

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE  
**RUSSIAN CULTURE**

*Ayse Dietrich, Ph.D.*

**Course Description**

This course is a survey of the major trends and events in the development of Russian culture from the times of Kievan Rus up to 1917. It examines selective elements of culture; among them literature, language, mythology, religion, art, music, and theater.

**About the Professor**

This course has been prepared by Dr. Ayse Dietrich, Professor Emeritus of Russian History, Literature, Language and Linguistics. She has a bachelor degree from Ankara University, Faculty of Letters, Department of Russian Language and Literature. She also has a master degree from the same University. She received a scholarship in 1987 to study in the United States, and received a master's degree from New York University, Department of Russian Language and Literature and a third master's degree and a doctorate from Cornell University, Slavic Department. She was the chair of the Department of Russian Language and Literature at Ankara University since 2008. She is currently working as a part-time instructor at Middle East Technical University, in the Department of History and the Eurasian Studies, teaching courses on Russian History, Soviet History, History of the Caucasus and Language Policies in Late Imperial, Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia. She is the founder and editor of the *International Journal of Russian Studies (IJORS)*, published in the U.S.A.

**Course Contents**

Unit I	People's Lives, Religion, Art, Architecture and Literature
Unit II	Religion
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Unit IV	Literature
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**The Course Objectives are:**

- 1 -To understand the cultural characteristics of major historical periods;
- 2 - To be able to identify major trends in art, literature and architecture;
- 3 - To employ appropriate terminology in discussing artistic and architectural features, techniques, materials, etc.

**Course Requirements and Methodology:** This course is a graduate level course. Students are required to read assignments and write short essays. In selecting essays topics, students must consult with the instructor.

**Assessment:** Grades are based on the results of the reading assignments, essays and final exams. The essays will be worth 50% and the final paper will make up the remaining 70% of the total grade.

**Course Materials:** Some readings will be provided by the instructor. The other sources can be obtained from the libraries. Students can refer to the following sources:

English Sources:

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- 2- Billington, James. *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture*, Vintage, 1970.
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- 4- Zenkovsky, Serge A. *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*, Meridian, 1974.
- 5- Crackraft, J., *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Culture*, The Belknap Press Of Harvard University Press, 2004.
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- 7- Figes, O., *Natasha's Dance, A Cultural History of Russia*, Metropolitan Books, New York, 2002.
- 8- Emerson, C., *The Cambridge Introduction to Russian Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2008.
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- 10- Evtuhov, C., Goldfrank, D., Hughes, L., Stites, R., *A History of Russia: Peoples, Legends, Events, Forces*, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 2004.
- 11- *Readings in Russian Civilization*, Vol. I, II, III, Edited by Thomas Riha, University of Chicago Press, 1969.
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- 14- Warner, E., *Russian Myths*, The British Museum Press, 2002.
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- 18- Meyendorff, J., *Rome, Constantinople, Moscow, Historical and Theological Studies*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York, 2003.
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- 20- *Orthodox Russia, Belief and Practice Under the Tsars*, Edited by Valerie A. Kivelson and Robert H. Greene, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003.
- 21- *Russian Orthodoxy Under the Old Regime*, Edited by Robert L. Nichols and Theofanis George Stavrou, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1978.
- 22- Kolarz, W., *Religion in the Soviet Union*, MacMillan and Co Ltd., New York, 1962.
- 23- *Religious and Secular Forces in Late Tsarist Russia*, Edited by Charles E. Timberlake, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1992.

- 24- Mann, R., *Lances Sing, A Study of the Igor Tale*, Slavica Publishers, Inc., 1989.
- 25- The Cambridge History of Russia, *From Early Rus' to 1689*, Edited by Maureen Perrie, Vol. I, Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- 26- The Cambridge History of Russia, *Imperial Russia 1689-1917*, Edited by Dominic Lieven, Vol. II, Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- 27- The Cambridge History of Russia, *The Twentieth Century* , Edited by Ronald Grigor Suny, Vol. III, Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- 28- Kennedy, M.D., *Encyclopedia of Russian and Slavic Myth and Legend*, ABC-CLIO Inc., 1998.
- 29- Bailey, J. and Ivanova, T., *An Anthology of Russian Folk Epics*, ME Sharpe, Inc., 1998.
- 30- Lewit, *The Obviousness of the Truth in Eighteenth Century Russian Thought*, <http://www-bcf.usc.edu/~levitt/publications/documents/obviousness.pdf>
- 31- *Dictionary of Literary Biography*. Volume 150: "Early Modern Russian Writers, Late Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries." Edited by Marcus C. Levitt. Detroit: Gale Research, 1995.
- 32- Leatherbarrow, W., & Offord, D., *A History of Russian Thought*, Cambridge University Press, 2010.
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- 43- Hutchings, S., *Russian Literary Culture in the Camera Age*, Routledge, 2004.
- 44- Pipes, R., *Russia Under the Old Regime*, New York, 1974.
- 45- *Russia and Western Civilization*, Edited by Russell Bova, ME Sharpe, New York, 2003.
- 46- *Ibn Fadlan's journey to Russia : a tenth-century traveler from Baghdad to the Volga River*, Princeton : Markus Wiener Publishers, 2005.
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- 48- Taruskin, R., *On Russian Music*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2009.
- 49- *Russians on Russian Music, 1880-1917, An Anthology*, Edited and Translated by Stuart Campbell, Cambridge University Press, 2003.
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- 51- Jensen, C.R., *Musical Cultures in the Seventeenth Century Russia*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2009.

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- 2- *История русской культуры*, "Издательство Око", 2007.

- 3- Литература древней Руси, "Просвещение", Москва, 1996.
- 4- Седов, В.В., V.V. Восточные славяне в VI – XIII вв., Москва, 1982.
- 5- Юдин, А.В., Русская народная духовная культура, "Высшая школа", Москва, 1999.
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- 7- Русская литература XI-XVIII вв., "Художественная литература", Москва, 1988.
- 8- Русские народные сказки, "Азбука", Санкт-Петербург, 1997.
- 9- Путилов, Б., Древняя Русь в лицах, "Азбука", Санкт-Петербург, 1999.
- 10- Литература и культура Древней Руси, словарь-справочник, под редакцией В.В. Кускова, Москва, Высшая школа, 1994.
- 11- Петрухин, В., Крещение Руси: от язычества к христианству, АСТ, Москва, 2006.
- 12- Капица, Ф.С., Тайны славянских богов, Рипол, Москва, 2008.
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- 18- Русская мифология, Энциклопедия, Москва, Эксмо, 2005.
- 19- Митрохин, Н., Русская православная церковь, Новое литературное обозрение, Москва, 2004.
- 20- Власова, М., Русские суеверия, Энциклопедический словарь, Санкт-Петербург, Азбука, 1998.
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- 22- Костомаров, Н.И., Домашняя жизнь и нравы великорусского народа, Экономика, Москва, 1993.\
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[http://www.teatr-lib.ru/Library/Histotry\\_evr/history/](http://www.teatr-lib.ru/Library/Histotry_evr/history/)
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## CLASS SCHEDULE

**Week I Unit I**                    *Medieval Russian Culture – People, Life, Religion, Art, Architecture and Literature*

### *Introduction:*

The first people to live in the lands of Rus lived mostly by hunting game and practicing some agriculture. Since swamps and forests made up a large part of the land in which they settled, many areas were unsuitable for agriculture, to make a living the people hunted, kept bees, fished and trapped animals for their fur. Agriculture was only possible after clearing the forests and then working the newly-created fields. However, the forests provided many of the East Slavic tribes' needs: timber was used to build houses, plates and other utensils were made from wood, and tree bark was used to make shoes and clothing.

Each East Slavic tribe was divided into clans (*rod*), and each clan was divided into families (*familiya*); each clan maintained sovereignty over its territory. The clan's property was held in common and clan leaders met to discuss important matters in popular assemblies known as *veche*. In the clan, every family with its own land lived together in units called *verv*, and the people associated with the family were known as *smerd*.

*The Tale of Bygone Years (Provest' vremennykh let)* provides the following description of the lifestyle of the first Slavs in the lands of Rus':

“Each of these tribes has its own unique customs, social laws, traditions and character. The Polyan, like their ancestors, maintained harmonious, peaceful and mild relations with their own sisters and brides, mothers and their families...

The Drevyan, like animals, lived in herds and killed one another,... they ate every unclean thing, did not marry, and kidnapped girls at the water's edge. The Radimich, Vyatich and Severyan had a common custom: they lived in the forest like wild animals, ate every unclean thing and had inappropriate conversations in front of their fathers and brides. They, too, did not marry but arranged entertainment in the villages. At these times they would come together to dance, sang shameful songs, and took the women they wanted as mates; everyone had two or three mates...”<sup>1</sup>

(*The Tale of Bygone Years*, 12<sup>th</sup> century)

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<sup>1</sup> Milner-Gulland, 1997.

The writer of *The Tale* states that other tribes lived like the Radimich, Vyatich and Severyan. On the Polyan living in Kiev are praised by the writer, raising suspicions that he was a member of this tribe.

In the 10<sup>th</sup> century the Arab Ibn Fadlan was sent to the lands of Rus' as an ambassador of the Abbasid Caliphate. He later wrote an account of his journey in the *Journey to Russia*, and describes the lifestyle of the Rus tribes:

“I saw the Rusiya when they came hither on their trading voyages and had encamped by the river Itil. I have never seen people with a more developed bodily stature than they. They are as tall as date palms, blond and ruddy, so that they do not need to wear a tunic nor a cloak; rather the men among them wear a garment that only covers half of his body and leaves one of his hands free... They are the dirtiest creatures of God. They have no shame in voiding their bowels and bladder, nor do they wash themselves...

They come from their own country, moor their boats on the strand of the Itil, which is a great river, and build on its banks large houses out of wood. In a house like this ten or twenty people, more or less, live together. Each of them has a couch where-upon he sits, and with them are fair maidens who are destined for sale to the merchants, and they may have intercourse with their girl while their comrades look on. ”

(Ibn Fadlan *Journey to Russia*, 10<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>2</sup>

It can be seen that the description of how the Rus tribes lived given in Ibn Fadlan's *Journey to Russia* shows parallels with what was said in *The Tale of Bygone Years*.

The East Slavs' commercial, economic and political relations with their neighbors (the Finns, Balts, Iranian tribes, Byzantines and other Slavic tribes), together with their acceptance of Christianity created the need for a writing system unique to their language. The transition from paganism to Christianity took place in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and the ancient culture Byzantium, one of the most advanced in that period, was assimilated by the Russians.

When Prince Vladimir accepted the Eastern Orthodox faith in 988, he began the process of importing into Rus' of a large collection of religious works that had been translated during the previous century from Greek into the Slavic language. These translations formed the base for the development of literature in Rus'.

During the 11th and 12th centuries the composition of original literary works in Rus' began to flourish alongside the continued translation of Greek literature. All literary activity was conducted by churchmen, so the works of this period were either clearly religious in content or else displayed a strong religious influence. The literature produced in Kievan Rus' consisted of chronicles, homiletic works, and saints' biographies.

The Russians did not blindly adopt the customs of outsiders, but adopted them by adapting them to their own culture. In the villages it is impossible to find traces of these foreign customs which

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<sup>2</sup> Frye 2005, p. 64.

were seen more as a form of oppression in the large cities. It is clear that the conservative Russian villages preserved these ancient customs.

Prior to the adoption of Christianity the Russian people worshiped pagan gods, fairies, spirits, the earth, trees, stones, fire, the sun and water. In order to cure people of illness the Russians would place them in trees whose trunks were split or broken, seek sacred stones, and offer them to the forests, lakes, and wells. The burials of princes and nobles became elaborate rituals; burial mounds were made for the dead, and one of their wives or slaves was buried with them. After the burial competitions were arranged and memorial meals were given.

The Russians' religion was also based on the influence of hunting and agriculture, and for these people things such as fields, forests, rivers, lakes, pools, houses, and stables held great importance. As a result their religious thinking and emotions were formed within the framework of this life. These people who obtained their living from hunting and from the earth sought the aid of supernatural powers to protect them from difficulties and dangers they encountered in their daily lives and to live in peace, even giving these powers a corner in their homes.

The acceptance of Christianity in Kievan Russia began a new era in Russian history. In the late 10<sup>th</sup> century the centers of eastern and western Christianity were Constantinople and Rome. By accepting Christianity from Byzantium the Russians moved in the direction of Byzantine civilization, and thus isolated from Rome, and western culture. Through Byzantium the Russians took the customs of Near Eastern, Greek and Christian civilizations "ready-made", but adopted them by giving them a uniquely Russian character. The political hegemony of princes recognized by the Orthodox Church in Byzantium was carried to Kievan Russian also, and was the reason for the princes' consolidation of their power. At the same time, Christianity ended the separation between the indigenous and foreign tribes, merging these peoples with one another. Not only the Slavic tribes, but the Finnish tribes, too, were forced to accept Christianity, and thus, the first step in the new religion's spread from Kiev to Lake Ilmen. As soon as Christianity had been accepted, beginning with Kiev churches and monasteries were constructed, icons made and craftsmen were brought from Byzantium. Kiev became a religious center, the Metropolitan of Kiev was appointed from Constantinople and became the highest ranking religious leader in Russia. The first Metropolitan for the Russians was Greek, and this situation that would continue to 15<sup>th</sup> century. In 1051 the Metropolitan Ilarion, a Russian, was accepted by Constantinople, but remained in his post for only one year. The rules for the churches in Russia (Nomokanon) were also brought from Byzantium.

As a result of the tolerance shown to all religions during the period of Mongol rule, the position of the Russian church was strengthened. Churches were exempt from all taxes, and respect was shown to all rites and ceremonies conducted in them. Such was the level of tolerance that in 1261, with the permission of the Mongol khan, a new bishopric was established in Saray, the seat of the khanate.

Due to the Principality of Kiev's loss of power, the Metropolitan Maxim moved his seat to the city of Vladimir in 1305. Peter, who took Maxim's place after his death, maintaining close relations with Ivan Kalita played a major role in the construction of Uspenskiy Cathedral in Moscow, the expansion of the Principality of Moscow and its becoming the permanent center

of the Russian church. Fifty new monasteries were constructed by the monk Sergi Radonezh in this century and monastic life gained vitality.

The 15<sup>th</sup> century was the period in which the Moscow church declared its independence. The Metropolitan of Moscow, Isidore, who had signed the declaration of the Council of Ferrara-Florence reuniting the eastern and western churches, was removed from his position. The newly appointed Metropolitan, Iona, was the Metropolitan of Moscow and thus the head of the independent Orthodox Church. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Moscow's dream of becoming the Third Rome resulted in Moscow's status as a patriarchate being accepted.

