail, ed., *Joseph Brodsky: Peresechennaya mestnost’* (Moscow: Nezavisimaya gazeta, 1995), Petr Vail, “Prostranstvo kak metafora vremeni. Stikhi Iosifa Brodskogo v ghanre puteshestvia” [Space as a Metaphor of Time. Joseph Brodsky’s poems in the genre of travelogue] in *Joseph Brodsky: Special Issue. Russian Literature*, vol. XXXVIII/III, North-Holland (1995): 405-416 and Sanna Turoma, “Poet kak odinokii turist: Brodsky, Venezia i putevye zametki” [A Poet as Lone Tourist: Brodsky, Venice and Travel Notes], *Novoe Literaturnoe Obzrenie* no. 67 (2004).

⁴⁷⁹ Joseph Brodsky, “Flight from Byzantium” in *Less Than One: Selected Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1986), 393 – 446. Originally written in Russian and translated into English by Alan Myers in collaboration with the author.

Presumably, it would have made sense to make friends with someone, get into contact, look at the life of the place from the inside, instead of dismissing the local population as an alien crowd, instead of regarding people as so much psychological dust on one's eye. Who knows? Perhaps, my attitude toward people has in its own right a whiff of the East about it, too. When it comes down to it, where am I from?⁴⁸⁰

And elsewhere:

Racism? But is not it only a form of misanthropy? [...] Snobbery? But it is only a form of despair. Misanthropy? Despair? Yet what else could be expected from [...] a man who has nothing to go back to?⁴⁸¹

The “where am I from?” remark is indeed key to reading this polemical travelogue, which is at once a brilliant *tour de force* of a Russian-American essayist, and a bold historiosophical statement, although vulnerable to criticism on the grounds of its historical accuracy and ideological outlook. The text's controversial political contingency, I suggest, should be regarded within its mythopoetic essence that speaks beyond the travelogue's immediate subject matter about something of deeper and larger import - about politics and art, the interrelations between ethics and aesthetics, the poet's conceptions of time and space, and ultimately, of course, about the poet and his own native country. Banished from Soviet Russia, unable to visit even briefly in order to attend his parents' funeral, Brodsky comes to the “Second Rome”, having “spent 32 years in what is known as the Third Rome, about a year and a half in the First. Consequently, I needed the Second, if only for my collection.”⁴⁸² In a sense, his journey to Turkey, that gives him a chance to cast a glance at Russia from the other shore of the Black Sea, is a poetic rehearsal of the impossible journey of

⁴⁸⁰ Joseph Brodsky, *Less Than One*, 443.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid*, 403.

⁴⁸² *Ibid*, 395.

homecoming.⁴⁸³ His real destination and subject matter is Russia, not Turkey and his reflections on the “gradual erosion of the cross and the rise of the crescent” inquire into the source of Eastern despotism to which he himself fell victim in his own land: “Isn’t my native realm an Ottoman Empire Now? – in extent, in its military might, in its threat to the Western world?”⁴⁸⁴ It is this experience of persecution and exile that pits his staunch and hard-won Occidentalism versus what he perceives as the false (historically uninformed and thus dangerously romantic) myth of the Orient, as well as the more recent illusions harbored by Western Left about the nature of the Soviet system.

Probing deeper than the immediate ideological façade one encounters an extraordinarily complex text that weaves together a poetic space-bound description of the actual journey with a historico-philosophical, time-bound, exposé. It also exists in two languages thereby speaking to two very distinct audiences, two radically different historical experiences and cultural subtexts. The English title evokes Yeats’ famous Byzantium poems, particularly his 1927 “Sailing to Byzantium”, and signals Brodsky’s rejection and inversion of Yeats’ romanticization of the “Orient.” A close reading would reveal allusions to Byron and a poetic engagement with a yet another post-colonial traveler from metropolis to the “fringes of civilization” – a fellow Nobel-prize writer V.S. Naipaul (*An Area of Darkness*, 1967, *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey*, 1981). The Russian title, *Путешествие в Стамбул* [Journey to

⁴⁸³ Lev Loseff stressed the importance of Brodsky’s exilic experience for the understanding of his tourist/traveling poetic persona. According to Loseff, traveling exiles are rarely as open to the foreign reality around them as travelers or tourists. Instead of gazing around, their gaze is turned inwards, at the constantly shrinking image of the country they have left behind. Where tourists or travelers see many places, exiles see only one: a non-motherland [«не-родина»]. Thus, concludes Loseff, despite his extensive journeying since the forced emigration in June 1972, Brodsky did not really *travel*, but rather *lived in exile* [«просто жил в изгнании»]. Lev Loseff quoted in George L.Kline, “Variations on the Theme of Exile” in Lev Loseff and Valentina Polukhina, eds., *Brodsky’s Poetics and Aesthetics* (Houndmills: MacMillan, 1990), 70-71.

⁴⁸⁴ Brodsky, *Less Than One*, 438.

Istanbul] positions Brodsky's travelogue within the two-centuries long tradition of Russian literary Journeys, alongside Radischev's Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow, Pushkin's *Journey to Arzrum* and Mandelshtam's *Journey to Armenia*.⁴⁸⁵ He engages the Slavophile thinker and admirer of Constantinople, Konstantin Leontiev (1831-1891), and a literary historian and philologist Sergey Averintsev (1937-2004) whose idea about the relationship between the monotheist religions and absolutist regimes resurfaces in Brodsky's travelogue.⁴⁸⁶ Thus, Brodsky's text, speaking in two voices and to two different audiences accomplishes a formidable act of cross-cultural translation.

The structure of Brodsky's journey itself is also worth mentioning, as it is laden with symbolisms and allusions as is his merciless description of "the delirium and horror of the East", both present and past.⁴⁸⁷ When "Flight from Byzantium" appeared in print, it was signed "Istanbul – Athens, June 1985." The hyphen between the two cities graphically embodies the move – or flight -- from the oppressive,

⁴⁸⁵ For an excellent comparative analysis of the Russian- and English-language versions of Brodsky's travelogue, see Tomas Venclova, "A Journey from Petersburg to Istanbul" in Tomas Venclova, *Forms of Hope: Essays* (Riverdale-on-Hudson, New York: The Sheep Meadow Place, 1999), 161-173 and Peter Vail, "Bosforskoje vremya. Stambul – Byron, Stambul - Brodsky" [Bosfor Time: Istanbul –Byron, Istanbul - Brodsky] in Petr Vail, *Genii Mesta* [Genius Loci] (Moscow: Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 1999), 305-343.

⁴⁸⁶ "...what do we discern in this falsetto of Konstantin Leontiev, that falsetto that pierced the air precisely in Istanbul, where he served in the Czarist embassy: "Russia must rule shamelessly?" What do we hear in this putrid, prophetic exclamation? The spirit of the age? The spirit of the nation? Or the spirit of the place?" Brodsky, *Less Than One*, 438. On Brodsky's polemics with Averintsev and Leontiev in "Flight from Byzantium" see, Petr Vail, "Bosforskoje vremya" in *Genii Mesta* [Genius Loci].

⁴⁸⁷ "The delirium and horror of the East. The dusty catastrophe of Asia. Green only on the banner of the Prophet. Nothing grows here except mustaches. A black-eyed, over-grown-with-stubble-before-supper part of the world. Bonfire embers doused with urine. That smell! A mixture of foul tobacco and sweaty soap, and the underthings wrapped around loins like another turban. Racism? But is not it only a form of misanthropy? [...] Snobbery? But it's only a form of despair. The local population in a state of total stupor whiling its time away in squalid snack bars, titling its heads as in a *namaz* in reverse toward the television screen, where somebody is permanently beating somebody else up. Or else they're dealing out cards, whose jacks and nines are the sole accessible abstraction, the single means of concentration. Misanthropy? Despair? Yet what else could be expected [...] [f]rom a man who has nowhere to go back to?" Joseph Brodsky, *Less Than One: Selected Essays*, 403.

despotic Orient, that Brodsky compares to a form of contagious infection, to Hellenicism, the very source of Western civilization (an explicit reversion of Byron's flight from restrictive Western civility to the libertarian exotica of Turkish harems and baths.) The metaphor of illness resurfaces again when Brodsky explains his mode of transportation. He flew in to Istanbul by plane from Greece, "having thus isolated [the city] in my mind like some virus under the microscope."⁴⁸⁸ The city is contagious, it does not let one leave it easily, it clings to the traveler and overwhelms him passing on that quality to the notes that Brodsky tries in vain to wrap up - "feverishly" - only to admit their viscosity and growing disorder, not dissimilar to his subject matter itself. When he decides to leave Istanbul by sea either for Venice or for Athens, he discovers that no ship or cargo is scheduled to sail West from either Smyrna or Istanbul in the upcoming weeks, the only exception being a Soviet cruise company with a strange name "Boomerang" – that promises perpetual, Kafkaesque, return rather than a definite departure that Brodsky so craves: "I wonder where the young Lubyanka lieutenant who dreamed up that name came from. Tula? Chelyabinsk?"⁴⁸⁹

These multiple dimensions of Brodsky's complex and controversial text make a powerful case for Russian travel writing as a fascinating terrain, overcrowded with the overlapping footprints and itineraries of travelers, past and present, and with their texts that echo each other across time and space. And just as Brodsky travels "in the company" of Byron, Pushkin, Yeats, Leontiev, Averintsev and Naipaul, a Turkish-born Orhan Pamuk charts the symbolic geography of his native city with Brodsky's essay at hand:

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid, 395.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid, 417.