The Muscovite period lasted from approximately 1400 to 1700. After tentative attempts, around 1480 Moscow became the unquestioned capital, and the pinnacle of Muscovite literary culture was reached in the 1550s, during the reign of Tsar Ivan the Terrible. However, the writers of Moscow did not continue the new literary forms which had appeared toward the end of the Kievan period. Rather, they created strict imitations of existing literary genres; their main achievement was the extensive collections of chronicles and hagiographies which they compiled in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The most distinctive characteristic of this period's literature is its conscious service of state policies.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Church was completely under the control of the state, so much so that Ivan IV removed the Metropolitan Philipp from his post, and going further, later had him killed. In this period the struggles between two church groups, the *Possessors* and *Nonpossessors* ended with the victory of the *Possessors*, and both the state's power and the Church's properties increased more.

Known as the Time of Troubles, the 17<sup>th</sup> century was a period in which the Russian church turned its back on Catholic politics. The Patriarch Filaret, who had assumed position after the death of the Patriarch Germogen, gained fame with anti-Catholic policies. As he was also the father of Tsar Mikhail Romanov, he was given the title *Great Lord*.

Russian art and architecture prior to the acceptance of Christianity consists of idols from the pagan period made of wood and stone, and burial mounds. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century we see that wood craftsmanship held an important place. This can be seen from artifacts recovered in archaeological excavations, remains of temples, and surviving princes' palaces. It is known that during the time of Prince Vladimir Svyatoslavich the number of wooden structures and stone temples increased significantly, and in Kiev the Cathedral of St. Sophia with thirteen spires was also built. The interior of the the cathedral is decorated with frescos and mosaics.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> century we can see an increase in the number of structures made from stone. During this period in Novgorod the Cathedral of St. Sophia, and in Chernigov Spasskiy Cathedral were built. All of these cathedrals were adorned with rich frescos and mosaics. Also in this century Kiev became famous for its golden gates, made in the time of Yaroslav.

In the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century and early years of the 13<sup>th</sup> century both churches and princes' palaces were made of stone. These structures display an architectural style that displays a synthesis of Byzantine elements combined with local traditions. This period witnessed the construction of the Georgiyevskiy Cathedral and the Spasskiy Church in Novgorod's lower sections, the Uspenskiy and Dmitriyevskiy Cathedrals in the city of Vladimir, a palace in Bogolyubovo, and nearby the Pokrov Church. These cathedrals were decorated



with statues. In the late 13<sup>th</sup> – early 14<sup>th</sup> century, in the period of Ivan Kalita, four architectural works were erected in the Kremlin in Moscow: the Uspenskiy Cathedral, the Church of Ivan Lestvichnik, the Spas Church, and the Arkhangelskiy Cathedral. Of all the aforementioned structures, only a few have been preserved. Those in Moscow were restored in the time of Dmitriy Donskoy, and the Kremlin's walls were reinforced with white limestone.

In the late 14<sup>th</sup> century and early 15<sup>th</sup> century the murals of the Greek artist Feofan Grek in Novgorod and Moscow bear witness to Russian painting. The icons of the monk Andrei Rublev were the masterpieces of Russian icon painting which was in its golden age in this period. In particular, Rublev's Old Testament Trinity icon, with its colors and lines is unsurpassed. Today, this Trinity is kept in the Tretyakov Gallery. Ceiling paintings by Rublev are also found in the Uspenskiy Cathedral in Vladimir, and in the Spasskiy Cathedral in the Andronikov Monastery. The Lazarus Church in Murom, a timber structure from the last years of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, is the first surviving example and holds an important place in Russian architecture.

The two schools of architecture opened in Novgorod and Pskov left their mark on Russian architecture in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The Moscow School of Architecture, established on the basis of the architectural traditions of Pskov and Novgorod, later became one of the most important schools. In Zvenigorod, the Uspenskiy Cathedral, and the Troitse-Sergiyev and Savvino-Storozhevskiy Monasteries were built in the Moscow style. Aristotel Fioravanti, brought from Italy in 1479, finished the construction of the Uspenskiy Cathedral in the Kremlin. Dionisii, his two sons and his students gained fame from the frescos they painted in the Kremlin's Uspenskiy Cathedral and in the Pafnu'yevo-Borovskiy Monastery.

The building of stone churches and castles continued in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Churches and cathedrals built in this period show the influence of Italian architecture. The New Arkhangel Cathedral built by Aleviz Friazin in the Kremlin is the structure which is the clearest example of this influence. In the early years of this century the white stone walls of the Kremlin were replaced with bricks. In the icons which were painted on the walls and ceilings of churches, monasteries and palaces the lives of saints, historical events and hymns were brought to life.

In 17<sup>th</sup> century architecture, however, the main building material is again wood. The wooden tsar's palace in Kolomenski is decorated with wood carvings and colorful paintings on the ceiling. In this century the Rostovskiy Kremlin, which contains a number of monasteries, was built. In the last quarter of the century small churches built in the baroque style began to be seen. For example The Sukharev Tower in Moscow, and the Pokrov Church by Lev Naryshkin in Fili were built in this style.

The story of Russian literature begins in 988 - a date of great importance in Russian political and cultural history, when the ruler of Kievan Rus officially accepted Christianity and made it the new faith of his realm. Prior to this date there was no written literature in Rus, but with his conversion Prince Vladimir laid the foundation for what is now known as medieval Russian literature, although it would not attain its true form — on the basis of the literature which survived the destruction of the Mongol invasions - for a number of years thereafter. But the eastern Slavs received an alphabet created by Cyril and Methodius, and also became heirs to the extensive Byzantine cultural heritage which had already been and would later be translated from the Greek.

In the Kievan period the foreign works which were translated in Russia primarily reflected the interests of the church: almost all were translated from Greek, and most related to the interests of the church. Produced in this period, *the Ostromirovo evangeliye (The Ostromir Gospel)* of 1056–1057 is the oldest dated Russian manuscript.

A famous work of Old Russian literature is Hilarion's *Slovo o zakone i blagodati* (1037– 1050) (*Sermon on Law and Grace*), a well-written piece of rhetoric contrasting Old Testament law with New Testament grace.

The predominant genre of Old Russian literature is hagiography, and a number of interesting saints' lives date from the earliest period. Both a chronicle account and two hagiographies of the first Russian saints, Boris and Gleb, have survived to the present day.

Considered one of the greatest works of Old Russian literature, the epic poem *The Tale of Igor's Campaign* describes the events of Prince Igor's campaign against the Polovtsy (Kipchak) and his adventures in its aftermath. More commonly known as *The Igor Tale*, it was written some time between 1185 and 1187. It was re-discovered in 1795 by Count Musin Pushkin, but the manuscript was destroyed in the Moscow fire of 1812. Fortunately, a copy has survived which had been made for Catherine II. A number of scholars have questioned the poem's authenticity, but the majority of experts now accept its authenticity. The destructive infighting among the Russian princes is the main topic of this work.

In the period between Vladimir's conversion and the Mongol invasions in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, Kiev was the cultural and political center of Rus, as well the capital and seat of the new Russian church's metropolitan. It was not until the late 13<sup>th</sup> century that Kievan Rus was able to recover from the results of the Mongol invasion. The first areas to recover were Novgorod and Pskov, since they had not suffered from the raids of the Tatars. Distinctive cultures evolved in these cities which were governed by a type of local assembly. In the early years of the 14<sup>th</sup> century Moscow took over governance of the north-eastern territories from the Principality of Vladimir. Afterwards, Moscow would contest with Tver for legitimacy over the next century. Moscow had been included within the territories of Vladimir, serving a major role in the defense of the northeast. The Metropolitan Peter's abandonment of Vladimir and taking up residence in Moscow in 1324 effectively transferred the seat of the Russian Orthodox Church to Moscow, increasing the city's prestige.

In 1380 one of the landmark events in Russian history occurred when Dmitry Donskoy and his forces inflicted the first Russian defeat on the Golden Horde.

Literary works, particularly hagiography and chronicles, reflected the political-military conditions of this period and were used by local rulers to celebrate their achievements. A series of works in assorted genres, known collectively as the Kulikovo cycle, celebrated the first Russian victory over the Tatars in 1380 under the leadership of Grand Prince Dmitry Ivanovich Donskoy. A less-accomplished imitation of the *Tale of Igor's Campaign*, *the Zadonshchina* glorifies Dmitry Donskoy. The most important hagiography of this period is *Zhitiye Sergiya Radonezhskogo (The Life of Saint Sergius of Radonezh)* written by Epifany Premudry.

Bitter infighting for the seat of the Grand Prince in Moscow was endemic in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century. Not until the latter years of the century was Ivan III able to unite Russia, and in 1480

at the Great Standing on the Ugra River he brought an end to the Golden Horde's rule in Russia.

In the years after the end of the Mongol period, through a combination of diplomacy and military might, Muscovy was able to extend its dominance over European Russia. Ivan III felt entitled to refer to his empire as *the Third Rome* and heir to the Byzantine tradition; a century later in 1613 the Romanov dynasty was established under tsar Mikhail.

Concurrent with Moscow's increasing power, a number of writings appeared on the subject of "translation of empire", writings whose purpose was to legitimize Russia's imperial claims. Among these were works relating the transfer of imperial and ecclesiastical regalia from Constantinople to Moscow, and the composition of elaborate genealogies linking the Byzantine and Russian imperial families. Among the most influential of these works was the monk Filofei's epistle to Vasily III (written between 1514 and 1521). In it he put forward the claim that in the wake of the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople (the second Rome), Moscow was the Third Rome of the only truly Christian state, Orthodox Russia. In essence, this proposition was an attempt to legitimize Russian ambitions.

A number of encyclopedic works, including the voluminous *Sermon on Law and Grace*, the *Code of Laws*, and other collections were indications of the consolidation of power in Moscow. One of the most well-known examples is the *Domostroy*, or rules for household management.

Some of the other well known works of the period include stories designed to entertain; *Povest o Petre i Fevronii Muromskikh (The Tale of Peter and Fevroniya)* is one such example. A merchant, Afanasy Nikitin, describes his voyages to Persia and India between the years 1466–1472 in his *Khozhdenie za tri morya (Journey Beyond Three Seas)*. However, one of the most significant aspects of this period is the fact that the Renaissance completely bypassed Russia, a fact which only helped to increase the cultural differences between Russia and the West. Russia would not produce the secular literature found in the West.

The influx of Western ideas into Russia begins in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, and the cultural crises of the 18<sup>th</sup> century were a result of the rapid change in worldview that occurred in parallel with linguistic and alphabet reforms. 18<sup>th</sup> century writers seem to waiver between producing works that merely mimic French literary style and genres, and attempting to create a truly unique Russian literature. This desire to create nationally unique works can be seen throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the works of a number of prominent writers. V. K. Trediakovsky and M. V. Lomonosov both strove to create a theory of Russian prose composition; A.V. Sumarokov composed songs in the style of Russian folk songs; D .I. Fonvizin made everyday life in Russia the subject of his comedies and used the colloquial language in his works; and Derzhavin will be the forerunner of the sacred genre in the Russian lyric poetry that is to come. The most prestigious genres in this period were clearly drama and poetry, and it is in poetry that the Russian language will attain its definitive literary form in the works of N. M. Karamzin, V. A. Zhukovsky, and A. S. Pushkin.

Russian writers produced original works, employing national themes and style during the time of tsar Alexander I, a period noted for its literary creativity. Without a doubt the quintessential works of this period are those of A.S. Pushkin. Although European culture is assimilated and debated at this time, in years to come a Slavophile opposition will emerge, challenging

western ideas in culture not only nationally and psychologically, but also in the arenas of culture and art.

Beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century romanticism emerges as a means to express the moral and spiritual doubts of contemporary society. Artists see themselves as outsiders, not quite a part of their societies. A new theme, that of the superfluous man, appears in the literature of the time. One of the best expressions of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century mix of doubt and exaltation is found in the novel *The Hero of Our Time*, by M.Y. Lermontov. Through his satirical works N.V. Gogol highlighted the religious and moral subjects that were being debated in Russian cultural circles, a subject that would run throughout 19<sup>th</sup> century literature.

Russian literature gravitated towards social issues during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Only lead, at minimum, to some form of bondage, or, at worst, to self-destruction.

The prose works of Russia's literary golden age were written in the context of a strong tsarist autocracy. While generally composed within a realist framework, the masterpieces of this period are also characterized by the search for a solution to the isolation of an individual in this world; for many writers that solution lay in establishing some type of communication in society, very often by merging with the life of the common people. I. S. Turgenev became internationally renowned for his complex novels which were also extremely critical of Russian society. The moral and religious idealism found in F. M. Dostoyevsky's works earned him both critical and popular acclaim, as did the novels of L. N. Tolstoy. F.M. Dostoevsky examined the society and people of his time from a religious perspective, showing how arrogant, unfettered human freedom can only lead, at minimum, to some form of bondage, or, at worst, to self-destruction. A. P. Chekhov closed the golden age with his sensitive plays and stories, and the following period is better known for its poetic works.

#### *Reading Assignments:*

- 1- Readings in Russian Civilization, Edited by Thomas Riha, University of Chicago Press, 1969. Vol. I, Ch.17.
- 2- Zenkovsky, Serge A. Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales, Meridian, 1974.
- 3- The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture, Edited by Nicholas Rzhevsky, Cambridge University Press, 1998, Ch.1.
- 4- The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture, Edited by Nicholas Rzhevsky, Cambridge University Press, 1998, Ch.2.
- 5- Milner-Gulland, R., The Russians, Blackwell Publishers, 1997.
- 6- Russia and Western Civilization, Edited by Russell Bova, ME Sharpe, New York, 2003, Ch. I, Sect. 1.
- 7- Russia and Western Civilization, Edited by Russell Bova, ME Sharpe, New York, 2003, Ch. II, Sect. 4.
- 8- Ibn Fadlan's Journey to Russia : a Tenth-Century Traveler from Baghdad to the Volga River, Markus Wiener Publishers, Princeton, 2005, Ch. III.

*Questions:* (Write an essay of 200 words, including full bibliography and footnotes, in answer to each of the following questions):

- 1- Compare the early Russian culture with European culture. Discuss what differences exist between the two cultures.
- 2- How was Russian culture affected by the late 17<sup>th</sup> century Western European values?
- 3- How did the Russian intelligentsia react to Westernization?

## **Week II Unit II**      Religion

### *Introduction:*

Centuries ago in Kievan Russia lived tribes who believed in gods and spirits which they identified with the forests and meadows. Very little information has survived about the religious customs of these tribes.

We can learn about the religious beliefs and practices of one East Slavic tribe, the Rus, from priests' manuscripts, epics and some treaties signed with princes (Oleg, 971; Igor, 945).

The pagan Russians worshipped the earth, trees, stones, fire, the sun and water, as can be understood from *The Tale of Bygone Years*:

(1) 'Other pagans were among those who made sacrifices to lakes, wells and the forest.'

(*The Tale of Bygone Years*, 1113)

The Russians would place a sick person in the trunk of tree that was cracked or split, and look for sacred stones. Even today in the Novgorod-Pskov region of Belorussia large stones with marks resembling animal or human footprints are still considered sacred.<sup>3</sup>

V.V. Sedov<sup>4</sup> records that on the lower reaches of the Desna River there are still two trunks of an oak tree worn by the waves, and that these were symbols of paganism. Wild boar tusks were driven into these two tree trunks.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were national forests in the north of Russia that were considered sacred.<sup>5</sup> In the records of Novgorod province the following was written concerning these forests:

(2) 'The forests, made up mostly of large pines, have a magnificent appearance and are today that region's adornment; chapels are made from them.

. . .As for the signs that these forests are revered, the first is that forests are not touched, the second is that these days chapels are constructed near many of these forests, the third is that there are many stories about the misfortunes that soon come to anyone who even intends to cut a single tree from these forests, and the fourth is that young people, out of respect, do not gather to enjoy themselves in any of these forests, nor do they dance there in spring.'<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Yudin, A.V., 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Sedov, V.V., 1982.

<sup>5</sup> Yudin, A.V., 1999.

<sup>6</sup> *Op cit.*

The Russians conducted their ceremonies, and made their prayers and supplication in these forests and shrines. During these ceremonies they played trumpets and rang bells in a wild, noisy fashion, and danced skipping and hopping. Sacrifices were made during these ceremonies to obtain from the gods what they had asked for. Animal and human bones, skulls, vessels, coals and ashes have been found in archaeological excavations. Human sacrifice in Russia continued up until the middle of the 16th century.

Christianity first appeared in this pagan land with Princess Olga's visit to Constantinople in 955. Our information about her visit and acceptance of Christianity there comes from *The Tale of Bygone Years*:

(9) 'Olga went to Greece and arrived in Tsargrad.<sup>7</sup> The ruler at that time was Constantine, the son of Leo. Olga came before him, and the Emperor, seeing that she was both intelligent and beautiful, was astonished. He conversed with Olga and proposed ruling his city together. Upon hearing his words Olga informed the Emperor that she was still a pagan, and if he wanted her to be baptized he would have to do it himself.'<sup>8</sup>

Following this conversation the Emperor, with the help of the Patriarch, baptized her. When Olga returned to Kiev she wanted her son Svyatoslav to be baptized also, but the request was rejected by Svyatoslav. The long-running violence during the reigns of Svyatoslav and his son Yaropolk were not enough to reduce the strength of Olga's Christianity, rather its influences began to become apparent in later years. Years later, when Vladimir, a Viking descendent, became prince of Kiev in 978, he compelled the people of Kiev to accept a single religious system. To this end, he constructed a temple containing images of the gods within Kiev, and demanded that everyone venerate them. However, this effort was unsuccessful and in 988 he himself accepted Byzantine Orthodox Christianity. *The Tale of Bygone Years* relates that before Vladimir converted to Christianity, Jews from the Khazar Khanate, Muslims for the Bulgar state on the banks of the Volga, Catholics from Germany and Greek philosophers from Byzantium came to him, each attempting to convince Vladimir to accept their faith:

(10) 'In that time the Russians were ignorant pagans. Therefore, Satan was happy, but he did not realize that his end had come. He greatly desired to destroy Christianity, but he was driven out of this land by Christians. Vladimir was visited by the Bulgars who kept the religion of Muhammad. ... They told Vladimir that they believed in God, and that Muhammad had commanded them to be circumcised, not to eat pork, not to drink wine, and he promised that after death all their earthly desires would be realized. ... Vladimir told them that their religion – circumcision, not eating pork and not drinking wine – was unacceptable, and answered them by saying, "Drink is the joy of the Russians. We cannot live without that pleasure." ... Next, the Germans came. Vladimir asked them to give him information about their religion. "You must fast when you have the strength, but as St. Paul said, whatever you eat and whatever you drink, you are acceptable to God." Vladimir answered them in this fashion: "Leave here. Our ancestors would never accept such principles." ... Then the Khazar Jews came and said:

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<sup>7</sup> *Tsargrad* means 'city of the tsar' and refers to Constantinople.

<sup>8</sup> Readings in Russian Civilization, p.6.

“Like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob we believe in one God.” Later Vladimir asked them what their religion consisted of. They told Vladimir that their religion had commandments such as circumcision, not eating pork or rabbit, and not doing any work on the Sabbath. The Prince then inquired where their homeland was, and they told him it was Israel. When Vladimir asked where Israel was, they replied: “God was angry with our forefathers and due to our sins scattered us among other peoples. Later our land was given to the Christians.” Hearing this the Prince said: “Then if God has driven you from your land, how is it that you presume to teach others? If God had loved you and your religion, He would not have scattered you in foreign lands. You expect us to accept your religion?” ... The Greeks were the last to visit Vladimir, and they criticized the other religions. ... Their words were beautiful and it was pleasant to listen to them. They spoke of the world to come. They said: “Whoever accepts our religion and then dies will be resurrected and live forever.” ...

Vladimir’s ambassadors continued their journey and when they reached their destination they saw the Bulgars’ bad behavior and the way they worshipped in the mosques. Then they returned to their country. ... Upon this Vladimir announced that the ambassadors that had been sent had returned and that he wished to hear their report.

The ambassadors said: “When we went to the Bulgars we saw their ungirt worship in the temples they call mosques. The Bulgars bent over, sat, looked here and there as if possessed by spirits, and they were not happy; on the contrary they were sad and smelled terrible. Their religion is not good... Later we went to the Germans and watched the rituals in their temples, but there was no splendor in their rituals. Then we went to Greece, and the Greeks took us to the places where they worship God, and we could not understand if we were in heaven or in some other place, because there is no such beauty and splendor anywhere else on earth”... Then the boyars began to speak and they said: “If the Greeks’ religion were bad, our grandmother Olga, who was more intelligent than all other people, would not have accepted it.”

Vladimir then asked where they needed to be baptized, and they replied that he needed to decide this. ... After the people were baptized they returned to their homes. Vladimir, in his joy that God had accepted him and his subjects, ordered that wooden churches be built in the places where the old pagan idols had stood.”<sup>9</sup>

The new religion which Vladimir had obtained from the Greeks is known as Eastern Orthodoxy, or Greek Orthodoxy. At first, the Russians perceived their rapid Christianization as an insult to the old gods, and believed that the new religion impoverished the Russian language. However, this religion aided the start of Russian autocracy, and became the reason that the new values flourished on Russian soil. Christianity in Russian territory brought with it a church organization with Greek archbishop appointed from Constantinople at its head. Unlike the Byzantine church, the Russian church used a language close to the Russians’ own language, Old Church Slavonic. The Greek priests who served in the churches in Russia accepted the use of Old Slavonic as a liturgical language in place of Greek.

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<sup>9</sup> Op cit., pp.8-9.

In 1054 the Christian world witnessed the final schism dividing the Eastern Orthodox and western Roman Catholic churches. The western church had adopted a principle of papal superiority and authority over all churches and in matters of doctrine, and claimed that this principle could not be questioned. The Russian church, having its origin in Byzantium, sided with the Orthodox church and opposed Rome.

A few years after accepting Christianity Vladimir granted the church a number of privileges; his son and successor, the Prince of Kiev Yaroslav also gave the church some additional rights. It has been argued that Christianity brought with it attitudes that harmed the status of women in society in Russia.<sup>10</sup> However, as can be seen in the following excerpts from Yaroslav's *Kiev Canon Law* (Russkaya Pravda) shown in (11), this view is incorrect, and to the contrary, shows that church law contained elements that protected the rights of women.

(11) 'Whoever kidnaps a young maiden and mistreats her, if the maiden is the daughter of a distinguished boyar, shall pay 5 gold *grivna*<sup>11</sup> for the insult to her... if the maiden is the daughter of a less distinguished boyar he shall pay 1 gold *grivna*...

If a distinguished boyar divorces his wife for no cause, he shall pay the woman 3 gold *grivna* for the insult to her, the wife of a distinguished citizen who does the same shall receive 3 rubles.

If someone leads a young maiden astray in his own home and forces her to have relations with another, the maiden shall receive 3 *grivna* for the dishonor.

If a husband forces his wife into prostitution, this is a religious crime. If a husband marries another without divorcing his wife, the bishop will deal with this matter. The man's new wife will be judged in the bishop's court, as for the man he will be forced to live with his former wife.

If a young maiden does not wish to marry, but her father and mother force her to do so and then the maiden harms herself for this reason, her father and mother are guilty and must pay a fine to the bishop, as must the prospective groom.<sup>12</sup>

The adoption of Christianity based on the Byzantine model as the state religion does not mean that only religious doctrine and education were brought to Russia. The lands of the Rus were introduced to Byzantine art and culture, together with religion. Churches were built in the Byzantine style, icons, frescos, and mosaics took the Byzantine style as their foundation. The Prince of Kiev, Vladimir, had Byzantine style cathedrals built in each large city for the purpose of introducing Byzantine art and culture to the Russian people. It is also reported that after the cathedrals were built Vladimir separated children from their families and sent them away to learn the new religion's sacred scripture, the Gospel, for the purpose of creating a new clergy and religious leaders.

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<sup>10</sup> See Kochan and Abraham.

<sup>11</sup> 1 *grivna* = 10 kopek.

<sup>12</sup> Dmitrishin, p.43.



Another characteristic that the Russians inherited from Byzantium was the relationship between the church and the state. In Russia, as in Byzantium, the church remained in the position of obeying the state. In western Europe the church and the state were often in conflict, the church was independent of the state and often held a position superior to the state.

Orthodoxy became the means by which an individual Russian judged himself, the society he lived in, and the place of that society in the world, as well as the means by which Russia perceived its place in the world as the Third Rome. At the start of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the abbot of the Eleazarov Monastery in Pskov, the monk Filofei, described Russia's dream of being the Third Rome<sup>13</sup> in these words:

(12) 'According to the books of the prophets, all Christian states will disappear and unite under one state, that is, under Russia.'<sup>14</sup>

In Christianity's initial years in Russia the Russian church was under the control of the Greek Patriarch in Constantinople. Following the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 the Russian church established itself as an archbishopric and declared its autonomy. In 1589 the Russian church declared its archbishop a patriarch and attempted to show the world that the Russian church was totally independent. In the mid-1600s the Russian patriarch Nikon made some changes to the liturgy and religious practices. Nikon, who declared that errors could be overlooked when the Russians were performing their worship, changed the style of some of the practices of worship in the church. In response, taking the side of the traditional practices in opposition to Nikon the head priest Avvakum divided the Russian church into two camps. Avvakum and his friends, known as the *Old Believers*, opposed the understanding of religious practice advocated by Nikon, who maintained harmonious relations with the western Catholic church. However, this attitude of the Old Believers led to the weakening of the Russian church.

The Russian church experienced major reforms, particularly in the time of Peter the Great. Peter closed the office of the Patriarch of Moscow and its place was taken by the Holy Governing Synod. In 1700, after the death of the patriarch Adrian, he did not allow a new patriarch to be elected. Instead, a committee appointed by the Emperor was established. Thus, by putting an end to the church's independence he was able to transform it into an institution bound to the state. Peter's most important actions were the measures he took to attempt to achieve unity through religion. Peter ordered priests to determine those who had left the Orthodox church and to find ways to bring them back into the church. He even permitted priests to use force to achieve this, if necessary. Those who had left the church paid higher taxes and were forbidden from working in the civil service. However, Peter's efforts to achieve national unity through religion came to naught as Russia's borders expanded and

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<sup>13</sup> There are three reasons for Russia's dream of becoming the Third Rome failing to materialize: Religiously, Christianity was divided into two major groups in the 11<sup>th</sup> century – Catholic and Orthodox. At the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Protestant movement begun by Martin Luther divided western Christianity into an ever growing number of sects. The unity of the Christian church that had existed when Constantinople was declared the Second Rome had long since disappeared. Politically, Russia at that time was not a large empire in the league of the Roman or the later Byzantine Empire. Finally, there was the issue of legitimacy. Constantinople was established by the Romans themselves, and they recognized the city as their capital and the emperor who ruled from there as their legitimate ruler. Russia, on the contrary, had no such direct connection with Rome or her emperors.

<sup>14</sup> Steeves, p.17.

peoples of other religions began to live within the boundaries of the Russian Empire. Nevertheless, the efforts to convert members of other religions to Orthodoxy continued; Muslims who refused to convert were driven from their villages. The efforts to convert Muslims to Orthodoxy only came to an end in the time of Catherine II. The Russian state permitted Muslims to practice their religion provided they lived in the remote corners of the Empire and were obedient.

With Catherine II's annexation of a large territory that had been under Polish rule, came a large number of Jews were now within the boundaries of the Russian Empire. Anti-Jewish measures which began in the period of Ivan the Terrible had, by the first of the 1700s, reached the degree that Catherine I ordered all Jews who refused to convert to Orthodoxy to be driven out of Russia. Attacks against the Jews gradually increased, and by the 19<sup>th</sup> century they were even held responsible for Alexander II's death at the hands of an assassin. In Catherine II's time Catholics living within the borders of the empire were left with no choice but to be associated with the Russian church. At the same time in this century a small Protestant group became active. In the 1860s, a group known as Baptists, active in the Caucasus and the Ukraine, began to expand rapidly within the borders of the empire. Worried by this development, the Holy Governing Synod banned all sects and denominations. Members of the Baptists were kept under surveillance and those who were caught were persecuted. Orthodox missionaries were sent to all the villages and efforts began to convert to Orthodoxy anyone who belonged to another denomination. The church's attitude became so strict that it eventually alienated its own people.