After a long period, when no one of consequence came to Istanbul, and local journalists interviewed all foreigners who showed up at the Hilton Hotel, the Russian-American poet Joseph Brodsky published a long piece entitled “Flight from Byzantium” in the *New Yorker*. [...] At the time I was living far from the city and wanted to read only good things about it, so his mockery was crushing, yet I was glad when Brodsky wrote: “How dated everything is here! Not old, an ancient, antique, or even old-fashioned, but dated!” He was right.⁴⁹⁰

Another passionate traveler – cum – cultural critic, Petr Vail, visits Istanbul almost fifteen years after Brodsky’s stay there to explore the *genius loci* through the eyes of Byron and Brodsky, comparing the personal mythologies each of the poets forged in and off the city. The travelogue’s (and travel’s) inherently citational, multidimensional nature and the wealth of inter-textual allusions that the better examples of travel writing spur forward, offer a telescopic perspective on the wider literary and intellectual landscape of a given culture.⁴⁹¹ Thus, a comprehensive analysis of the twentieth century Soviet/Russian travel writing, which was the initial subject of this dissertation, has proven to be impossible without an examination of the earlier texts of this genre, that reverberate through the works of their literary successors. Pushkin’s *Journey to Arzrum*, Mandelstam’s *Journey to Armenia* (1931-1932), Andrei Bitov’s *Lessons of Armenia: A Journey from Russia* (1969) and Anatoly Naiman’s *Glorious End of Un-glorious Generations* (1996); Mandelstam’s *Journey to Armenia*, Joseph Brodsky’s *Journey to Istanbul* (1985) Petr Vail’s *Genius Loci* (1998); Dostoevsky’s *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* and Leonid

⁴⁹⁰ Orhan Pamuk, *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), 238.

⁴⁹¹ As Eleonory Gilburd puts it in her study of Soviet travels to Western Europe in the 1950s: “Like all text, travelogues have a social life: they are shaped by previous texts and, in turn, shape other trips and travel accounts. They are produced for a certain audience whose responses derive from earlier readings, experiences, and memories. Close attention to the multiple dimensions of a single text allows for contextualization of Soviet travel within the imaginative universe of literary pilgrimage, knowledge and nostalgia”

Eleonory Gilburd, “Books and Borders: Sergei Obratsov and Soviet Travels to London in the 1950s” in. *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist Under Capitalism and Socialism*, eds. Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P.Koenker, eds Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 227- 247, 228.

Tsyppin's *Summer in Baden-Baden* (1982), Chekhov's *Island Sakhalin* and Petr Vail's *Map of the Motherland* (2003) are but a few instances of such literary echoes and dialogues.

At the same time, the discussion of the twentieth century Soviet/Russian travel writing, although clearly rooted in the traditions of the genre and the discursive formations that predate it by centuries, must engage a radically different socio-historical context. From the cultural pluralism and the breakthrough of Russian literature, theater, painting, ballet, design, etc. onto the European cultural scene during the so-called Silver Age (1890-1917) to the growing isolationism and nationalism of the Soviet period (1917-1991) and the Russian "rediscovery" of the outside world following the collapse of the Soviet regime - the twentieth century Russian history has radically reworked the meaning of the experience of border crossing and the functions and significance of travel writing.⁴⁹² Not only had Russia's historical concern with the *West* remained an issue and had gained additional ideological connotations (West being chiefly associated with *capitalism* and the entire social and political order repudiated by the Soviet regime). The symbolic, psychological and cultural dimensions of Russia's relationship to and inclusion into the cultural heritage generally known as Western Civilization were also radically challenged by the

⁴⁹² The flowering of the arts and literature during the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first seventeen years of the twentieth century that later came to be known as the Silver Age was rooted in a creative synthesis between western influences and a self-confident affirmation of national traditions and cultural models. In the words of Vladimir Wiede, "[n]ever before had cultured Russia such a sense of being naturally European, of being a nation with a natural place among the nations of Europe." (Vladimir Wiede, *Russia: Absent and Present* (New York: Vintage – Random House, 1961.)) A sense of closeness to, even oneness with Europe coexisted with the rediscovery of national themes and patterns. The period also saw proliferation of travel literature, the discussion of which would have required a separate study. Suffices to mention to works of Pavel Muratov's *Obrazy Italii* [Images of Italy] vol.1,2,3 (1911-1924); Andrei Bely's *Ophir: Travel Notes and African Journal* (1922) and Nikolai Gumilev's Africa-inspired letters, travel notes and poems, Konstanin Bal'mont's 1905 travel notes about Mexico and the Unites States and his later (1907-1913) extensive travel to Australia, Japan, Egypt (*Realm of Osiris*), etc..

appearance of a tangible border separating Soviet Russia from the West and the world as a whole.⁴⁹³

The country's isolation could not but change the relationship between the traveling author (usually a prominent cultural figure – e.g. Mayakovsky, Il'f and Petrov, Erenburg, Obrastsov, Kataev, Victor Nekrasov, Paustovsky, etc.), and the stay-at-home reader. Surrounded by privilege, one of which was the ability to travel abroad, the Soviet writer was entrusted with the dual mission to both represent the Soviet culture abroad and to translate the foreign reality to the audiences at home.⁴⁹⁴

The narrator and the reader were thus tied by a complex bond of envy, trust and incredulity as well as by a shared system of cultural codes that in the best examples of travel writing transcended the officially sanctioned ideological dimension of the text (e.g. the avowal of the superiority of the socialist society over the capitalist ones) and familiarized the reader with the otherwise barely accessible “far away.” Although the ideological constraints loomed large above these “prescribed journeys”, their literary

⁴⁹³ Carol Avins, *Border Crossings: The West and Russian Identity in Soviet Literature, 1917-1934* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: Berkley University Press, 1983), 4-5.

⁴⁹⁴ The mid-1950s, and particularly, Nikita Khrushchev's 1955 visit to the Geneva summit, marked the relative opening up of Soviet cultural, and to a lesser extent, also physical borders. In contrast to the militant rhetoric of permanent confrontation with “capitalist West” of the previous decades, the partially liberalized Soviet regime now spoke of the “peaceful coexistence”, “peaceful competition” with its archenemy and the “expansion of cultural ties” with the “progressive elements” within western societies. In order to boost the country's international prestige, the regime allows, albeit reluctantly, foreign travelers into the country and facilitated Soviet tourism to the countries within the Soviet camp. As a result, not only the subsequent decade so a veritable explosion of the literature of travel, but the number of travel accounts published in “thick” literary journals devoted to foreign destinations throughout the 1960s nearly twice outnumbered the accounts of domestic travels. (Marina Balina, “A Prescribed Journey: Russian Travel Literature from the 1960s to the 1980s”, *Slavic and East European Journal*, vol. 38, no. 2 (Summer, 1994): 261 – 270, 262).

As for the West – Europe and America - the real object of desire for most, it remained the privilege of the so-called cultural luminaries – mostly writers, poets, directors of ballet and dance companies, less commonly, film directors and actors. The crucial prerequisite for their journeys – loyalty, ideological fidelity and capacity to serve both cultural mediators for the audiences at home and show-cases for the achievements of socialist art and culture abroad. The older ones of them have been in Europe or America before 1917, or perhaps in the 1920s, and were now returning to the places that they have already visited earlier, and could now “reclaim the western culture” for the Soviet audiences. (Eleonory Gilburd, “Books and Borders: Sergei Obrastsov and Soviet Travels to London in the 1950s” in Anne Gorsuch and Diane P.Koenker, eds., *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist Under Capitalism and Socialism* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 227-247.)

accounts did play a crucial didactic illustrative and didactic function, mediating foreign cultures and ideas to the audiences at home, talking, however shyly, of fashions, different cuisines, consumer goods unavailable in the USSR, popular music and other entertainments.⁴⁹⁵ An important feature of the Soviet and early post-Soviet travel writing is its unremitting, almost fetishistic, attention to expressions of material culture, in its most trivial: in the country of continual shortages and material bleakness the aura of “foreignness” seemed to confer a special value to the most insignificant of objects – e.g. pens, candy wrappers, or a pair of jeans that tangibly embodied the “otherness” of the West.⁴⁹⁶

At the same time, the author’s confinement within the geographical borders and ideological straightjacket led to the expansion of the imaginary borders of the literary space that contributed to both the amplified elasticity of the genre’s boundaries and immense popularity of all sorts of travel and adventure literature with the public, including western translations of it. For all its topographical concreteness, in the context of Soviet self-imposed isolation (however varied its degree in different periods of Soviet history had been) the topos of border has come to denote passages not only in actual space, but also in time, history and memory, spurring forward a

⁴⁹⁵ I am referring here to the title of Marina Balina’s study “A Prescribed Journey: Russian Travel Literature from the 1960s to the 1980s”, *Slavic and East European Journal*, vol. 38, no. 2 (Summer, 1994): 261 – 270.