(13) 'The Orthodox church never found a common language with the educated people because its conservative outlook made it pronouncedly anti-intellectual. Following the medieval Russian precept, 'all evil comes from opinions', it showed little interest even in its own theology to which it resorted mainly when compelled to defend itself from heretics or foreigners. It met all attempts to revitalize it with the instinctive suspicion which turned to hostility, sometimes accompanied by denunciation to the authorities and excommunication, whenever it felt that independent judgment was being brought to bear on any of its dogmas or practices. One by one, it pushed away from itself the country's finest religious minds: the Slavophiles, Vladimir Solovëv, Lev Tolstoy, and the laymen gathered in the early 1900s around the Religious Philosophy Society. It also showed little interest in educating its flock.<sup>15</sup>

The trial and exiles continued until 1905, and cannot even be said to have been completely ended after that year. For the first time in 1905 a law to grant legal tolerance to other religions in Russia began to be discussed. Also for the first time members of other religious groups could act more freely than before. However, of those in prison or in exile, some died and other were able to return only after 1917.

#### *Reading Assignments:*

1- The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture, Cambridge University Press, 1998, Ch.3: Religion: Russian Orthodoxy.

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<sup>15</sup> Pipes, p. 243.

- 2- Figes, O., *Natasha's Dance, A Cultural History of Russia*, Metropolitan Books, New York, 2002, Ch. 5: In Search of the Russian Soul.
- 3- Uspenskij, B. & Zhivov, V., "Tsar and God" and Other Essays in Russian Cultural Semiotics, Edited by Marcus C. Levitt, Academic Studies Press, Boston, 2012, p. 1-78.
- 4- Mandelstam, M.B., *Russian Traditional Culture, Religion, Gender and Customary Law, The Introduction of Christianity in Russia and the Pagan Traditions*, ME Sharp, 1992, p. 3-15.
- 5- Mandelstam, M.B., *Russian Traditional Culture, Religion, Gender and Customary Law, Russian Folk Culture and Folk Religion*, ME Sharp, 1992, p. 34-47.
- 6- Meyendorff, J., *Rome, Constantinople, Moscow, Historical and Theological Studies*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York, 2003, Ch.7, 8.
- 7- *Orthodox Russia, Belief and Practice Under the Tsars*, Edited by Valerie A. Kivelson and Robert H. Greene, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003, Ch. 1.
- 8- Pipes, R., *Russia Under the Old Regime*, New York, 1974, Ch. 9.
- 9- Steeves, P.D., "Religious Tradition. From Kievan Rus to a Tsarist Empire", [www.stetson.edu/artsci/russian/keepingthefait01.html](http://www.stetson.edu/artsci/russian/keepingthefait01.html)
- 10- Dmitrishin, B., *Medieval Russia, A Source Book, 850-1700*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., London, 1990.
- 11- Kochan L., & Abraham R., *The Making Modern Russia*, Penguin Books, London, 1985.
- 12- *Readings in Russian Civilization, Volume:1. Russia Before Peter the Great, 900-1700*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, p.6, 1969.
- 13- Yudin, A.V., *Russkaya narodnaya duhovnaya kultura, "Vysshaja shkola"*, Moskva, 1999.
- 14- Sedov, V.V., *Vostochnye slavyane v VI – XIII vv.*, Moskva, 1982.
- 15- *Russia and Western Civilization*, Edited by Russell Bova, ME Sharpe, New York, 2003, Ch. I, Sect. 2.

*Questions:* (Write an essay of 200 words, including full bibliography and footnotes, in answer to each of the following questions):

- 1- How was Christianity reflected in Russian culture?
- 2- Is it possible to see traces of pagan culture in Orthodox Russia?
- 3- Talk about the concept of Tsar as God. Where did this concept come from? How did Byzantine culture see their Emperor?
- 4- Why did Russia see herself as the Third Rome? Why did this doctrine fail?

### **Week III Unit III      Mythology**

#### *Introduction*

Mythology takes as its subject the significance of the objects that exist in the world, natural events, and the private matters and objects of social life from an emotional point of view. Mythology is the identification of humanity with nature, making the powers of nature one's own in the imagination. In the face of natural events, the first humans were powerless, both before the events within themselves and those that came from outside. Therefore, it is directed at describing events and objects that were considered taboo, or embodying and personalizing events or objects that the mind could not grasp. Identifying itself with all living

and non-living thing from the very beginning, the human mind tried to express them through various objects and symbols. The rustle of leaves, thunder, bird calls, and lightning striking – all these natural events were perceived by humans as a sign of good or evil, life or death.

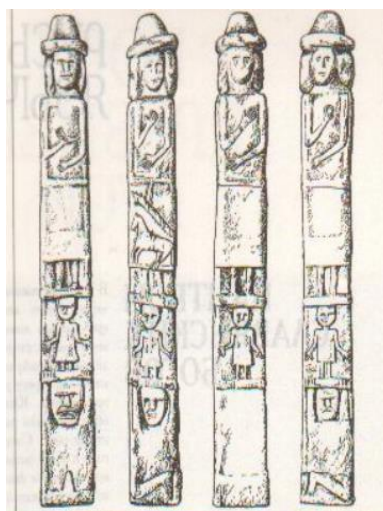
Mythological images are indirect expressions of humans' internal worlds and emotions. Emotions override reason. Mythological images do not consist only of imaginary depictions. They also have the quality of making living in harmony with human desires and emotions, and acting together easier. In this context, The subject of Russian mythology consists of the belief of the Russian people, who planted fields, worked the land, and spent their lives together with animals such as eagles and wolves, that supernatural powers directed the fates of men, and the symbols and gods that before and after the coming of Christianity were passed down from generation to generation.

Mythology sustains its existence in all cultures in both oral and written sources. It is possible to find knowledge about the mythology of the Indo-European people in the earliest literary works. Therefore, for example, we can gain a great deal of information about Greek mythology from Homer's epics. We can learn about Russian mythology, however, from priests' manuscripts, epics, or some treaties signed by princes (Oleg, 971; Igor, 945). Apart from these, religious folk beliefs, ceremonies, songs, and stories play an important role in providing mythological information.

Prior to accepting Christianity, the pagan Russians worshipped the earth, trees, stones, fire, the sun and water. It is possible to see traces of these beliefs in the one of the oldest manuscripts, *The Tale of Bygone Years*.

The first find from archaeological excavations is the Zbruchskiy statue, found at the foot of the Zbruch river in the vicinity of the city of Gusyatin. This statue, three meters in length, made of limestone, and in the form of a square column has three levels. The upper level is dedicated to the gods, the middle to human beings and the bottom level is the underworld (see picture 2).

(2)



On the column are four figures, all the same height and wearing the same hat. Two of the figures are women, and each figure has its own unique symbols: a ring, sword, horse, horn etc. However, it is still not known which divinities are depicted here. It is believed that this four-faced statue from the 10th century symbolizes the four cardinal directions (north, south, east, and west).<sup>16</sup>.

We know from archaeological data that a pagan temple was used in the Perin district of Novgorod in Russia. It is thought that this temple was built for the god of thunder, Perun.

(4) "The center part of the temple consists of a plaza surrounded by a regular circular ditch more than 1 meter in depth, 7 meters across and 21 meters in diameter which rises horizontally on the surrounding surface. In the exact center of the circle, excavations revealed a hole 0.6 meters in diameter. Here there was a wooden image of Perun that was carved in 988 and thrown into the Volkhov. In front of the image was a place for sacrifices made of paving stones."

The Russians conducted their religious ceremonies, prayers and supplications in these forests and temples; in these ceremonies they rang bells and played trumpets wildly, and danced hopping and jumping. Sacrifices were offered during these ceremonies for the fulfillment of their prayers. Animal and human bones, skulls, vessels, coal and ashes have been found in archaeological excavations. Offering sacrifices continued in Russia until the mid-16th century.

We learn from *The Tale of Bygone Years* that the first time that the Russians officially placed images of the gods in the palace was during the reign of Vladimir Svyatoslavich:

(5) 'And Vladimir began to rule in Kiev, and he had a temple built on a hill outside the palace; Perun, and Hors, Dazhbog, Stribog, Symargla and Mokosh made of wood, their heads of silver and their mouths of gold.'

(*The Tale of Bygone Years*, 1113)

From the same paragraph we learn that after the acceptance of Christianity the pagans began to be called 'sinners' and that there is now a church on the hill where the image of Perun stood:

(6) 'However, God, who distributes his blessings, did not wish for the sinners to die; now the church of St. Vasilij stands on that hill.'

(*The Tale of Bygone Years*, 1113)

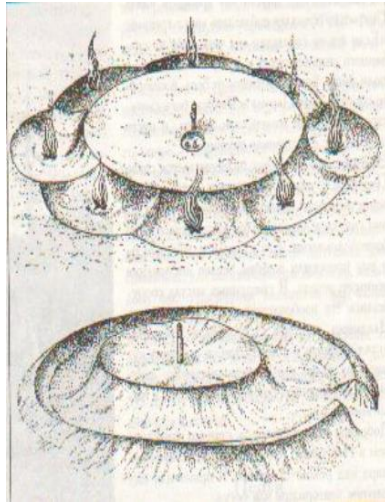
The greatest and most important god (4) during the Russians' time as pagans was the god of the sky, lightning, storms and war, Perun. Perun was also the protector of princes and soldiers in battle. In times of war soldiers swore oaths in his name. Perun was depicted as a bellowing bull, or a male goat; he ensured fertility by sowing seeds and moistening the earth with rains. Perun's symbol was the oak tree and his weapon was the axe. The axe was Perun's lightning and the oak tree drew this lightning to itself. The flames created by Perun's lightning striking

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<sup>16</sup> Путилов, Б., 1999.

the earth could not be extinguished. It was for this reason that the common people cursed someone by saying “May Perun strike you dead!” (Chtob tebya Perun ubil!) <sup>17</sup>. The Russian sacrificed chickens, goats, oxen and even humans to images of Perun made of oak wood. In Novgorod, an image of Perun was located on the top of a hill, and in that location was seen as a symbol of power. Below is a drawing, based on archaeological estimates, of the image of Perun found on that hilltop:

(7)



In *the Story of Oleg’s Conquest of Constantinople* (Povest’ o vzyatii Olegom Tsargrada) from *The Tale of Bygone Years*, the moment Tsar Leon, Alexander and Oleg pledge themselves to keep the peace after signing a peace treaty, the following words are found:

(8) ‘Tsar Leon made peace with Alexander and Oleg, promised to pay tribute and swore oaths among themselves; Tsar Leon and Alexander kissed the cross, Oleg and his men in accordance with Russian law approved the peace by swearing by their weapons, their god Perun, and the god of animals Volos.’

(*The Tale of Bygone Years*, ‘Story of Oleg’s Conquest of Constantinople’, 1113)

The god Volos appears as Perun’s opposite; whereas the image of Perun, the greatest of the gods, was placed on the top of a hill, and when agreements were signed in time of war a prince’s soldiers swore by the god of war Perun, the others swore by the god of the underworld, Volos who protected all of Russia. Volos’ reign in the underworld was represented by death and animal herds, and it was believed that he controlled the demons of the underworld. His place was not a hill, but under a tree or a stone. Volos’ place was taken by St. Vlasii in Christianity. St. Vlasii was a shepherd who protected domestic animals and herds, and represents a martyr. St. Vlasii is depicted as a man mounted on a horse, or seated on a rock surrounded by sheep, cattle and horses. In Russia today, the colloquial words *volosatik* and *volosen’* are known to derive from Volos, and both are used with the meaning ‘evil spirit’ or ‘devil’. <sup>18</sup> The use of Volos in the name of constellations, as in *Volosini* or

<sup>17</sup> Путилов, Б., 1999.

<sup>18</sup> Юдин, А.В., 1999.

*Volosozhari*, is also seen. It was believed that the hunt would be successful in the month when these stars shone brightly.

Again, in the “Story of Oleg’s Conquest of Constantinople” from *The Tale of Bygone Years*, Svyatoslav expresses his belief in the thunder god Perun and the god of animals Volos:

(9) If the Greek Tsar will swear an oath with me, the boyars and all Russians, we will be faithful to our oath. However, if he fails to fulfill the promises he made before, I swear by the gods whom we believe in under the names Perun and the god of animals Volos to those with me and to God above me, that we will be as gold, such that our weapons also will be gold and that we will kill them.’

(*The Tale of Bygone Years*, ‘Story of Oleg’s Conquest of Constantinople’, 1113)

Another image found on a hilltop in Kiev was that of the goddess Mokosh’. Mokosh was the goddess of darkness, wet rainy nights, sacred wells, springs, sexuality and fertility. Her role was make the work of men and animals easier, and to protect them. After the acceptance of Christianity she was replaced by St. Paraskeva. Another form of this goddess was as the goddess of death and rebirth Baba Yaga. In one Russian tale, *Beautiful Vasilisa* (*Vasilisa prekrasnaya*), she appears as an evil old woman who eats children and threatens them with death. However, Baba Yaga also protected women and guided them. In the story, Baba Yaga tells Vasilisa, who was sent by her three step-sisters on the pretext of requesting a candle to be eaten by Baba Yaga:

(10) “Before I give you a light you must live with me and do some work for me. If you refuse, I will eat you.”

(*Beautiful Vasilisa*)<sup>19</sup>

However, being pleased with the work Vasilisa has done for her, she decides not to eat her, and explains that she is going to send her back:

(11) “Pushing Vasilisa outside, she took a burning eye from the skull, put it on a stick and gave it to the girl. ‘Take this and carry it to your three sisters. I know that they sent you for this.’”

(*Beautiful Vasilisa*)

Today mythological female heroes called *Mokushi* or *Mokoshi* are talked about in northwestern Russia. These women are depicted spinning wool. In addition, the names *Mara*, *Morena*, *Markita* and *Makrina* are said to be connected to Mokosh.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Русские народные сказки, 1997.

<sup>20</sup> *Op cit.*

Svarog, god of the heavens and the universe, was considered the father of the gods. The gods of the sun, lightning, clouds, wind, fire and water were begotten by him. The sun god Dazhbog, son of Svarog, distributed wealth prosperity and abundance to humanity with his fruitful rays. It was believed that his marriage to the goddess of spring, Lada, brought prosperity and happiness to the world. In an old story entitled *Dazhbog and Lada* (Dazhbog i Lada), the first encounter and later marriage of the sun god and goddess of spring are described in these lines:

(12) "One day when the sun god Dazhbog was passing through the heavens in his two-wheeled chariot drawn by twelve horses with shining golden manes, he leaned over to see where a sad voice that he heard was coming from and spied a beautiful girl. Lada looked at him and flirtatiously threw water at him, and right then the sun god struck her."

(Dazhbog and Lada)<sup>21</sup>

In the story, Svarog, the high god and god of the heavens, hears that Lada's father Tsar Mora was opposed to this marriage. By creating dark clouds above Tsar Mora and blacking out the sun Svarog helps his son to kidnap Lada in the darkness. The story ends with Lada and Dazhbog's marriage and having a son. Dazhbog's name is found in *The Tale of Igor's Campaign*:

(13) 'Oleg Gorislavich in his time... destroyed all the wealth of Dazhbog's descendants, smashed it and ruined their lives.'

(*The Tale of Igor's Campaign*, 16th century)

Another sun god among the Russians was *Khors*, also known as *Khrys*.<sup>22</sup> Khors' name appears in *The Tale of Igor's Campaign* in the following lines:

(14) The noble prince of all the Slavs put a code of laws into place, met with the princes of the city, and at night ran like the wolves. Setting out from Kiev, he reached Tmutarakan by the time the roosters crowed. Running like a wolf to noble Khors, he reached the other side of the road.'

(*The Tale of Igor's Campaign*, 16th century)

In *The Tale of Igor's Campaign*, one of the most important works of Old Russian literature, Stribog, the god of storms and wind, appears in the following lines:

(15) 'Those winds, Striborg's grandchildren, blew like arrows from the sea on Igor's brave troop.'

(*The Tale of Igor's Campaign*, 16th century)

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<sup>21</sup> Simonov, P., 1997.

<sup>22</sup> It is thought that this name is derived from the Persian word *khurset* 'divine sun'.



In addition to the gods the Russians believed in minor divinities and supernatural powers. These were the spirits, demons, sprites, fairies and giants that lived in the forests, trees, sky, water and houses. These types of mythological beings were far more numerous than the gods; there was only one pantheon of major divinities, but the number of minor mythological beings varied by location.

The Russians' old religion was based on the influence of agriculture; for these people the concepts of earth, fields, forests, rivers, courtyards, houses and barns held great importance in their daily lives. For this reason their religious thoughts and emotions always developed within this framework of their lives. These people whose livelihoods were obtained from the earth sought the help of supernatural powers to protect them from the worries and dangers they encountered in their daily lives and to be able to live in peace. They even went so far as to give them a corner of their homes.

The most important of these supernatural powers, the *Domovoy*<sup>23</sup> or 'house spirit', protected the house. Every house had its Domovoy and every part of the house had its unique characteristics.

Figures of Domovoy were generally made from wood, and depicted a bearded, white-haired old man. Sometimes Domovoy could appear as a rabbit, dog or cat. They were generally accepted to be an invisible being in the house, and it was believed that anyone who looked at a Domovoy would go blind, or even die. A figure of a Domovoy as an old man is seen below (16):

(16)



Domovoy in farm houses, like all people, were beings which required feeding and being shown the proper respect. They abandoned homes were they felt they were not respected or were not fed, and the house that they abandoned would be visited by illness, disaster and death. Before a farmer bought a new animal they walked it around the house both to determine if the Domovoy approved of the animal or not, and to show how much they respected the Domovoy.

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<sup>23</sup> Other names are *Dobrojil*, *Kormilets*, *Dedushka*, *Susedka*, *Batan*, *Zhirovik*, *Shut*, *Sadolom*, *Oblom*, and *Karnouhiy*.

Domovoy hid by day and only came out at night. At night he groomed the horses, fed them and dried wheat in the storehouses.

*The Domovoy and the Two Villagers* (Domovoy i dva krest'yanina) is a folk story about the lives of two farmers, which clearly shows the place of the Domovoy in the home. One farmer had three well-raised horses and with them he was able to provide a good living for his family. The other farmer had three lazy horses; as a result the family barely got by. When the farmer who was in difficulty asked the farmer with the good horses how he fed them, this was the reply:

(17) 'I don't know. It's as if the animals are secretly fed at night, but I don't know anything about it.'

(*The Domovoy and the Two Villagers*)<sup>24</sup>

Lying in wait that night, the jealous farmer who had seen the Domovoy feeding the mares, convinced their owner that the water the Domovoy left for the animals would bring disaster to humans and that he should drill a hole in the bottom of the bucket that the Domovoy used to give water to the mares. Listening to the jealous farmer, the other farmer did as he had been advised and through this thoughtlessness angered the Domovoy. In response to this disrespect the Domovoy of the well-off farmer burned the stable with the horses in it and never returned to that house.

Another household spirit was the *Ovinnik*<sup>25</sup> 'the granary giant', who lived in the granary and resembled a cat the size of a black dog with eyes that burned like coals. In the granaries where the heads of wheat were dried was an oven located in a depression in the floor. The *Ovinnik* lived here, stoked the oven's fire, and went to the threshing floor where threshed the wheat. His duty was to protect those living in the house, and to ensure their happiness. However, it was known that he never forgave the inhabitants' mistakes and misbehavior and punished them.

The spirit that protected the stables and barns outside of the house was the *Khlevnik*, 'stable giant'. The *Khlevnik* herded the animals outside, cleaned them and fed them. His place was the back corner of the stable, where he watched the horses and cattle. Other animals did not attract his attention. In addition to being the protector of the animals, the *Khlevnik* was also regarded as a trouble-maker who could sometimes do them harm. For example, he was sometimes the one who made the horses suddenly run in the stable, or caused a cow to go dry. To guard against the *Khlevnik*'s bad side, owners of animals hung scarecrows at the stable's entrance, braided whips made from hemp that had several knots, forced their animals to pass under a brazier hung in front of the stable door containing glowing poplar coals.

The protective spirit of nature and the forests beyond the house was the *Leshiy*<sup>26</sup>, 'forest giant'. He lived in dense forests and fed on the moisture on the trees. He took the height of any tree and shrub and could assume the shape of any animal. Unlike humans, he wore his clothes reversed, and could uproot even the strongest tree. The *Leshiy* is depicted as a

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<sup>24</sup> Simonov, P., 1997.

<sup>25</sup> Other names are *Gumennik*, *Podovinnik*.

<sup>26</sup> Other names are *Leshak*, *Lesovik*, *Lesovoy*.

creature wearing animal furs, and having a blue tail, protruding green eyes, long eyebrows, long hair, a green goatee and horns.

(18)



The Leshiy disappeared every October until the following year, and reappeared the next spring. In spring he was merciless to people wandering through the forests he watched. By whistling and making noises he made people lose their way in the forest, but in the end allowed to return unharmed. The Leshiy was also known for stealing orphan children abandoned under a tree. In a folk tale called *The Tailor and the Leshiy (Portnoy i Leshiy)*, one day a poor, unemployed tailor says in desperation:

(19) 'If the Leshiy even asked me to sew something for him I would do it.'

*(The Tailor and the Leshiy)*<sup>27</sup>

Following the words, an old man has the tailor sew a number of things for him; in the end, as a reward for his talent and patience, the old man gives the tailor a beautiful girl, a gold carriage with three horses and a quantity of money. This girl had been forgotten by her father under an oak tree twenty years before. Thanks to the tailor and the Leshiy, the girl eventually gained a good husband and father.

The water nymphs, *Rusalka* (plural, *Rusalki*)<sup>28</sup>, were the spirits of unbaptized young girls who had drowned in the rivers or had been killed. They lived in river beds or lake shores. They sometimes appeared as nude, fair-skinned, beautiful girls with long hair; sometimes they had the form of a mermaid, a frog, or even a mouse. The water nymphs lived in the water and only came out of the water for a few days in summer to dry out. These days when they emerged from the water brought plenty and prosperity to the fields and crops. The Rusalki were lonely and constantly sought companions to spend their lives with. They attracted men with their beautiful dances and songs. Men who became enchanted by the Rusalki fell into their trap and eventually either drowned in a river or became a slave of the Rusalki. Therefore, the Rusalki represented darkness, underground water and death.

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<sup>27</sup> Simonov, P., 1997.

<sup>28</sup> Other names are *Krinittsy*, *Loskotalki*, *Zemlyanochki*.

(20)



The folk tale *Ivan Savelevich and the Rusalka* (*Ivan Savelevich i Rusalka*) describes how a hunter who one winter day set out in his boat to hunt seals, was trapped at sea, and fell in love with a beautiful Rusalka who entertained him with her dances at this difficult time, fell into the Rusalka's trap. Before diving into deep waters to meet the Rusalka he says:

(21) 'Rusalka, my love, are you there, below waiting for me perhaps? Or is this a trap? I am afraid of drowning.'

*(Ivan Savelevich and the Rusalka)*<sup>29</sup>

The hunter senses a trap, but completely enchanted by her beauty he cannot stop himself from diving into the deep waters. At the end of the story, when the hunter wants to return to the surface he understands that it is impossible and becomes an eternal slave to his love for the Rusalka.

The oldest stories in Old Russia that were passed from generation to generation and person to person were *epics* (bylina). The subject of these epics is the lives of heroes and champions such as *Svyatogor*, *Il'ya Muromets*, *Dobrynya Nikitich*, *Mikula Selyaninovich*, and *Sadko*; and their triumphs in Russian history.

Among these champions, *Svyatogor*<sup>30</sup> is a great hero in Russian epics. He has no home and no county, and wanders the the Sacred Mountains<sup>31</sup>.

(22) "I do not wander in Holy Russia, for I was not given permission; permission was given me to wander the mountains and heights."<sup>32</sup>

He was forbidden to enter Holy Russia due to his great height (his head almost touched the clouds) and his great weight, beyond the ability of Mother Earth to bear. He was exiled to live in the Sacred Mountains. In the epic *Svyatogor, Mother Earth and Fate*, while sitting on a mountain peak and angry at being exiled *Svyatogor* asks himself this question:

(23) 'Why can I not freely wander the lands of my own country?'

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<sup>29</sup> Simonov, P., 1997.

<sup>30</sup> *Svyatogor* means 'sacred mountain'.

<sup>31</sup> That is, the clouds.

<sup>32</sup> Путилов, Б., 1999.

(Svyatogor, Mother Earth and Fate)<sup>33</sup>

Boasting about himself, Mother Earth and the Sky oppose him. He attempts to demonstrate that he is even strong enough to turn the earth upside down. However, Svyatogor's tries to pick up Mikula Selyaninovich's load, a small one which he is carrying on his back, Svyatogor is unable. When he asks Mikula what this load is, the reply is that the sack contains Mother Earth and the Sky who had opposed him. Mikul explains the reason for Svyatogor's exile:

(24) 'You boasted, saying that you could turn the world upside down; now you have seen the world's true weight. The gods have punished you for your pride.'

(Svyatogor, Mother Earth and Fate)<sup>34</sup>

In the end of the epic Svyatogor is unable to escape the dictates of fate, but he stabbed because of his ugliness and left die; from his wife he learns that after the stroke of the knife he has suddenly become beautiful:

(25) 'I lay deep in sleep for thirty years on a dung heap. A fig skin completely covered me. One day a man came to the hut and left 500 gold rubles. When I awoke there was a wound on my chest and the fig skin that covered me had fallen off.'

(Svyatogor, Mother Earth and Fate)<sup>35</sup>

In the folk epic *Il'ya Muromets and the Hero Svyatogor* (*Il'ya Muromets i bogatyr' Svyatogor*) three miracles occur in Il'ya Muromets life. The child of a peasant family, Il'ya is bedridden by an illness. The first miracle takes place when three travelers come to their house. The old men want Il'ya to give them water, but Il'ya cannot stand up; the old men then order Il'ya to get up immediately and bring them something to drink. Il'ya, as if nothing was wrong with him, gets up and brings them kvas. The old men then offer him some of the drink. As soon as Il'ya drinks the kvas he revives and regains his strength.

(26) 'There is such incredible strength within me, as if I could even move the world.'

(*Il'ya Muromets and the Hero Svyatogor*)<sup>36</sup>

Immediately after these words the the travelers give him a drink for a second time. However, after drinking this drink Il'ya realizes that his strength has decreased slightly. By giving him this second drink, the travelers want to show Il'ya that the strength he has gained is temporary and that he needs to be humble in life. After the second drink the travelers confirm to Il'ya that no one will be able to harm him in battle and that he will be a great hero. Putting Il'ya on a horse, the ask him to look after throughout its life. In the epic, one day Il'ya encounters

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<sup>33</sup> Simonov, P., 1997.

<sup>34</sup> Simonov, P., 1997.

<sup>35</sup> Simonov, P., 1997.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

Svyatogor, with the strength to move the world; after the giant man tests Il'ya and sees that he is humble, by giving him his sword and strength makes Il'ya even stronger. Thus, thanks to his own strength and his horse who warns him of danger ahead of time Il'ya is thrown into the miraculous.

One of the heroes of the epic, Alyosha Popovich Rostovlu, is the son of a priest. Alyosha became famous not for his strength, but from his erratic behavior, cunning actions and quickness of mind that stem from his youth. Alyosha's childhood is described in this manner in the epic *Alyosha Popovich* (Alyosha Popovich):

(27) 'Before long he learned to walk, wander the streets and play with other small children. However, when one of the children caught him by the arm, the child's arm was dislocated; when caught by the foot, the foot was almost torn off – their games were very vicious. In fact one day he grabbed a man by the waist and the man's waist was torn in two.'

(*Alyosha Popovich*)<sup>37</sup>

Alyosha's greatest victory was defeating the dragon Tugarin who had threatened the prince of Kiev, Vladimir, and his principality.

(28) 'Immediately Alyosha jumped on Tugarin and tore off his head. The dragon's head fell to the ground like a beet boiling in a cauldron. Then, Alyosha put Tugarin's bloody head on a spear and returned to Prince Vladimir with this trophy.'

(*Alyosha Popovich*)<sup>38</sup>

After this event Prince Vladimir made Alyosha a knight in his troop.

Another important epic hero is Dobrynya Nikitich; after Il'ya Muromets and Alyosha Popovich he is the third great champion. Il'ya Muromets was a peasant, Alyosha Popovich had a clerical personality, but Dobrynya Nikitich represents a man from the class of princes. In the epic *Dobrynya Nikitich and the Dragon* (*Dobrynya Nikitich i zmey*), Dobrynya is described as follows:

(29) ' Thus Dobrynya arranged for himself a great, suitable feast in the palace. He wore green Moroccan leather shoes with high heels and pointed toes. The toes of his shoes were so pointed that an egg could even turn around them, and sparrows could fly under his heels. His clothes were worked in gold and his cape was made of black sable brought from countries beyond the sea.'