⁴⁹⁶ For more on it, see Joseph Brodsky’s essay on the glimpses of western culture that reached the Soviet Union by way of war “trophy”: “For a man is what he loves. That’s why he loves it: because he is a part of it. And not a man only. Things are that way too. I remember the roar produced by the then newly-opened, imported from Lord-knows-where, American-made Laundromat in Leningrad when I threw my first blue jeans into a machine. There was a joy of recognition in that roar; the entire queue heard it. [...] let’s admit it, we recognized something in the West, in the civilization, as our own; perhaps, even more so there, than at home. What’s more, it turned out that we were prepared to pay for that sentiment, and quite dearly- with the rest of our lives. Which is a lot, of course. But anything less than that would be plain whoring. Not to mention that, in those days, the rest of our lives was all we had.” J. Brodsky, “Spoils of War”, *Spoils of War*, *The Threepenny Review*, no. 64 (Winter, 1996): 6-9;9 and also on the phenomenon of foreign “aura”, see Epstein, Mikhail. *Postmodern v Rossii: Literatura i Teoriya* [Postmodernity in Russia: Literature and Theory] (Moscow: R. Elenin Publishing House, 2000).

wide range of memoirs, descriptions of arm-chair journeys, journalistic reporting, adventure stories and other forms of narratives structured around the trope of travel.⁴⁹⁷

In their turn responding to the many levels of meaning, half-utterances, half-intimations, allegories, and allusions developed by the authors as a counterbalance for the “official speak,” generations of Soviet readers developed and mastered a highly elaborate skill of “reading-between-the-lines”. Viewed historically, the successive periods of political repression and relative liberalization influenced both the flow of travelers from and to the Soviet Union and the ideological control over what of the outside world they have been allowed to reveal in their accounts. In the words of contemporary literary critic Natalia Ivanova, the history of Russian travelogue, and, we should add, of travel as well, is synonymous with the changing fortunes of freedom in Russia, “its rising tides and ebbs, and with the history of the coming into being (and existence) of an independent, autonomous *lichnost*’ - self.”⁴⁹⁸

Once the free border crossing becomes a privilege of the selected few, the already heavily mythologized foreign domain, Dostoevskian “land of the holy miracles” [«страна святых чудес»] attains an almost otherworldly dimension, whose very existence is put into question (at least it had been until the relative liberalization of border crossing from and into the USSR that came in the wake of the “thaw”). For the emigrants leaving Soviet Russia for the West, the border crossing was tantamount to the crossing of Styx, for they could only hope to meet those they

⁴⁹⁷ Azade Seyhan, *Writing Outside the Nation* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), 19.

⁴⁹⁸ The word “lichnost” lacks an exact equivalent in English and can be roughly translated through its attributes, such as integrity, autonomy, moral fiber, independence, etc. «История путешествий как литературного жанра — это история приливов и отливов свободы в России.. И — история становления (и существования) независимой личности. » Natalya Ivanova, “Zhertva geografii: russkii pisatel’otkryvaet (i zakryvaet) mir” [Victim of geography: Russian writer discovers (and “shuns”) the world] in *Nevesta Bookera. Kritichesky Uroven’ 2003/2004* (Booker’s Bride. Critical Level 2003/2004). Moscow: Vremia, 2005, 149-170.

were living behind in the afterlife.⁴⁹⁹ The perception of the outside world as a postmortem “other world” and one’s own reemergence on the other side of the border as a second birth or life after death are all common motives of both the Russian emigrant and travel literature and of exilic literature in general (e.g. Georgy Gachev: “Emigration across the Atlantics is equivalent to the crossing of Lethe in Charon’s boat: death and new birth.”⁵⁰⁰) Tomas Venclova convincingly argues, for instance, that the structure of Brodsky’s Turkish travelogue embodies the classical model of katabasis: flying in to Istanbul from the Athens, the traveler imagines himself descending from the “other world” to Hell. The night before his journey, however, he wanders through the buzzing street crowds of Athens and suddenly realizes that this is how the afterlife should look like: “life has ended but movement was still continuing: this is [what] eternity is all about”.⁵⁰¹ The only thing that indicates otherwise is that he looks for the shadows of his dead parents among the people in the street and does not find them.⁵⁰²

Writer Lidiia Chukovskaya records a conversation she had with Anna Akhmatova around 1955. Akhmatova recalled the pigeons that used to swarm in Tsarskoe Selo before 1917 and then gradually disappeared (eaten by the famished Leningraders during the many successive famines plaguing the city in the first half of

⁴⁹⁹ Solomon Volkov recalls the dedication that Gennady Shmakov, Leningrad-based art critic and poet, made on the book that he presented Volkov with shortly before Volkov’s emigration to the United States at the time when Shmakov himself, a non-Jew and thus not-eligible for an exit-visa, was entertaining hopes for emigration to America : «Милому Соломону Волкову с надеждами на встречу в стране «цвета времени и снов.»»[For dear Solomon Volkov with hopes of meeting again in the “land the color of time and dreams.”] Quoted in Solomon Volkov, *Dialogi s Iosifom Brodskim* [Conversations with Joseph Brodsky] (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 1998), 301.

⁵⁰⁰ Georgy Gachev, “National Images of the World” in Ellen E. Berry and Anesa Miller-Podgar, eds., *Re-Entering the Sign; Articulating New Russian Culture* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 119.

⁵⁰¹ Joseph Brodsky, *Less Than One*, 412.

⁵⁰² Tomas Venclova, “A Journey From Petersburg to Istanbul”, in *Forms of Hope: Essays*. (Riversdale-on-Hudson, NY: The Sheep Meadow Press, 1999), 161-173

the twentieth century). Akhmatova also recalled the doves of Venice, which Chukovskaya found particularly hard to imagine: while she could by some stretch of imagination envisage the pre-1917 Tsarskoe Selo still teeming with pigeons, Venice... did it exist at all?⁵⁰³ As Chukovskaya's recollection makes clear, the transformation of the palpable Venice, a common destination for the pre-1917 Russian travelers and vocational tourists, into an almost surreal figment of memory and/or imagination whose actual existence was impossible to verify is intrinsically connected to the sudden and violent destruction of the pre-1917 Russia: as the Tsarskoe Selo (renamed "Detskoe Selo" after 1917) receded into memory and so must have done the outside world, for who could have imagined that elsewhere life continued in its course, undisturbed?

In his study of the lived experience of late socialism in Russia, Alexei Yurchak argues that the Soviet popular conception of *zagranitsa* (outside world) reflects the "peculiar combination of insularity and worldliness in Soviet culture". While most people used to believe that the communist values and ideals themselves represented universal, internationalist aspirations and were inherently outward looking, they were also well aware that the outside world itself was invariably beyond reach for them:

Zagranitsa lay at the intersection of these two attitudes toward the wider world, signifying an imaginary place that was simultaneously knowable and unattainable, tangible and abstract, mundane and exotic. This concept was disconnected from any "real" abroad and located in some unspecified place – over there (*tam*), with them (*u nikh*), as opposed to with us (*u nas*) – and although references to it were ubiquitous, its real existence became dubious. In the 1980s, the clowns from the famous troupe *Litsedei* made their audiences roll in the aisles with laughter by remarking that, in reality, *zagranitsa* did not

⁵⁰³ «- Волков - Лидия Чуковская вспоминает об одном разговоре с Ахматовой. Дело было в девятьсот пятьдесят пятом году и Анна Андреевна сказала: «Мы отвыкли от голубей, а в Царском селе они были повсюду. И в Венеции.» И Чуковская добавляет, что Царское с голубями она еще могла вообразить, но Венецию – никак. Лидия Корнеевна подумала тогда: а существует ли на самом деле эта Венеция?

-Бродский – Это старая русская мысль.»
Solomon Volkov, *Dialogi s Iosifom Brodskim*, 204.

exist; foreign tourists on the streets of Soviet cities were dressed-up professional actors, and foreign movies were shot in a studio in Kazakhstan.⁵⁰⁴

Thus, the Imaginary West, that could not be visited, but could be “produced locally” and yearned for (as in the popular idiom «увидеть Париж и умереть»/ “to see Paris and die”) informed Soviet literature, film and popular parlance, figuring as an eternal “elsewhere” of imagination, creativity and psyche, and, no less importantly, ideological and theoretical constructions.⁵⁰⁵ Georgy Gachev, for instance, produced a fascinating “reading” of American culture and in particular, American “image of the world” without ever actually setting a foot on its shores, challenged by an emigrant friend, who claimed that the one who had never been to America can never hope to understand it.⁵⁰⁶ To prove otherwise, Gachev committed himself to reading American fiction, books on the country’s geography and history as well as real travelers’

⁵⁰⁴ «In a short story by Mikhail Veller the protagonist from a small city in the Urals in the 1970s has an impossible dream – just once in his life to have a glimpse of Paris. Having failed in endless attempts to get permission to travel overseas, the hero finally, when getting close to a retirement age, is allowed to join a group of factory workers going on a rare voyage to France. After a few euphoric days spent in the French capital, he grows suspicious: “The Eiffel Tower could not possibly be three hundred meters. It was perhaps not higher than the television tower in their hometown, a hundred and forty meters at the most. And at the base of its steel leg Karen’kov spotted the branding of Zaporozhie Steel Factory. He walked further and further...and suddenly stopped by an obstruction that extended to the left and to the right, as far as the eye could see – a gigantic theatrical backdrop, a painted canvas strung on a frame. The houses and the narrow streets were drawn on the canvas, as were the tiled roofs and the crowns of chestnut trees. He set his lighter on maximum and moved the flame along the length of the deceitful landscape. Paris simply did not exist in the world. It never had.” (Veller 2002, p.291).” Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 158-9.