(*Nikitich and the Dragon*)<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Simonov, P., 1997.

<sup>38</sup> Simonov, P., 1997.

<sup>39</sup> Simonov, P.,1997.

In the epic Vladimir sends Dobrynya to find the dragon that had taken the beautiful princess. Dobrynya finds the monster, but cannot defeat him in three days. Six days later he reaches the dragon's lair, saves the princess and sends her back to Kiev with Alyosha Popovich. At the end of the epic Dobrynya marries Nastasya whom he encountered on the road and returns to Kiev.

Mikula Selyaninovich, a farmer and father of the Nastasya mentioned the epic *Nikitich and the Dragon*, is also one of the epic heroes. In the epic *Volga and Mikula* (Volga i Mikula), Prince Volga with his soldiers set out to collect the taxes and annual tribute from the cities that are resisting payment. On the road he hears the sound of a plow; when introduced to the plowman, he tells Volga to be very careful as the people living in the cities are very dangerous and set an ambush for him. Volga then asks the plowman to join him. The plowman and his mare join Prince Volga's troop, and they all set out on their expedition. Along the way the plowman remembers that he left his plow out in the open, and worried that it might be stolen, asks Volga's help in hiding it in a safe place. Volga sends five men back to hide the plow, but the five men cannot move it. Volga then sends ten strong men, and finally the entire troop to do the job, but none of them can budge the plow. Seeing this the plowman mounts his mare and returns to hide the plow himself. He picks up the plow with one hand, shakes off the dirt and hides it behind some bushes. Catching up with Volga's troop, he passes them. Volga admires the plowman's mare and asks for it. Mikula replies that the mare is priceless. Confronted by the plowman's courage before him, Volga asks his name. The plowman answers Volga as follows:

(30) 'When I plow the field for barley, and when I heap it up,  
When I heap it up and bring it home  
When the grains are beaten in the mortar and I make drink,  
When I give it to the villagers to drink,  
The villagers praise men,  
And call me the peasant's son, the young Mikula Selyaninovich'  
(*Volga and Mikula*)<sup>40</sup>

Another epic hero is Sadko, who besides being a singer from Novgorod who plays the *gusli*<sup>41</sup>, is also a wealthy merchant. He earns money by playing the *gusli* at banquets, but in the epic *The Wealthy Merchant Sadko* (Bogatyj kupets Sadko) Sadko is no longer called to banquets. One day while sitting on the shore of Lake Ilmen and playing his *gusli*, thanks to the advice of the Tsar of the Oceans, who was born from the waves, Sadko's life is changed and he becomes rich in gold. He sails by ship to neighboring countries to conduct trade. However, because of Novgorod's storms and waves he is unable to return. Thinking that the Tsar of the Oceans desires tribute from him, he vows offerings of gold, silver, and even humans to the sea. However, nothing calms the sea. Finally, Sadko abandons the ship to sacrifice himself. The Tsar of the Oceans appears and asks him which is more valuable to Novgorod – gold, silver or steel? Sadko answers:

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<sup>40</sup> Simonov, P., 1997.

<sup>41</sup> The *gusli* is a multi-stringed Russian instrument similar to a zither.

(31) 'Gold and silver are truly valuable in Russia, but steel is no less so. One can live without gold or silver, but not without steel and iron.'

(*The Wealthy Merchant Sadko*)<sup>42</sup>

As tribute, the Tsar of the Oceans wants Sadko to play the *gusli* and then get married. An old man who suddenly appears says that fulfilling what the Tsar has asked of Sadko and listening to him are the only ways that he can return to Novgorod. In return for the old man's help Sadko promises that when he returns to Novgorod he will build St. Nikolay's Church. When Sadko returns to Novgorod he marries, becomes very wealthy and builds many churches in Novgorod.

#### *Reading Assignments:*

- 1- Simonov, P., *Russian Mythology*, Thorsons, London, 1997.
- 2- Warner, E., *Russian Myths*, The British Museum Press, 2002.
- 3- Ivanits, L., *Russian Folk Belief*, ME Sharp, Inc., 1989.
- 4- Kennedy, M.D., *Encyclopedia of Russian and Slavic Myth and Legend*, ABC-CLIO Inc., 1998.
- 5- Bailey, J. and Ivanova, T., *An Anthology of Russian Folk Epics*, ME Sharpe, Inc., 1998.
- 6- Putilov, B., *Drevnyaya Rus v litsah*, "Azbuka", Sankt-Peterburg, 1999.
- 7- Yudin, A.V., *Russkaya narodnaya duhovnaya kultura*, "Vysshaya shkola", Moskva, 1999.
- 8- *Russkie narodnye skazki*, "Azbuka", Sankt-Peterburg, 1997.

*Questions:* (Write an essay of 200 words, including full bibliography and footnotes, in answer to each of the following questions):

- 1- Which deities did the pagan Russians worship?
- 2- What sources help us to get information about Russian mythology?
- 3- Talk about the reflections of paganism in Russian Orthodoxy and provide relevant examples.

#### **Week IV Unit IV**      Literature

##### *Introduction*

The story of Russian literature begins in 988 - a date of great importance in Russian political and cultural history, when the ruler of Kievan Rus officially accepted Christianity and made it the new faith of his realm. Prior to this date there was no written literature in Rus, but with his conversion Prince Vladimir laid the foundation for what is now known as medieval Russian literature, although it would not attain its true form — on the basis of the literature which survived the destruction of the Mongol invasions - for a number of years thereafter. But the eastern Slavs received an alphabet created by Cyril and Methodius, and also became heirs to the extensive Byzantine cultural heritage which had already been and would later be translated from the Greek.

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<sup>42</sup> Simonov, P., 1997.



In the Kievan period the foreign works which were translated in Russia primarily reflected the interests of the church: almost all were translated from Greek, and most related to the interests of the church. Produced in this period, *the Ostromirovo evangeliye* (The Ostromir Gospel) of 1056–1057 is the oldest dated Russian manuscript.

A famous work of Old Russian literature is Hilarion's *Slovo o zakone i blagodati* (Sermon on Law and Grace). Other important works were composed by Clement of Smolensk, metropolitan of Russia from 1147 to 1154, and by St. Cyril of Turov (1130–1182). The predominant genre of Old Russian literature is hagiography, and a number of interesting saints' lives date from the earliest period. Both a chronicle account and two hagiographies of the first Russian saints, Boris and Gleb, have survived to the present day.

From a purely literary perspective, the finest work of Old Russian literature is *The Tale of Igor's Campaign*, a type of epic poem concerning Prince Igor's raid against the Polovtsy (Kipchak), a steppe people, his capture, and his escape. Written some time between 1185 and 1187, the Igor Tale, as it is generally known, was discovered in 1795 by Count Musin-Pushkin. This manuscript was destroyed in the Moscow fire of 1812, however, a copy made for Catherine II the Great has survived. Although the poem's authenticity has often been challenged, it is now generally accepted. Its major theme is the disastrous fratricidal disunity of the Russian princes.

In the period between Vladimir's conversion and the Mongol invasions in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, Kiev was not only the cultural and political center of Rus, but also the capital, and the seat of the metropolitan of the new Russian church. It was not until the late 13<sup>th</sup> century that Kievan Rus was able to recover from the results of the Mongol invasion. Having been spared from the Tatar raids, the first areas to recover were Novgorod and Pskov. These city-states, with parliamentary rule, developed a unique culture influenced to some degree by their western Baltic neighbors. Leadership in the north-eastern lands was transferred from the Principality of Vladimir to Moscow in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, which would then fight for leadership against Tver for another century. Functioning as one of the border fortresses of north-eastern Russia, Moscow was a part of the Vladimir lands. By leaving Vladimir and settling in Moscow in 1324, Metropolitan Peter transferred the residence of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The late 14<sup>th</sup> century was marked by one of the most important events in Russian history - the first serious blow to the Golden Horde dealt by Dmitry Donskoy and his army in 1380.

Reflecting these political conditions, the chronicles and saints' lives served the interests of different local powers. A series of works in assorted genres, known collectively as the Kulikovo cycle, celebrated the first Russian victory over the Tatars in 1380 under the leadership of Grand Prince Dmitry Ivanovich Donskoy. A less-accomplished imitation of the Igor Tale, the Zadonshchina glorifies Dmitry Donskoy.

The most important hagiography of this period is the *Life of Saint Sergius of Radonezh* written by Epifany Premudry.

Mid -15<sup>th</sup> century Russia was characterized by bloody internal conflicts for the Moscow seat of the Grand Prince. Ivan III only managed to unite the Russian lands around the end of the

15<sup>th</sup> century, and ended Russia's subjugation to the Golden Horde after the Great standing on the Ugra River in 1480.

Following the Mongol period, Muscovy gradually became the predominant state and was able, through diplomacy and conquest, to establish its rule over European Russia. Ivan III (1462-1505) felt entitled to refer to his empire as "the Third Rome" and heir to the Byzantine tradition; a century later in 1613 the Romanov dynasty was established under Tsar Mikhail.

Concurrent with Moscow's increasing power, a number of writings appeared on the subject of "translation of empire", writings whose purpose was to legitimize Russia's imperial claims. They sought to do achieve this by creating elaborate genealogies and relating accounts of how imperial and ecclesiastical regalia were transferred to Russia. Among the most influential of these works was the monk Filofei's epistle to Vasily III (written between 1514 and 1521). In it he put forward the claim that in the wake of the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople (the second Rome), Moscow was the Third Rome of the only truly Christian state, Orthodox Russia. In essence, this proposition was an attempt to legitimize Russian ambitions.

A number of encyclopedic works, including the voluminous *Sermon on Law and Grace*, the *Code of Laws*, and other collections were indications of the consolidation of power in Moscow. One of the most well-known examples is the *Domostroy*, or rules for household management.

Some of the other well known works of the period include stories design to entertain; *Povest o Petre i Fevronii Muromskikh (The Tale of Peter and Fevroniya)* is one such example. A merchant, Afanasy Nikitin, describes his voyages to Persia and India between the years 1466–1472 in his *Khozhdenie za tri morya (Journey Beyond Three Seas)*. However, one of the most significant aspects of this period is the fact that the Renaissance completely is bypassed Russia, a fact which only helped to increase the cultural differences between Russia and the West. Russia would not produce the secular literature found in the West.

During much of the Muscovite period the land of Rus' was a closed kingdom. Contact with outsiders from Europe was uncommon and strictly controlled. However, after the Time of Troubles and the founding of the Romanov dynasty in 1613, however, the country was relatively peaceful, wealthier and more open than it had been previously.

A great variety of books from Western Europe began to enter the Russian land from Western Europe, and by the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century many foreigners, Germans in particular, were in Russia. Foreigners were confined to designated sections of particular cities and their freedom to associate with the native population was still limited. In spite of this, their numbers were growing, their restrictions on them were being reduced, and enforcement of these restrictions was lax. The foreigners who came to Russia were often educated people, and missed the literary and artistic culture of their native lands. They tried to recreate that culture in Russia by bringing books of poetry and establishing theaters in the "foreign quarter."

When Peter the Great came to the throne at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century it was his intent to bring Russia up to the level of the other European powers. However, he realized that this was possible through a process of Europeanizing his country. Although not very interested personally in literary culture, his overall policy allowed western models of literature to come into Russia and encouraged their adaptation to the conditions in Russia.

The authors who appeared in 18<sup>th</sup> century Russia were responsible to a large degree for the creation of a written language and literature. During Peter the Great's reign the written Russian language was greatly modified, with the result of facilitating translations from western European languages. In addition, education and the development of the printing industry in Russia were promoted by Peter the. The final result of all these efforts was the emergence of secular Russian literature.

While writers of this period imitated French patterns they were also searching for their own themes, language and style. Throughout the entire period writers attempted to give their literature a unique national character; for example, the satirist A.D. Kantemir combined European neoclassicism with depictions of Russian life. In addition to his panegyrics of Peter's reforms, he also initiated a long-running debate on proper syllabic versification in the Russian language. Only later would V.K. Trediakovsky and M.V. Lomonosov create the accepted theory of the proper patterns of Russian versification. Finally, the founder of Russian drama, A.V. Sumarokov, combined European forms and Russian themes in both his fables and in his plays.

In the literature produced during the reign of Catherine II the influence of the European Enlightenment is evident. In her own dramas Catherine combined both classical style and a satirical tone, as is seen in the journals of N. I. Novikov and G. R. Derzhavin's odes. Satire was combined with realistic motifs in Likewise, the plays of D. I. Fonvizin, and in the fables of I. I. Khemnitser combined classicism and satire. Towards the end of the century A. N. Radishchev merged political radicalism with Rousseauian sentimentalism. The development of sentimentality is also seen in the dramas of V.A. Ozerov, as well as in the prose of N. M. Karamzin, the pioneer of the Russian short story.

The reign of Catherine the Great is also noteworthy for the expansion and support given to secular literature. The debates over the function and form of literature in relation to the Russian language in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, influenced by Peter I's reforms, established the precedent for writers in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century during Catherine the Great's reign. in the second half of the century. However, the themes and scopes of the works produced by the writers of this period were often more poignant, political and controversial than those of earlier writers.

The import of Western European culture was accompanied by the influx of western ideas, such as liberal democracy and freedom, which the Russian government found itself unable to halt. Such ideas were clearly contrary to the authoritarian tsarist system in place in Russia, and the results of this clash were entirely predictable: when the concepts of freedom and self-rule became associated with first the American, and then the French Revolution, the Russian government responded by attempting to stop the flow of foreign ideas into Russia.

As an example, the depictions of socio-economic conditions, the condition and treatment of the serfs, and local governmental corruption in "A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow" by A. N. Radishchev, shocked the Russian public. Catherine the Great was displeased by his depictions of the situation in her realm and had Radishchev arrested. He was originally sentenced to death, but his sentence was later commuted to exile in Siberia.

It was only during the reign of Alexander II that Russian writers were able, for the first time, to experience the satisfaction of independent, creative work which was national in both its spirit and its style. Poetry above all was regarded as a spiritual exploit and a worthy vocation.

Traditionally the 19<sup>th</sup> century is regarded as the "Golden Era" of Russian literature. Poetic talent in particular flourished in the Romantic movement; two of the most prominent poets in this period were. A. Zhukovsky and his protégé A. S. Pushkin.