⁵⁰⁵ «Изоляция от Запада была настолько полной и беспросветно вечной, что нам иногда казалось, что Европа – это виртуальная реальность, существующая только в книгах, а волны Атлантического океана разбиваются о берега Белоруссии. Безнадежно отрезанные от другого мира, мы знали и любили марсианскую цивилизацию, может быть, больше, чем его аборигены.» Andrey Piontkovsky, “V poiskakh poteriannogo vremeni” / “Our isolation from the West was so complete, so impenetrable and hopeless, that it sometimes seemed to us that Europe was nothing but virtual reality that only existed in books, and that the waves of the Atlantic Ocean are breaking against the shores of Belorussia [reference to the above quoted passage from *The Golden Calf* - KP]. Hopelessly cut off from the other world we knew and loved this Marsian civilization, perhaps, even better than its aborigines knew it.” Andrey Piontkovsky, “V poiskakh poteriannogo vremeni.” [In Search of the Lost Time], *Kontinent*, no.139 (2009):159–177, 159.

⁵⁰⁶ Georgy Gachev, “National Images of the World” in Ellen E. Berry and Anesa Miller-Podgar, eds., *Re-Entering the Sign; Articulating New Russian Culture* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 118.

accounts so as to produce a non-traveler's travelogue, an analytical expose on Americans' image of themselves and the world, a rather daring undertaking considering the fact that he had never been to the United States and confessed that he did not feel an urge to.

Deconstructing Soviet obsession with the Imaginary West and particularly, with America, Petr Vail and Aleksandr Genis recap the many mythologies and functions of this construct in the post-war era:

When our longing for *zagranitsa* began to be propped by the tiny signs, coming from there – like Paul Robson, for instance – it became a dream and a religion. The international vacuum in which Russia existed at the time spurred forth a gamut of mythologies about *zagranitsa*. Essentially this was a thoroughly designed theological system, albeit, as it is typical of the realm of the metaphysics everything in it was shaky and ambivalent. The main question, however, – is there G-d? Is there life on Mars? – Has been answered positively. The West did exist in reality. This was where books, films and jazz music were coming from. Europe, Rio and Alabama did exist in reality, some place. [...] There were skyscrapers and Hollywood, striptease and cocktails, bullfights, and democracy. Everything was there. We had nothing. A backward peasant woman from an old Soviet movie imagines paradise as a lobby of a Moscow subway station. A Muscovite's image of the afterlife was Paris or New York. Our love for *zagranitsa* was platonic. [...] We needed the West as a pure ideal. It was enough that it did exist. [...] Wonderful and inaccessible, it redeemed everything that was going on at home.⁵⁰⁷

The mythological construct of the “West” that Vail and Genis compare to “religion” and the Soviet consciousness that engendered it echo medieval Russian conception of space in which moral notions of the “sacred” and the “profane”, “righteous” and

⁵⁰⁷ [К]огда тоска [по загранице] стала подкрепляться крохотными знаками оттуда – в виде Поля Робсона, - она стала мечтой и религией. Международный вакуум, в котором существовала Россия, породил целую коллекцию мифов о загранице. В сущности, это была детально разработанная теологическая система. Как и свойственно этой метафизической области, все здесь было нетвердо и не наверняка. Но главный вопрос – есть ли Бог, существует ли жизнь на Марсе – решался положительно. Запад был на самом деле. Оттуда приходили книги, фильмы, джаз. Где-то существовала Европа, Рио-де-Женейро, Алабама. Там, под жарким солнцем Запада, зрели битники, саксофоны, абстракционизм. Там были небоскребы и Голливуд, стриптиз и коктейли, бой быков и демократия. Все было. У нас не было ничего. В старом советском фильме отсталой крестьянке рай представляется в виде Московского метрополитена. Для москвича загробная жизнь реализовалась в Париже или Нью-Йорке. Мы любили за границу платонической любовью. [...] Запад нам нужен был как чистый идеал. Достаточно того, что он существует. [...] Прекрасный и недоступный, он оправдывал все, что творилось дома. Petr Vail and Aleksandr Genis, *Poterianny Rai* [Lost Paradise] in *Sobranie sochinenii v dvukh tomakh*, vol.2 (Yekaterinburg: Y-Faktoria, 2003), 91.

“heretical” were extrapolated over geographical coordinates. An evil social order, demonized by Soviet propaganda, or a “pure ideal” romanticized by generations of Soviet people, *zagranitsa* remained crucial for the country’s own self-definition. A territory laying west of the partially sealed borders of the Soviet Union was so loaded with projections, expectations, anxieties, and desires, so multi-layered and ambivalent, that literature describing encounters with it was also inadvertently pondering the meaning of Russia in both individual, national and ontological terms. The border crossings from and to the West do not merely signify actual passages in space, but a metaphysical transition, deeply affecting both the travelers themselves and the eventual readers of their travelogue.⁵⁰⁸ Not only were literary and actual border crossings filling the “pure ideal” of the West with actual substance, but they also helped transform Soviet Russia, this “negative space” in relation to the West (e.g. “Everything was there. We had nothing”, “The West redeemed everything that was going on at home”, etc.) into a place of a more distinct identity, that was once part of a larger cultural space. Crucially, foreign travels and the clandestine circulation of Soviet-censored literature that it enabled were refurbishing the connection with the cultural and moral heritage of the pre-1917 past, with the Russian émigré culture as well as with contemporary western cultural productions that reached the Soviet Union belatedly, often times distorted, if they reached it at all. They satisfied, however partially, the “longing for the world culture” [*«тоска по мировой культуре»*], Mandelstam much-quoted definition of akmeism] that has tantalized Russian

⁵⁰⁸ Parenthetically, the juxtaposition of the native and foreign that naturally structured travel accounts of journeys to the West can also be discerned in the descriptions of domestic travel to the Russian interior. Natalia Ivanova argues, that the medieval dichotomy of “*Наше — святое, их — адово*” [Ours – saintly, theirs – hellish] was perpetuated by the so-called “village prose” of the 1960s, which, although not travel writing in the strict sense of the world, drew much of its social pathos from the juxtaposition of the traditional village life (as the national ideal) with urban life and the attrition of everything that is authentically national and pure that it entailed. Natalya Ivanova, “Zhertva geografii: russkii pisatel’ otkryvaet (i zakryvaet) mir” [Victim of geography: Russian writer discovers (and “shuns”) the world] in *Nevesta Bookera. Kritichesky Uroven’ 2003/2004* [Booker’s Bride. Critical Level 2003/2004]. (Moscow: Vremia, 2005), 149-170.

consciousness throughout the years of isolation and throughout the “tides and ebbs of freedom” to quote Natalia Ivanova.

* * *

A twentieth century Soviet/Russian writer, suggests Ivanova, should be likened to Robinson Crusoe “who collects on the island of his text, whatever he can salvage from the wrecked ship of the twentieth century culture.”⁵⁰⁹ It is here that the knowledge of the proceeding history of the travel writing in Russia helps illuminate important continuities – as well as ruptures – in the tradition of the genre and in the evolution of the West’s (and more generally, of *zagrantsa*’s) many meanings in Russian culture and imagination.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid, 151.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Secondary Sources

Adams, Percy G. *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983.

----- . *Travelers and Travel Liars, 1160-1800*. Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Pressm 1962.

Adler, Judith. "Origins of Sightseeing." *Annals of Tourism Research* , vol.16 (1989): 7-29.

----- . "Travel as Performed Art." *The American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 94, No. 6. (May, 1989):1366-1391.

Avins, Carol. *Border Crossings: The West and Russian Identity in Soviet Literature 1917-1934*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1983.

Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*. Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1994.

Balina, Marina. "A Prescribed Journey: Russian Travel Literature from the 1960s to the 1980s." *Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Summer, 1994): 261 – 270.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays by M.M.Bakhtin*, edited by M. Holquist and V. Liapunov. Translated by V. Liapunov. Austin: Texas University Press, 1990.

----- . *Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo* (Dostoevsky's Poetics). Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1972.

----- . *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*. Translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin:University of Texas Press Slavic Series no.1, 1981.

----- . *Voprosy literatury i estetiki*. (Questions of Literature and Aesthetics). Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1975.

Barthes, Roland. *Empire of Signs*. Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1982.

----- . *Mythologies*. Translated by Annette Lavers. New York: Hill and Wang, 1972.

Bassin, Marc. "Asia". In *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture*, edited by Nicholas Rzhevsky. Cambridge University Press, 1998.

- . “Russia between Europe and Asia: The Ideological Construction of Geographical Space”. *Slavic Review*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (Spring, 1991):1-17.
- Batten, Charles. *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth Century Travel*. Berkley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1978.
- Baudelaire, Charles. *Le Spleen de Paris/Petits Poemes en Prose*. Paris: Gallimard, 2006.
- Bauman, Zygmunt “From Pilgrim to Tourist – A Short History of Identity.” In *Questions of Cultural Identity*, edited by Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1997.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. Translated by Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken, 1965.
- . *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writing*, edited by Peter Demetz. Translated by Edmund Jephcott. New York: Schocken Books, 1978.
- Berdiaev, Nikolai. *Ruskaia ideaia. Osnovnye problemy russkoi mysli XIX veka n nachala XX veka*. In *O Rossii I russkoi filosofskoi kul'ture* (On Russian and Russian Philosophical Culture). Moscow: Nauka, 1990.
- . “O vechno-babiem v russkoy dushe.” (On the ever-womanish in the Russian soul) In Nikolai Berdiaev, *Tipy Religioznoy Mysli* (Types of Religious Thought) vol. 3. Paris: YMCA Press, 1989.
- . “O vlasti prostranstva nad russkoy dushoi.” (On the power of space over the Russian soul) In Nikolai Berdiaev. *Sud'ba Rossii* (Russia's Destiny). Moscow: Sovetsky Pisatel', 1990.
- Bethea, David. *The Shape of Apocalypse in Modern Russian Fiction*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989.
- . *Joseph Brodsky and the Creation of Exile*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Berghoff, Hartmut, et al., eds. *The Making of Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of the British Experience, 1600-2000*. New York: Palgrave, 2002.
- Berry, Ellen E. and Anesa Miller – Pogacar, eds. *Re-Entering the Sign: Articulating New Russian Culture*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1995.
- Black, J.L. *Essays on Karamzin: Russian Man-of-Letters, Political Thinker, Historian, 1766-1826*. The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1975.
- Blanton, Casey. *Travel Writing: The Self and the World*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

- Bongie, Chris. *Exotic Memories, Literature, Colonialism, and the 'Fin de siecle'*. Stanford University Press, 1991.
- Boorstin, Daniel. *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*. New York: Vintage Books, 1992.
- Borm, Jan. "Defining Travel." In *Perspectives on Travel Writing*, edited by Glenn Hooper and Tim Youngs. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004.
- Boym, Svetlana. *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994.
- . *Death in Quotation Marks: Cultural Myths of the Modern Poet*. London and Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991.
- . *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books, 2002.
- Bracewell, Wendy and Alex Drace-Francis, eds. *Under Eastern Eyes: A Comparative Introduction to East European Travel Writing on Europe*. Budapest, New York: CEU Press, 2008.
- Bracewell, Wendy, "The Limits of Europe in East European Travel Writing". In *Under Eastern Eyes: A Comparative Introduction to East European Travel Writing on Europe*, edited by Wendy Bracewell and Alex Drace-Francis. Budapest, New York: CEU Press, 2008.
- Brower, Daniel R. and Edward J. Lazzerini, eds. *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- Brumfield, William C. "The West and Russia: Concepts of Inferiority in Dostoevsky's *Adolescent*." In *Russianness: Studies on a Nation's Identity, 1918-1978*, edited by Robert L. Belknap. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1990.
- Buzard, James M. *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to "Culture", 1800-1918*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Clifford, James. *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- . *Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Chaadaev, Petr. *Filosoficheskie pis'ma* (Philosophical Letters). In *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i izbrannye pis'ma*, vol.1 (Complete collection of works and selected letters). Moscow; Nauka, 1991.
- . *The Major Works of Petr Chaadaev*. Translated by Raymond T. McNally. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969.

- Chambers, Ian. *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*. New York and London: Routledge, 1994.
- Chaney, Edward. *The Evolution of the Grand Tour: Anglo-Italian Cultural Relations since the Renaissance* London. Portland, OR.: Frank Cass, 1998.
- Chard,Chloe. *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour: Travel Writing and Imaginative Geography, 1600-1830*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999.
- Chi, Robert. "Towards a New Tourism: Albert Wendt and Becoming Attractions". *Cultural Critique*, No. 37 (Autumn, 1997): 61-105.
- Chirico, David. "The Travel Narrative as a (Literary) Genre." In *Under Eastern Eyes: A Comparative Introduction to East European Travel Writing on Europe*, edited by Wendy Bracewell and Alex Drace – Francis. Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2008.
- Cross, Anthony Glenn "*By the Banks of the Thames*": *Russians in Eighteenth Century Britain*. Newtonville, Mass.: Oriental Research Partners, 1980.
- Cross, A.G., ed. *Russia and the West in the Eighteenth Century*. Newtonville, Mass.: Oriental Research Partners, 1983.
- Culler, Jonathan. "The Semiotics of Tourism." *American Journal of Semiotics*, vol. 1, no. 1-2 (1981): 127-140.
- Dement, Galya and Yuri Slezkine, eds. *Between Heaven and Hell: The Myth of Siberia in Russian Culture*. New York: St Martin's Press, 1993.
- Derrida, Jacques. "Of an Apocalyptic Tone Recently Adopted in Philosophy." Translated by John P. Leavey, Jr. *Oxford Literary Review*, 6, no.2 (1984):3-37.
- Dickinson, Sara. *Breaking Ground: Travel and National Culture in Russia from Peter I to the Era of Pushkin*. Amsterdam, New York: Editions Rodopi, BV, 2006.
- ."Four Writers and a Waterfall: Questions of Genre in Russian Travel Writing about Western Europe, 1791 – 1825." *Germano-Slavica* 11 (1999): 3-26.
- ."Russia's First "Orient": Characterizing the Crimea in 1787." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 3.1 (2002): 3-25.
- . "The Russian Tour of Europe Before Fonvizin: Travel Writing as Literary Endeavor in Eighteenth Century Russia." *Slavic and East European Journal*, vol. 45, no.1(2001):1-29.
- Duff, David, ed. *Modern Genre Theory*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2000.
- DeKoven Ezrahi, Sidra. *Booking Passage: Exile and Homecoming in the Modern Jewish Imagination*. Berkley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2000.

- Elsner, Jas and Joan-Pau Rubies, eds. *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel*. London: Reaktion Books, 1999.
- Ely, Christopher. "The Origins of Russian Scenery: Volga River Tourism and Russian Landscape Aesthetics." *Slavic Review*, vol. 62, no. 4 (Winter, 2003): 666-682.
- Epstein, Mikhail. *Postmodern v Rossii: Literatura i Teoriya (Postmodernity in Russia: Literature and Theory)*. Moscow: R. Elenin Publishing House, 2000.
- Feifer, Maxine. *Going Places: The Ways of the Tourist from Imperial Rome to the Present Day*. London: Macmillan, 1985.
- Forsdick, Charles. *Travel in Twentieth-Century French and Francophone Cultures: The Persistence of Diversity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Foucault, Michel "What is Enlightenment?". In *The Foucault Reader*, edited by Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984.
- Frank, Joseph "Dostoevsky: The Encounter with Europe". *Russian Review*, vol. 22, no. 3 (Jul., 1963): 237-252.
- Frow, John. "Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia." *October*, vol. 57 (Summer 1991): 123-151.
- Fussell, Paul. *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980
- , *The Norton Book of Travel*. New York: Norton, 1987.
- Gates, Henry Louis Jr, ed. "Race," *Writing, and Difference*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.
- Glad, John. *Russia Abroad: Writers, History, Politics*. Washington D.C. and Tenafly, NJ: Hermitage and Birchbark Press, 1999.
- Gleason, Walter. "The Image of the West in the Journals of Mid-Eighteenth Century Russia." In *Russia and the West in the Eighteenth Century*, edited by A.G.Cross. Newtonville, Mass.: Oriental Research Partners, 1983.
- Goodman, Nelson. *Ways of Worldmaking*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978.
- Gorsuch, Anne E. and Diane P.Koenker, eds. *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist Under Capitalism and Socialism*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006.
- Greenleaf, Monika Frenkel. "Pushkin's "Journey to Arzrum": The Poet at the Border." *Slavic Review*, vol. 50, no. 4 (Winter, 1991): 940-953.
- Groyce, Boris. *Isskustvo utopii (The Art of Utopia)*. Moscow: Khudozhestvenny zhurnal, 2003.