It was V. A. Zhukovsky who first brought European romantic idealism into Russian poetry. The fables of I. A. Krylov show a growing interest in national characteristics, and the wars against Napoleon I only furthered this trend. A. S. Pushkin, often regarded as the greatest Russian poet, developed a realistic, nationally conscious modern Russian style, influenced to a degree by romanticism and European poetry in the 1820s. Following Pushkin, the poetry of M. Y. Lermontov was able to maintain such stylistic excellence for a while.

It was in the 1830s that a cultural divide between Slavophiles and Westernizers became apparent. V. G. Belinsky, the main proponent of the Westernizers, emphasized the importance of the link between literature and national life, and advanced the development of Russian literary realism. Likewise, N.V. Gogol, the main initiator of realistic prose, also demonstrated qualities of romantic and morbid fantasy in his satirical and humanitarian tales. In the mid-19th century, I. A. Goncharov developed a harsh realism, tinged with humor; A. N. Ostrovsky, the first depict the merchant world in Russian literary works, wrote numerous plays, although most of them are no longer performed. F. I. Tyuchev's poetry endowed everyday events with philosophic significance, and N. A. Nekrasov penned verses with social purpose.

The prose works of Russia's literary golden age were written in the context of a strong tsarist autocracy. While generally composed within a realist framework, the masterpieces of this period are also characterized by mysticism, brooding introspection, and melodrama. I. S. Turgenev became internationally renowned for his complex novels which were also extremely critical of Russian society. The moral and religious idealism found in F. M. Dostoyevsky's works earned him both critical and popular acclaim, as did the novels of L. N. Tolstoy. These two writers remain even today among the giants of world literature. A. P. Chekhov closed the golden age with his sensitive plays and stories, and the following period is better known for its poetic works.

Symbolism, most popular between the 1890s and 1910, emerged as a reaction against realism and can be seen in the works of F. Sologub, V. K. Brynsov, I. F. Annensky, A. Bely, A. A. Blok, K. D. Balmont, and A. M. Remizov. The religious and philosophical works of V. S. Solovyev and the historical novels of D. S. Merezhkovsky also show the influence of symbolism.

A new movement, the Acmeist school led by N. S. Gumilev and S. M. Gorodetsky, in 1912 promoted a return to more concrete poetic imagery. Among the followers of this movement were O. E. Mandelstam and A. A. Akhmatova. Among the major figures in the field of fiction were V. M. Garshin and V. G. Korolenko. In the years before the 1917 revolution M. Gorky was the dominant figure in fictional literature. Gorky's realistic style was also seen in the stories and dramas of his admirer Leonid Andreyev. Another member of Gorky's literary circle, Ivan Bunin, likewise wrote in a realistic style, but more conservatively.

Following the Bolsheviks' victory in the Russian Revolution (1917), many writers emigrated and continued writing abroad, among them Bunin, Kuprin, Merezhkovsky, Aldanov, and Nabokov. Others stayed in Russia but no longer published, some became Communists, while others found a niche for themselves in the new system, writing but remaining above its official doctrines. Initially, literature in the Bolshevik regime was little different from that current in Western Europe. Up until 1921 poetry continued to thrive, the major writers being the symbolist Blok, the imagist S. A. Yesenin, and the iconoclast V. V. Mayakovsky. Boris Pilnyak, an older novelist, documented the new society, and Isaac Babel wrote vivid short stories. Between 1922-1928, the era of the New Economic Policy, literary dictatorship was the subject of great debate; one group, known as "On Guard" supported it and the group around Mayakovsky was against it. Another group that included K. A. Fedin, M. M. Zoshchenko, V.V. Ivanov, V. A. Kaverin, Y.I. Zamyatin, and L.N. Lunts, and known as The Serapion Brothers voiced their support for artistic independence, while the formalists stressed poetic structure over poetic content. The novel was once again a major literary form, as seen in Ilya Ilf and Y. P. Petrov's satirical works, and in L. M. Leonov, Y.K. Olesha, and Kaverin's psychological and romantic novels. M. A. Sholokhov wrote epic novels on the subject of the revolution and Gorky a large audience in 1928.

Between 1929 and 1932 the various literary groups were dissolved, and the political mobilization of writers became a noticeable trend. Stalin's purges of the intelligentsia during the 1930s only accelerated this, and socialist realism became the guiding principle of all literary output. As an art form supported by the state and widely used as a means of propaganda, drama after the revolution was associated with a number of eminent figures, among them Y. L. Schvartz, N. R. Erdman, M. A. Bulgakov, S. M. Tretyakov, V. P. Katayev, V. M. Kirshon, A. N. Afinogenov, and A. N. Arbuzov. The prominent poets of this period were B. L. Pasternak and N. S. Tikhonov, while N. A. Ostrovsky, A. N. Tolstoy, and I. G. Ehrenburg were among the most widely read novelists. V. B. Shklovski became a very influential critic.

Stalin's death in 1953 ushered in a new period for a number of writers; some who had previously been publicly disgraced, returned to official favor; other living writers were once again allowed to publish. *Thaw*, a famous novel by Ehrenburg, described the desperation of writers who had no choice but to write according to the party line. Extraordinarily, cultural exchange with foreign countries was encouraged and, in contrast to official party propaganda, literature which criticized aspects of Soviet society was permitted, at least for a while. The nonconformist poetry of A. A. Voznesensky and Y. A. Yevtushenko was immensely popular. Voznesensky's innovative form and use of language was singled out for particular praise

However, this period of relative literary tolerance came to an end in 1963 when both the government and the Union of Soviet Writers severely reprimanded these and other dissident writers. *Doctor Zhivago*, published outside the Soviet Union and widely praised throughout the West, was not allowed to be published in the USSR, and state pressure compelled Pasternak to decline the Nobel Prize for literature.

The effort to free Soviet writing from official control increased after Khrushchev was removed from power in 1964. Public calls for an end to political censorship came from well-known writers such as Voznesensky and A. I. Solzhenitsyn. For publishing works outside the USSR

which criticized the Soviet regime under pseudonyms A. D. Sinyavsky and Y. M. Daniel served prison sentences. *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, the first novel written by Solzhenitsyn, described prison-camp life; when published in 1962 its anti-Stalinist tone was politically acceptable. Solzhenitsyn's later works resulted in his 1974 exile from Russia.

In the 1980s the stories of T. N. Tolstaya were one example of the religious, even mystical, trends in literature. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Solzhenitsyn returned from exile in 1994, twenty years after he had left.

### *Reading Assignments:*

- 1- Lewit, The Obviousness of the Truth in Eighteenth Century Russian Thought, <http://www-bcf.usc.edu/~levitt/publications/documents/obviousness.pdf>
- 2- Dictionary of Literary Biography. Volume 150: "Early Modern Russian Writers, Late Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries." Edited by Marcus C. Levitt. Detroit: Gale Research, 1995.
- 3- Leatherbarrow, W., & Offord, D., A History of Russian Thought, Cambridge University Press, 2010, Ch. 3, p. 47-51.
- 4- Leatherbarrow, W., & Offord, D., A History of Russian Thought, Cambridge University Press, 2010, Ch. 3, p. 51-56.
- 5- Leatherbarrow, W., & Offord, D., A History of Russian Thought, Cambridge University Press, 2010, Ch.4, p. 73-94.
- 6- Leatherbarrow, W., & Offord, D., A History of Russian Thought, Cambridge University Press, 2010, Ch. 5. 95-115.

*Questions:* (Write an essay of 200 words, including full bibliography and footnotes, in answer to each of the following questions):

- 1- Discuss Europeanization and the role of the Russian intelligentsia.
- 2- How did the Enlightenment influence Russian literature?
- 3- Talk about the Age of Revolutions and discuss how the Russians were affected.
- 4- Talk about Utopian Socialism and Utilitarianism. How was it spread among the Russian intelligentsia? Who were the leading figures of this thought in Russia?
- 5- What connection did Dostoevsky have with Utopian socialists? Which of his novels gets into polemics with the novel *What is to be done?* by Chernyshevsky? Why?

**Week V**                      Mid-Term

**Week VI Unit VI**        Painting

### *Introduction*

The art of icon painting, widely viewed as a major expression of Russian piety, was introduced into Russia together with Christianity. Initially icons were purely Byzantine in style, but local schools with their own unique characteristics later appeared in Novgorod, Yaroslavl, Pskov, Tver, Vladimir-Suzdal and Moscow.

A distinctive style of Russian icon painting emerged in the 14th century, with Novgorod as its center due to the excellence of the icons produced there. In addition, the names of individual artists from this period are known.

The 14th and 15th centuries are widely regarded as the acme of Russian icon painting, primarily due to the quality of the icons produced by Andrey Rublev, Dionysios, Theophanes the Greek, and Daniil Cherny.

One of the most influential icon painters was previously mentioned Theophanes the Greek, who is sometimes called the Father of the Russian Icon. He is known for his use of color that shows similarities with Byzantine painting. Examples of his work are still found in the Cathedral of the Annunciation in Moscow.

Another important artist was Andrey Rublev, who was one of the artists who contributed to the development of distinctively Russian icon painting towards the end of the 14th century. His most famous work, *The Holy Trinity*, was dedicated to St. Sergius of Radonezh. However, Rublev was not only an icon painter; there are a number of frescos and illuminated manuscripts that are attributed to him. It was Rublev's style above all others that became the model for what would become traditional Russian art.

The works of the painter Dionysios mark both the the end of Russia's golden age of icon painting and the beginning of a new artistic era. Among his best known works are the *Deesis* in Moscow's Cathedral of the Dormition; a large mural in the Ferapontov Monastery's Virgin Nativity Cathedral; and the icons painted for the Joseph Volokolamsky Monastery. His works are generally considered the peak of Russian religious art's classical style.

Both the composition and techniques of Russian icon painting advanced at the start of the 15th century. During the period of Ivan III in the following century Novgorod lost its status as the center of artistic life to Moscow. The painters of Moscow became known for the vivid colors they used, the exquisite proportions of their figures, and the balanced composition in their frescos and icons. Beginning in the first half of the 16th century icon painting displays more freedom, shifting from purely iconographic to illustrative.

Western art began to have a major influence on Russian icon painting from the mid-16th century on. Despite the objections of the church, these influences proved to be unavoidable. This was mostly due to Peter the Great and his program of westernization. Since the main centers of icon painting were in the Kremlin, they were subject to royal influence and Peter could dictate the style artists would employ in their work.

The Stroganovs, a boyar family, established a new artistic school that was named after them in the late 16th-early 17th century. The Stroganov school created a new artistic synthesis that combined the features of secular portraits with long-standing traditions of icon painting in Russia. This new type of painting became known as a *parsuna*; rather than religious figures, they honored secular figures of the time. Two of the best-known artists of this time were Fedor Zubov and Simon Ushakov.

The style of Russian icons, like the Orthodox Church itself, would be divided by a religious dispute in the latter part of the 17th century. In 1666 a group which became known as the Old

Believers left the Orthodox Church in opposition to a series of reforms that were ordered by the Patriarch Nikon; among the innovations that the Old Believers opposed was the change in the style of icon painting. Peter the Great persecuted the Old Believers and when they were exiled to the edges of the Russian Empire they took their style of icon painting with them. However, the big cities of the empire, such as Moscow, St. Petersburg, Pskov and Novgorod icons continued to be painted in the westernized style.

In the early 18th century that Russian painting finally broke with the traditions of icon painting, but it was not until the Academy of Arts was formed that painting in the western style became predominant. The Academy was heavily influenced by classicism, and this is reflected in the early works of this period.

Although the 18th century was period in which the genres of Russian painting had expanded, religious painting remained influential due to the church's patronage of the arts. Among the painters who continued to paint religious themes were Alexander Ivanov and Anton Losenko.

Portraiture, in imitation of western trends, along with some types of folk art were the major forms of painting in Russia in the 18th century. Among the best-known portrait painters of this period were Andrei Maveyev, Ivan Nikitin, Ivan Vishnyakov, Alexei Antropov, Dmitri Levitsky, Vladimir Borovikovsky, Ivan Argunov and Fyodor Rokotov.

In the wake of Peter the Great's reforms aimed at westernizing his country, Russian art became more and more secular, much as art in Western Europe. Western architects and sculptors were invited to Russia by Peter to help in the construction of St. Petersburg, his new capital. In addition, a large number of Russian artists were sent to Europe to learn the skills and techniques Peter demanded. Peter had intended to establish a separate department of art in his recently founded Academy of Sciences, but died before he could carry out his plan. However, Ivan Shuvalov, the minister of education in the mid-18th century fulfilled Peter's wish by establishing the Imperial Academy of Arts.

The Imperial Academy of Art supported art which reflected the European neoclassical style, rather than art based on Russian traditions. Russian artists learned current European styles and techniques, particularly those of the schools of Paris, Rome and Bologna. Paintings of historical events and individual portraits became particularly popular during the Romantic movement. An artist who became famous for his portraits of celebrities was Vasily Tropinin. Karl Bryulov, a contemporary of Tropinin, was the most famous portrait painter of his era.

Russian artists also rediscovered their own society and surroundings as art moved outside the limits of the court, and the trend towards naturalism was indicative of this development.

It was not until the early 19th century that Russian landscape painting became widely popular. There had been artists before this time who had produced fine landscape paintings, among them Fyodor Alexeyev, Maxim Vorobiev, Fyodor Matveyev, and Silvester Shchedrin, but their works were products of the Italianesque romantic tradition. True Russian landscape painting only emerged with the works of Nikifor Krylov, Alexei Venetsianov, and Grigory Soroka. Venetsianov's depiction of the Russian landscape and Russian peasants helped start this artistic tradition. Fedotov and other artists took the middle class as the subject of their paintings, works which also contained elements of social criticism. However, artists such as



Ivan Aivazovsky and Mikhail Lebedev continued to paint in the Italianesque romantic tradition.

Growing dissatisfaction with the conservative aesthetic and pedagogical principles of the Academy in the 1860s led to a student revolt in 1863. Instead of being required to follow the Academy's recommended themes, they wanted to use theme of their own choosing. The Academy refused to accept this, leading to the resignation from the Academy of one sculptor and thirteen painters. The leading figures of this group were Ivan Kramskoy, Vladimir Stasov, Vasily Stasov, Ilya Repin, Vasily Surikov, and Vasily Perov. At a later date they established *The Society of Wandering Art Exhibitions* which strove to reach people that the Academy and its art did not. Travelling throughout Russia, society members who became known as *Wanderers (Peredvizhniki)* held exhibitions of art that they had produced during their travels and espoused political reform. Cognizant of the fact that Peter the Great's reforms had produced a schism in Russian culture between the upper and lower classes, the Wanderers attempted to bridge this gap through their exhibitions.