- .*Utopia i obmen* (Utopia and Exchange). (Moscow: Znak,1993).
- Hall, Stuart and Paul du Gay, eds. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1997.
- Helfant, Ian M. "Sculpting a Persona: The Path from Pushkin's *Caucasian Journal* to *Puteshestvie v Arzrum*." *Russian Review*, vol. 546, no. 3 (July, 1997): 366-382.
- Hellberg – Hirn, Elena. "Ambivalent Space: Expressions of Russian Identity." In *Beyond the Limits: The Concept of Space in Russian History and Culture*, edited by Jeremy Smith. Helsinki: SHS, 1999.
- Henige, David. "Ventriloquists and Wandering Truths." *Studies in Travel Writing*, no.2 (Spring 1998): 64-180.
- Hodge, Alan, ed. *Varieties of Travel: A Selection of Articles from History Today*. Edinburgh : Oliver & Boyd, 1967.
- Holland, Patrick and Graham Huggan. *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998.
- Hollander, Paul. *Political Pilgrims: Western Intellectuals in Search of the Good Society*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1998.
- Hokanson, Katya. "Literary Imperialism, Narodnost' and Pushkin's Invention of the Caucasus." *Russian Review*, vol. 53, no. 3 (July, 1994): 336-352.
- Hooper, Gleen. and Tim Youngs, eds. *Perspectives on Travel Writing*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004.
- Hosking, Geoffrey. *Russia: People and Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Howard, Donald B. *Writers and Pilgrims: Medieval Pilgrimage Narratives and Their Posterity*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980.
- Iskander, Fazil' "Dumaischii o Rossii i amerikanez" (The one thinking about Russia and an American). In *Rasskazy, povest', skazka, dialog, esse, stikhi* (Short stories, a novel, a fairytale, a dialogue, an essay, poems). Ekaterinburg: Y-Faktoria, 1999.
- Ivanova, Natalya. "Zhertva geografii: russkii pisatel' otkryvaet (i zakryvaet) mir" (Victim of geography: Russian writer discovers (and "shuns") the world). In *Nevesta Bookera. Kritichesky Uroven' 2003/2004* (Booker's Bride. Critical Level 2003/2004). Moscow: Vremia, 2005.

- Ivashina, E.S. "O spetsifike zhanra 'puteshestviia' v russkoi literature pervoi treti XIX veka" (On the genre of "travel" in Russian literature of the first third of the nineteenth century). *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta*, 9: Philology, no. 3 (1979): pp.3-16.
- Kalinowska, Izabela. *Between East and West: Polish and Russian Nineteenth-Century Travel to the Orient*. New York: University of Rochester press, 2004.
- Kantor, Vladimir. "Otkuda i kuda ekhal puteshestvennik?" ("Where to and where from was the traveler going?"). *Voprosy literatury* no. 4 (2006): 83-138.
- Kaplan, Caren. *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.
- Khalid, Adeb. "Russian History and the Debate over Orientalism", *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, vol. 1, no. 4 (Fall 2000): 691 – 699.
- Kierkegaard, Soren. *Either/Or*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987.
- Kitson, Peter, ed. *Nineteenth Century Travels Explorations and Empires: Writings from the Era of Imperial Consolidation, 1835-1910*, vol. 1 *North and South Poles*. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003.
- Kjellberg, Ann, ed. *Joseph Brodsky: Collected Poems in English*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002.
- Kline, George L. "Variations on the Theme of Exile." In *Brodsky's Poetics and Aesthetics*, edited by Lev Loseff and Valentina Polukhina. Houndmills: MacMillan, 1990.
- Knight, Nathaniel. "On Russian Orientalism: A Response to Adeb Khalid". *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, vol. 1, no. 4 (Fall 2000): 701-715.
- Kochetkova, Natalya. *Nikolai Karamzin*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975.
- Koenker, Diane P. "Travel to Work, Travel to Play: On Russian Tourism, Travel and Leisure" *Slavic Review*, vol. 62, no. 4 (winter 2003): 657-732.
- Krasnoschekova, Elena. *I.A.Goncharov: Mir tvorchestva* (I.A.Goncharov and his creative world). (St. Petersburg: "Pushkinskii fond", 1997.
- "Fregat "Pallada": puteshestvie kak zhanr" (Frigate "Pallas": Journey as a genre). *Russkaia literatura*, no. 4 (1992) :12-31.
- "Sentimental'noe Puteshestvie." Problematika Ganra (Laurence Stern i N.M.Karamzin) ("Sentimental Journey" Issues of the Genre. (Laurence Stern and N.M.Karamzin). In *Filosofsky vek. Rossiia i Britaniia v epokhu Prosvescheniya. Opyt filosofskoy i kul'turnoy komparativistiki* (Philosophical

Century. Russia and Britain in the Age of Enlightenment. Essays in comparative philosophical and cultural criticism). St. Petersburg, 2002.

- Kundera, Milan. "An Introduction to a Variation." *Cross Currents* 5, (1986): 469-476.
- Lang, D.M. "Sterne and Radischev: An Episode in Russian Sentimentalism." *Revue de la littérature comparée* 21 (1947): 254-260.
- Leskinen M. and V.Khorev, *Mif Evriopy v literature I kul'ture Pol'shi iu Rossii* (The Myth of Europe in Russian and Polish literature and culture). Moscow: Indrik, 2004.
- Layton, Susan. *Russian Literature and the Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Lemon, Alaina. "Telling Gypsy Exile: Pushkin, India, and Romani Diaspora." In *Realms of Exile: Nomadism, Diasporas, and Eastern European Voices*, edited by Domnica Radulescu. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Lexington Books, 2002.
- Leving, Yurii. *Vokzal – Garage – Angar: Vladimir Nabokov i Poetika Russkogo Urbanizma* (Train station: - Garage – Hangar: Vladimir Nabokov and the Poetics of Russian Urbanism). St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Ivana Limbakha, 2004.
- Levi-Strauss, Claude. *Tristes Tropiques: An Anthropological Study of Primitive Societies in Brazil*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1973.
- Likhachev, Dmitry. *Razvitie russkoy literatury X-XVIII vekov: Epokhi I stili* (The Evolution of Russian literature, 1100s – 1700s: Epochs and Styles). St.Petersburg: Nauka, 1999.
- , "Povesti russkikh poslov kak pamiatniki literatury." In *Puteshestviia russkikh poslov XVI – XVII vv. Stateinye spiski* (Journeys of Russian Ambassadors and Their Accounts ("Statiynye Spiski")). Moscow, Leningrad: AN SSSR, 1954.
- Lisle, Debbie. *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Liss, Andrea. *Trespassing Through Shadows: Memory, Photography, and the Holocaust*. Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- Loseff, Lev and Valentina Polukhina, eds. *Brodsky's Poetics and Aesthetics*. Houndmills: MacMillan, 1990.
- Lotman, Yurii. *Semiosfera*. Saint Petersburg: Iskusstvo-SPB, 2004.
- , "Poetika bytovogo povedeniia v russkoi kul'ture XVIII veka" (Poetics of the everyday behavior in the eighteenth century Russian culture). In Vol. 1 of *Izbrannye stat'i* (Selected essays). Tallinn: Alexandra, 1992.

- Lotman Yuri and Boris Uspenskii, “*Pis'ma Karamzina i ikh mesto v razvitiu russkoi kul'tury*” (Karamzin’s *Letters* and their role in the development of Russian culture). In N.M. Karamzin, *Pis'ma russkogo puteshestvennika*, edited by Yu.Lotman and Boris Uspensky. Leningrad: Nauka, 1984.
- Löve, Katharina Hansen. *The Evolution of Space in Russian Literature: A Spatial reading of the 19th and 20th century Narrative Literature*. Amsterdam-Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1994.
- MacCannel, Dean. *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. Berkley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999.
- Maguire, Robert. *Exploring Gogol*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994.
- Malcolm, Janet. *Reading Chekhov: A Critical Journey*. New York: Random House, 2001.
- Maxwell, Mary Jane. “Afanasii Nikitin: An Orthodox Russian’s Spiritual Voyage in the *Dar al-Islam*, 1468 – 1475.” *Journal of World History* 17:3 (2006): 234-266.
- McReynolds, Louise. *Russia at Play: Leisure Activities at the End of the Tsarist Era*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003.
- Medvedev, Sergei. “A General Theory of Russian Space: A Gay Science and a Rigorous Science.” In *Beyond the Limits: The Concept of Space in Russian History and Culture*, edited by Jeremy Smith. Helsinki: SHS, 1999.
- Mills, Sara. *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- Mokletzova, I.V. “Palomnicheskaya tradizia v russkoi kul'ture (iz istorii dokhovnogo opyta)” (“The pilgrimage tradition in Russian culture (from the history of the spiritual experience)). *Vestnik MGU*, vol. 19 “Linguistics and Intercultural communication”, no.1 (2001): 64-76.
- Naficy, Hamid, ed. *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*. London and New York: Routledge/AFI Film Readers, 1999.
- Nakhimovsky, Alexander and Alice Stone Nakhimovsky, eds. *The Semiotics of Russian Cultural History*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- Osborne, Peter D. *Traveling Light: Photography, Travel and Visual Culture*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000.
- Piontkovsky, Andrey. “V poiskakh poteriannogo vremeni” (In Search of the Lost Time). *Kontinent*, no.139 (2009):159 –177, 159.
- Pipes, Richard. *Russia under the Old Regime*. London : Penguin Books, 1990.

- Porter, Dennis. *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Propp, Vladimir. *Morfologija skazki* (Morphology of the folktale). Leningrad: "Academia", 1928.
- Rabinow, Paul, ed. *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Penguin Books, 1984.
- Rayfield, Donald. *Anton Chekhov: A Life*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University press, 2000.
- Riasanovsky, Nicholas. *A History of Russia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- "Asia through Russian Eyes." In *Russia and Asia: Essays on the Influence of Russia on the Asian Peoples*, edited by Wayne Vucinich. Stanford: Hoover Institute Press, 1972.
- Ritzer, George. *The McDonaldization of Society*. Thousand Oaks and London: Pine Forge Press 1993.
- Roboli, T. "Literatura puteshestvii" (Literature of Travel). In *Russkaia proza: Sbornik statei* (Russian Prose: Collection of Essays), edited by Boris Eikhenbaum and Yurii Tynianov. Leningrad: Academia, 1926.
- Rogger, Hans. *National Consciousness in Eighteenth Century Russia*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960.
- Rojek, Chris and John Urry, eds. *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- "Transformations of Travel and Tourism". In *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory*, edited by Chris Rojek and John Urry. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Rozerov, Vassily. *Religia, Filosofija, Kultura*. (Religion, Philosophy, Culture). Moscow: Respublika, 1993.
- Rzhevsky, Nicholas, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York; Vintage, 1978.
- *The World, The Text, and the Critic*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983.

- Sargent-Baur, Barbara Nelson, ed. *Journeys Toward God: Pilgrimage and Crusade*. Medieval Institute Publications, 1992.
- Schönle, Andreas. *Authenticity and Fiction in the Russian Literary Journey, 1790-1840*. London and Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Schuetz, Alfred. "The Homecomer", *The American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 50, no. 5. (March, 1945): 369-376.
- Schulz-Forberg, Hagen. *London -Berlin: Authenticity, Modernity, and the Metropolis in Urban Travel Writing from 1851 to 1939*. Brussels, Belgium; New York : P.I.E.-P. Lang, 2006.
- Scott, David. *Semiologies of Travel: From Gautier to Baudrillard*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Scotto, Peter. "Prisoners of the Caucasus: Ideologies of Imperialism in Lermontov's "Bela"." *PMLA*, vol. 107, no. 2 (March 1992): 246-260.
- Seyhan, Azade. *Writing Outside the Nation*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Shepherd, Naomi. *The Zealous Intruders: The Western Rediscovery of Palestine*. London: Collins, 1987.
- Sherry, Dana. "Kavkaztsy: Images of Caucasus and Politics of Empire in the Memoirs of the Caucasus Corps' Officers, 1834-1859." *Ab Imperio*, no. 2 (2002):191 – 222.
- Siedel, Michael. *Exile and the Narrative Imagination*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986.
- Siegel, Kristi, ed. *Gender, Genre, and Identity in Women's Travel Writing*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2004.
- Singelton, Amy C. *Noplace Like Home: The Literary Artist and Russia's Search for Cultural Identity*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1997.
- Sivkov, K.V. *Puteshestviia russkikh ludei za granitsu v XIII veke* (Foreign Journeys of the Russian people in the XVIII c.). St.Petersburg: Energia, 1914.
- Smith, Jeremy, ed. *Beyond the Limits: The Concept of Space in Russian History and Culture*. Helsinki: Suomen Historialinen Suera, 1999.
- Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. London: Penguin Books, 1977.
- "Model Destinations". *Times Literary Supplement*, June 22, 1984, 699-700.
- *A Susan Sontag Reader*, edited by Elizabeth Hardwick. New York: Farar, Straus, Giroux, 1982.

- Shklovsky, Viktor. "Goncharov kak avtor "Fregata 'Pallada'" ("Goncharov as the author of *Frigate "Pallas"*). In *Zametki o proze russkikh klassikov. O proizvedeniakh Pushkina, Gogolia, Lermontova, Turgeneva, Goncharova, Tolstogo, Chekhova*. (Notes on the prose fiction of Russian classical writers. On the works of Pushkin, Gogol', Lermontov, Turgenev, Goncharov, Tolstoy and Chekhov). Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1955.
- Stafford, Barbara. *Voyage Into Substance: Art, Science, Nature, and the Illustrated Travel Account, 1760-1840*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984.
- Stavrou, Theofanis P.A. and Peter Weisensel, *Russian Travelers to the Christian East from the Twelve to the Twentieth Century*. Columbus, OH: Slavica Pub, 1986.
- Stepanov, Yurii. *Konstanty: Slovar' Russkoy Kul'tury (The Constants: Dictionary of Russian Culture)*. Moscow: Akademicheskii proekt, 2004.
- Sterne, Laurence. *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy*. London: Penguin Classics, 2005.
- Stewart, Neil. "From Imperial Court to Peasant's Cot: Sterne in Russia." In *The Reception of Laurence Sterne on the Continent*, edited by John Neubauer and Peter de Voogdedts. New York, London: Continuum 2004.
- Stewart, Susan. *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1984.
- Strycek, Alexis. *Rossia epokhi prosveshcheniia (Russia in the Age of Enlightenment)*. Moscow: Prometei, 1994.
- Swinglehurst, Edmund. *Cook's Tours: The Story of Popular Travel*. Faraday Close: Littlehampton Book Services 1982.
- Teffy. *Teffy: Biblioteka Mirovoy Novelly*. Moscow: Zvonitza MG, 1999.
- Theroux, Paul. *Sunrise with Seamonsters: A Paul Theroux Reader*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1985.
- Tiime, G.A. "O fenomene russkogo puteshestvia v Evropu. Genezis i literaturny zhanr" (On the phenomenon of Russian Travel to Europe: Genesis and the Literary Genre). *Russkaia literatura*, No.3 (2007): 3-18.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. "The Journey and Its Narratives." In *Transports: Travel, Pleasure and Imaginative Geography, 1600-1830*, edited by Chloe Chard and Helen Langdon. New Haven and London: Paul Mellon Center BA, 1996.
- "The Origins of Genres." In *Modern Genre Theory*, edited by David Duff. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2000.

- Todorova, Maria. "Does Russian Orientalism Have a Russian Soul? A Contribution to the Debate between Nathaniel Knight and Adeeb Khalid." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, vol. 1, no. 4 (Fall 2000): 717-727.
- Turner, Bryan. "A Note on Nostalgia." *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 4 no. 1 (1987): 147-156.
- Turner, Victor W. *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969.
- Turoma, Sanna. "Poet kak odinokii turist: Brodsky, Venezia i putevye zametki" (A Poet as Lone Tourist: Brodsky, Venice and Travel Notes). Translated by E. Kanischeva. *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie* no. 67 (2004).
- , "Joseph Brodsky's Watermark: Preserving the Venetophile Discourse". *Russian Literature* vol. 53, Issue 4, 15 (May 2003): 485-502.
- Tynianov, Yuri "O Puteshestvii v Arzrum." Vol. 2 of *Vremennik Pushkinskoi komissii*. Moscow, Leningrad, 1936.
- Urbain, Jean-Didier. *L'idiot du voyage: Histoires des touristes*. Paris : Payot, 1992.
- , "Sémiotiques comparées du touriste et du voyageur." *Semiotica*, vol.58, no.3/4 (1986): 269-286.
- Urry, John. *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. London: Sage, 1990.
- Vail Petr. "Prostranstvo kak metafora vremeni. Stikhi Iosifa Brodskogo v ghanre puteshestvia"(Space as a Metaphor of Time. Joseph Brodsky's poems in the genre of travelogue). In Vol. XXXVIII/III of *Russian Literature: Joseph Brodsky: Special Issue*. North-Holland, 1995. .
- Vail, Petr, ed. *Joseph Brodsky: Peresechennaya mestnost* (Joseph Brodsky: Covered Ground). Moscow: Nezavisimaya gazeta, 1995.
- Van Den Abbeele, Georges. "Sightseers: The Tourist as Theorist." *Diacritics*, vol. 10, no. 4 (Winter, 1980): 2-14.
- Venclova, Tomas. *Forms of Hope: Essays*. Riversdale-on-Hudson, NY.: The Sheep Meadow Press, 1999.
- Virtanen, Reino, Frans C. Amelinckx and Joyce N. Megay, eds. *Travel, Quest, and Pilgrimage as a Literary Theme*. Studies in Honor of Reino Virtanen (distributed by University Microfilms International, 1978).

- Walker, Gwen. "Andrei Bely's Armchair Journey through the Legendary Land of "Ophir": Russia, Africa, and the Dream of Distance." *The Slavic and East European Journal*, vol. 46, no. 1 (Spring, 2002): 47-74.
- White, Hayden. *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978.
- Wielde, Vladimir. *Russia: Absent and Present*. New York: Vintage – Random House, 1961.
- Wilson Reuel K. *The Literary Travelogue: A Comparative Study with Special Relevance to Russian Literature from Fonvizin to Pushkin*. The Hague: Martinus Nuhoff, 1973.
- Wolff, Larry. *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*. Stanford University Press 1994.
- "Voltaire's Public and the Idea of Eastern Europe: Toward a Literary Sociology of Continental Division." *Slavic Review* 54 (1995): 932-942.
- Wood, Francis. *Did Marco Polo Go To China?* London: Westview Press, 1995.
- Wright, Ronald. *A Short History of Progress*. New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2005.

Primary Sources

- Abbot Daniil, *Zhitie i khozdenie Daniila igumena Russkoi Zemli* (Life and Pilgrimage of Daniil, Abbot of the Russian Land), edited by O. Belobrova et al. St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Olega Obyshko, 2007.
- Brodsky, Joseph. *Collected Poems in English*, edited by Ann Kjellberg. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002.
- *Less Than One: Selected Essays*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux: 1986.
- *On Grief and Reason: Essays*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1997.
- "Says poet Brodsky: 'A Writer is a lonely traveler and no one is his helper'." *New York Times Magazine*, 1 October 1972, 78-84.
- "Spoils of War", *The Threepenny Review*, no. 64 (Winter, 1996): 6-9.
- *Watermark*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1993.
- Chaadaev, Pyotr. "Filosoficheskie pis'ma." In *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i izbrannye pis'ma*, vol.1 (Complete collection of works and selected letters in 2 volumes. Moscow: Nauka, 1991.

- Chekhov, Anton. *Pis'ma, 1877-1892* (Letters, 1877-1892). In Vol. 11 of *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh* (Collected works in twelve volumes). Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1956.
- "Kryzhovnik" (Gooseberry). In Vol. 8 of *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh* (Collected works in twelve volumes). Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1956.
- *Iz Sibiri* (From Siberia). In Vol. 10 of *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh* (Collected works in twelve volumes). Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1956.
- *Ostrov Sakhalin. Iz Putevykh zapisok (1893-1894)* (Island Sakhalin. From the travel notes (1893-1894)). In Vol. 10 of *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh* (Collected works in twelve volumes). Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1956.
- Chernyshevsky, Nikolai, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v shestnadsati tomakh*, vol. 4 (Complete works in sixteen volumes). Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1948.
- Coustine, Marquis Astolphe de. *Rosssia v 1839 godu* (Russia in 1839). Moscow: Zacharov, 2007.
- Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Zimnie zametki o letnikh vpechatleniakh*. In Vol. 4 of *Sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomakh* (Collected works in ten volumes). Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1958.
- *Sobranie sochinenii v piatnadtzati tomakh*, vol. 15 *Pis'ma, 1834-1881* (Collected works in 15 volumes, Letters, 1834-1881). St. Petersburg: Nauka, 1996.
- Erofeev, Viktor. *Entsyklopedia Russkoi Dushi*. (The Encyclopedia of Russian Soul). Moscow: Zebra E, 2005.
- Fonvizin, Denis. *Zapiski pervogo puteshestvia (Pis'ma iz Franzii)*. (Notes of the First Journey (Letters from France)). In *Russkaia proza XVIII veka* (Russian eighteenth century prose), edited by S. Chulkov. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1971.
- Fonvizin, Denis. *Nedorososl'* (The Minor). In Vol.1 of *Sobranie sochinenii v dvukh tomakh* (Collected works in 2 volumes). Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1959.
- *Brigadny-General* (The Brigadier-General). In Vol. 1 of *Sobranie sochinenii v dvukh tomakh* (Collected works in 2 volumes). Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1959.
- Glinka, Fyodor. *Pis'ma russkogo ofitsera o Pol'she, avstriiskikh vladeniakh, Prussii i Frantzii, s podrobnym opisaniem otechestvennoy i zagrtanichnoy voyny s*

1812 po 1814 god (Letters of a Russian officer about Poland, the Austrian lands, Prussia and France with detailed description of the Patriotic War and the foreign campaign, 1812-1814). Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1985.

Gogol', Nikolai. *Mertvye dushi* (The Dead Souls). In Vol. 5 of *Sobranie sochinenii v shesti tomakh* (Collected Works in 6 volumes). Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1949.

Goncharov, Ivan. *Frigat "Pallada"* (Frigate "Pallas"). In Vol. 2 and 3 of *Sobranie sochinenii v vos'mi tomakh*. Collected Works in 8 volumes] (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1953.

-----. *Oblomov*. In Vol. 4 of *Sobranie sochinenii v vos'mi tomakh*. Collected Works in 8 volumes] (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1953.

Ilia Il'f and Evgenii Petrov, *Zolotoi telenok* (Golden Calf). In Vol. 2 of *Sobranie sochinenii v 5 tomakh* (Collected works in 5 volumes). Moscow: Terra, 2003.

Iskander, Fazil'. "Dumauischii o Rossii i amerikanez" (The one thinking about Russia and an American). In Fazil Iskander, *Rasskazy, povest', skazka, dialog, esse, stikhi* (Short Stories, a novel, a fairytale, a dialogue, an essay, poems). Ekaterinburg: Y-Faktoria, 1999.

I

Ivanov, Viacheslav "Skif pliashet" (A Scythian Dancing). In *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy*. (Poems and Longer Poems). Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1978.

Karamzin, Nikolai. *Letters of a Russian Traveler, 1789-1790. An Account of a Young Russian Gentleman's Tour through Germany, Switzerland, France*. Translated by Florence Jonas. New York: Columbia University Press, 1957.

Karamzin, Nikolai. *Pis'ma russkogo puteshestvennika*. (Letters of a Russian Traveler), edited by Yuri Lotman, Nikolai Marchenko and Boris Uspensky (Moscow, Leningrad: Nauka, 1984).

Kluichevsky, Vassily. *Skazania innostrantzev o Moskovskom Gosudarstve* (The foreigners' tales of Muscovy). Moscow: Nauka, 1991.

-----. *Sobranie sochinenii v vos'mi tomakh* (Collected Works in 8 volumes). Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1956.

Muraviev, Aleksandr. *Puteshestvie ko sviatym mestam v 1830 gody* (A Journey to the Holy Sites in 1830). Moscow: Rossiia molodaya, 1999.

Nikitin, Afanasy. *Khozhdenie za tri moria Afanasiia Nikitina* (Afanasy Nikitin's Journey Beyond the Three Seas), edited by M. Kagan-Tarkovskaya and Ya. Lurie. Translated by L. Semenov. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1982.

Ol'shanskaya, L.A. and S.N.Travnikov, eds. "Umneishaia golova v Evrope...": P.A. Tolstoi, *Puteshestiva stol'nika P.A. Tolstogo po Evrope, 1697 – 1699* (The

Cleverest Head in Europe: Petr Tolstoi, Travels of *stol'nik* P.A. Tolstoi in Europe, 1697-1699). Moscow: Nauka, 1992.

Ostrovsky, Aleksandr. *Groza* (The Storm). Vol. 2 of *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v shestnadzati tomakh* (Complete collection of works in 16 volumes). Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1950.

----- . *Poezdka za granitzy v aprele 1962 goda: dnevnik* (Trip abroad, April 1962: diary) in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 13 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1952).

Pamuk, Orhan. *Istanbul: Memories and the City*. London: Faber and Faber, 2005.

Polo, Marco. *The Travels of Marco Polo*. Translated by Teresa Waugh. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1984.

Pushkin, Aleksandr. *Puteshestvie v Arzrum* (Journey to Arzrum). In Vol. 3 of *Sochinenia v trekh tomakh*. (Oeuvre in 3 volumes). Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1986.

Radischev, Aleksandr. *Puteshestvie iz Peterburga v Moskvu. Volnost'*. (The Journey from Petersburg to Moscow. Liberty.) St. Petersburg: Nauka, 1992.

Sterne, Laurence. *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1967.

Tolstaya, Tatiana. *Reka Okkervil* (The River Okkervi': Collected Stories). Moscow: Podkova, 2004.

Turgenev, Ivan. *Asya*. In Vol. 6 of *Sobranie sochinenii v dvenadzati tomakh*. (Collected works in 12 volumes) Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1955.

Ugrešić, Dubravka. "The Writer in Exile. In "Thank You for Not Reading: Essays on Literary Trivia. Translated by C.Hawkesworth. Normal, Il.: Dalkey Archive Press, 2003.

Vail, Petr. *Karta Rodiny* (Map of the Motherland). Moscow: KoLibri, 2007.

----- . *Genii Mesta* (Genius Loci). Moscow: Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 1999.

Vail, Petr and Aleksandr Genis. *Rodnaya Rech* (Native Speech). In Petr Vail and Aleksandr Genis, *Sobranie sochinenii v dvukh tomakh* (Collected works in two volumes) vol. 1. Ekaterinburg: Y-Faktoria, 2004.

Volkov, Solomon. *Dialogi s Iosifom Brodskim* (Conversations with Joseph Brodsky). Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 1998.

Wendt, Albert. *Ola*. Auckland: Penguin, 1991.

Watrous, Stephen D., ed. *John Ledyard's Journey Through Russia and Siberia 1787 - 1788: The Journal and Selected Letters*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966.