Outside the limits of the Academy, the Wanderers embodied a realism in their ideology and shown a national spirit that attempted to re-establish the bonds between their land and their art through depictions of the people, history and landscapes of Russia.

Ilya Repin, one of the most famous members of the Wanderers, became best known for his paintings depicting historical subjects, although he was equally skilled in many other genres. These paintings would become the model for realism in the late 19th century due to their blend of realistic depictions and criticism of society. The blossoming of Russian art in these years was, to a great degree, due to the Repin, Nikolay Gay and Ivan Kramskoy. The works of the latter two artists on religious themes were particularly influential.

Instability and creativity were the distinguishing characteristics of Russian between 1890-1917. Internal disagreements among the artists in *The Society of Wandering Art Exhibitions* would eventually lead to the group disbanding just at the point that it was becoming truly established. The Wanderers also became the target of criticism from both intellectuals and younger artists on two points: they claimed that the Wanderers had failed to pass on their skills to the next generation through teaching and that they had failed to formulate a new artistic system in place of the one they had rejected.

In this period a number of new artistic societies appeared; one of the most famous was *The World of Art* established by writers and artists based in St. Petersburg in 1899. Nikolai Roerich, Alexander Benois, Lev Bakst, Evgeny Lancere, Konstantin Somov and Sergei Diaghilev were among the founders of this society that was focused on art's aesthetic properties. Their intention was to create an art movement that was Russian, yet also part and parcel of general European culture. Past Western culture was admired by artists in *The World of Art*, but not to the degree that the West was seen as superior to Russia. Perhaps the greatest contributions of *The World of Art* to Russian art was teaching young artists about issues in Russian and European art, and that the most important quality of a nation's art is its uniqueness. In addition, unlike the Wanderers, *The World of Art* placed great importance on the expression of the individual artist.

Sergei Diaghilev can be credited with much of the success of *The World of Art*. The clear goals of the movement and the international recognition given to Russian art in this period was the result of his efforts. One factor that contributed to Diaghilev's success was his deep understanding of European and Russian artistic trends. He used this knowledge to find ways to introduce Russian art into the world of European art. One way he did this was by holding exhibitions that would display his artistic vision to both viewers and other artists. In 1906 he held an exhibition in Paris entitled *The Russian Seasons* which featured talented, traditional Russian artists from St. Petersburg and Moscow.

Between 1890-1917 naturalism was the predominant genre of Russian painting. However, some artists did produce works in other styles; the portraitist and former Wanderer Valentin Serov painted in a semi-Impressionistic style. Likewise, Konstantine Korovin and Mikhail Vrubel produced portraits in the same style. However, the works of Lev Bakst, Zinaida Serebriakova, Konstantin Somov and Alexander Golovin displayed a more classical style.

Igor Grabar, Alexander Kuprin, Boris Kustodiev, Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin, and Ilya Mashkov were all noted painters of still life, a category which was in harmony with *The World of Art's* artistic philosophy.

In the field of landscape painting, French Impressionism was a major influence on Russian works in this category. The most renowned Russian landscape painters were Vasily Surikov, Valentin Serov and Igor Grabar. Other notable landscape painters in this period were Konstantin Yuon, Vasily Baksheyev and Nikolai Krymov.

The years before the revolution of 1917 witnessed a burst of creativity and activity in Russian art. Russian artists had been exposed to and were familiar with the trends in contemporary European art, but they no longer attempted to merely imitate European art. Russian artists now combined European styles with their artistic vision; in the process they created works that would take modern art in new directions.

The second decade of the 20th century was a time when several movements related to abstract and semi-abstract art emerged. Among these were Cubism, Expressionism, Rayonism, Futurism, Constructivism and Suprematism. Notable Russian artists in these movements were Mikhail Larionov, Natalia Goncharova, Vladimir Tatlin and Kazimir Malevich. However, due to their sources of inspiration and methods Kandinskiy, Filonov and Marc Chagall stood outside of these movements. Chagall was one of the last representatives of the first generation of European modernism. He moved between St. Petersburg, Berlin and Paris in the period prior to the First World War and created his own distinctive style utilizing themes and elements from the culture and religion of Eastern European Jewry.

Russian expressionist painters primarily worked outside of the country; among the major Russian artists in this movement were Alexei von Jawlensky and Vasily Kandinsky.

Following the example of contemporary French artists, young Russian artists began revolutionary experiments in their own artistic works, among them Goncharova, Larionov and Byurluk. Cubism became one of the most influential of the French artistic trends in early 20th century Russian art. Desiring to preserve folk art, Larionov and Goncharova combined Russian

folk art with elements of modern French art. Their inspiration came from icons as well as from popular Russian prints known as *lubok*.

A number of Russian avant-garde artists made rejection of dependence on western artistic models a major tenet of their movements. Futurist experimentation soon displaced Larinov and Goncharova's interest in icons and *lubok*. Vladimir Mayakovsky is known as the initiator of Russian Futurism, and Kasimir Malevich, David Burlyuk and Vladimir Tatlin are among the prominent artists of this movement.

The futurist movement was characterized by the importance it placed on geometric form, dynamism, mechanical movement and art's temporal aspect.

Other avant-garde artists took issue with the futurist movement's approach to art, particularly futurism's mechanical aspect, and sought to infuse their art with greater spirituality through a number of separate approaches. One was rayonism, espoused by Kirill Zdanevich and Larionov. Their goal was to display the spiritual connections between the elements in the world, in contrast to the fragmented, mechanical approach of cubism. Rayonism was an approach that would not be advocated for long.

Of all the avant-garde movements, suprematism, established by Kazimir Malevich in 1915 was perhaps the most extreme. It advocated the use of limited colors and basic geometric forms such as lines, circles, rectangles and squares to give full expression to the artist's feelings while disregarding the normal appearance of everyday objects. For a suprematist artist both the concepts of the conscious mind and objectivity are to be disregarded.

Constructivism was another avant-garde movement of Russian art in the early years of the 20th century. It was established by Vladimir Tatlin in 1915 and was based on an emphasis of both an object's material properties and the space it occupied. Constructivist artists put their talents to use in the service of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, in particular by applying their artistic theories to the fields of advertising and fashion.

#### *Reading Assignments:*

- 1- Alpatov, M.V., Early Russian Icon Painting, Izdanie Iskusstvo, 1978.
- 2- Motley, M.B., The Russian Experiment in Art, 1863-1922, Thames and Hudson, 1962.
- 3- Bunt, G.E., Russian Art, From Scythians to Soviets, The Studio, London, 1946, , p.207-216, 238-261.
- 4- Figes, O., Natasha's Dance, A Cultural History of Russia, Metropolitan Books, New York, 2004.
- 5- Russia and Western Civilization, Edited by Russell Bova, ME Sharpe, New York, 2003, Ch. II, Sect. 5.
- 6- Billington, J.H., The Face of Russia, TV Books, L.L.C., New York, 1998, Ch. I.
- 7- A Companion to Russian History, edited by Abbott Gleason, Blackwell Publishing, 2009, Ch. 8.
- 8- <http://myweb.rollins.edu/aboguslawski/Ruspaint/ruspaint.html>

*Questions:* (Write an essay of 200 words, including full bibliography and footnotes, in answer to each of the following questions):

- 1- Talk about the development of iconography in Russia. Why did Russians adopt the style of Andrey Rublev as traditional Russian art?
- 2- Talk about Russian major art movements including artists and their works.
- 3- Talk about Constructivism and its main ideas. What distinguishes Constructivism from Futurism?

## **Week VII Unit VII**    Theatre

### *Introduction*

Pagan ceremonies in which tales, proverbs and fables were recited, together with the songs and dances of itinerant jesters, known as *Skomorokhi*, laid the foundation for the development of Russian theater. The Skomorokhi, based on Byzantine models, appeared around the middle of the 11th century in Kievan Rus and were performers who played musical instruments, sang, danced and even composed the scored for their performances.

The Skomorokhi were not universally popular in Kievan Rus; they are described in pejorative terms in the *Primary Chronicle*. Both the ruling authorities and the Orthodox Church viewed the Skomorokhi as being in league with the devil, and persecuted them for maintaining what they saw regarded as pagan traditions. A major reason for the Skomorokhi's unpopularity with both the secular and religious leaders was the nature of their art. The Skomorokhi's performances were aimed at ordinary people, and often were in opposition to those in power. As a result the clergy and feudal rulers viewed the Skomorokhi as useless to society at the very least, and politically and religiously dangerous at the very worst.

Both civil and religious leaders subjected the Skomorokhi to particularly intense persecution during the period of Mongol rule, a period which also coincided with the Orthodox Church's strong advocacy of asceticism.

The Skomorokhi's performances continued to be viewed with suspicion during the time of Ivan IV; it was believed that they undermined the authority and interest of the civil and religious leaders. There were even claims that their practices were somehow a form of devilry from the Greeks.

The high point of the Skomorokhi was the period of the 15th – 17th century. Performances were given in city squares or in the streets; spectators were encouraged to take part in them. Occasionally, in the 16th – 17th centuries, groups of Skomorokhi would join together to form a *vataga* (large group) and put on a performance.

The Skomorokhi's performances were banned by Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich in the mid-17th century for being blasphemous; nonetheless, popular celebrations remained a venue for occasional performances. A number of dramatic performances were given in the royal court in 1640 and 1650. An English merchant, John Hebdon, was ordered to hire German puppeteers in large numbers to perform in Russia in 1660. Significant changes in both Russian theater and Russian society would result from the introduction of Western theater during the reign of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich.

The 18th century witnessed the end of the Skomorokhi's performances, but some aspects of their art survived in the *rayok* (humorous talk shows) and *balagan* (puppet theater). The puppet shows had a long existence, and put on shows in city and market squares as well as at fairs. Performances were aimed at the lowest classes, with jokes and plot lines being rather bawdy.

It was not until the 17th century, with the introduction of literary culture, that the concept of a dramatic repertoire became known in Russia.

In the 17th century the large number of works translated from western languages and the founding of Russia's first theater were clear indications of Western influence. The degree of this influence grew dramatically with the reforms of Peter I. One result of this increased contact with Western Europe was the attempt to adapt the literary models of Western Europe to Russian writing. An early example of this process can be seen in the plays of A.P. Sumarokov. Considered the founder of Russian drama, Sumarokov blended Russian themes with European dramatic forms in his works.

A public theater was built on Red Square in 1702 by order of Peter the Great. When completed a German theater troupe came to put on performances. Initially the performances were in German, but by 1705 plays were being translated into Russian and performed. Most of these plays were translations of German and Dutch comedies, or poor adaptations of plays such as Molière's *Le Médecin malgré lui*. Later, both the Moscow Academy and the Moscow Medical School would stage dramas. More surprising, perhaps, was the establishment of a theater in Rostov by its bishop, Dmitrii, which he then used for performances of plays he wrote.

It was not until the latter half of the 18th century that the theater truly became an institution in Russia. The establishment of St. Petersburg's Alexandrinskiy Theater on August 30, 1756 is often taken as the starting point of Russian professional theater. A major innovation was the merging of two theatrical groups – aristocratic students from the Cadet School and a troupe of professional actors from the theater founded by Fedor Volkov – and then giving performances for the public at large. At the same time uniquely Russian drama was emerging in the works of the playwright A. Sumarokov. His tragedy, *Khorev*, is regarded as the first Russian drama and was even performed for the Empress Elizabeth. Sumarokov would direct Russia's first professional public theater between 1756 – 1761, and his works would also become the basis of the theater's repertoire. His later works included comedies such as *The Troublesome Girl*, *The Imaginary Cuckold*, and *The Mother as Rival of Her Daughter*, and such tragedies as *Mstislav* and *The False Demetrius*. This last work is ostensibly a tale about a despotic ruler, and has often been interpreted as a criticism of papal power. However, its real significance is as an indirect criticism of Catherine the Great's arbitrary use of power, while at the same time defending legitimate monarchy. *The False Demetrius* is thus the beginning of a long tradition of theater as political criticism. In addition, Sumarokov's plays *The Guardian* and *Khorev* are regarded as the first political comedy and tragedy in Russia.

Based on the quality of his satirical comedies, Fonvizin is generally regarded as the pre-eminent playwright in 18th century Russia. Two of his most famous plays were the neo-classical *The Minor* and *The Brigadier*. Both were satires of the values of the age and attempted to encourage more moral conduct; however *The Brigadier* takes particular aim at

the ignorance and moral laxity of the upper classes. Despite the fact that the monarchy often took issue with Fonvizin's works, Catherine the Great was an admirer of them.

The theaters in St. Petersburg and Moscow were later combined to form a state bureaucracy, as a means to control forms of expression that Catherine the Great regarded as dangerous. By 1827 this bureaucracy had become a monopoly which registered actors as civil servants, and which placed as much importance on protocol as it did on art. Earlier, in 1819, the Ministry of the Interior had taken control over theatrical censorship; the severity of its censorship would only increase over time and expand outside of the theaters. In some cases periodicals which made negative comments about actors found themselves the target of the Ministry's displeasure – since actors were civil servants, criticizing them was tantamount to criticizing their employer, the state. However, the effect of official censorship was felt most keenly in the theaters in St. Petersburg and Moscow, whose creativity was stifled by government guidelines. Beyond St. Petersburg and Moscow, the situation was slightly better, as independent theaters could put on performances, but still under the watchful eye of the police.

The roles of St. Petersburg and Moscow as the Russia's theatrical centers grew in the 19th century as new theaters were founded. In Moscow in 1824 the Maly (Small) Theater was established, followed in 1825 by the Bolshoi (Big), which was a replacement for the Peter's Theater which had burned down. In 1832 the Alexandrinsky Drama Theater opened in St. Petersburg.

The first half of the 19th century also witnessed the appearance of the Russian drama's first masterpieces. Among these works were *Inspector* by Gogol, and Griboyedov's *Woe from Wit*. The plays by Ostrovsky which appeared around the middle of the century would inspire a new generation of performers.

In the early 20th century there was a blossoming of theatrical performances as official control of the arts relaxed. A number of private theaters, among them the Moscow Art Theater, the Korsh Theater, and Alexander Tairov's Chamber Theater opened their doors after the end of the government's theater monopoly in 1882.

Of these newly established theaters, the Moscow Art Theater, established by Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko and Konstantin Stanislavsky in 1898, proved to be the most influential. Their productions of the last four plays written by Chekhov brought them great fame and the theater would go on to profoundly influence theater in Russia. Combining their talents, playwright Nemirovich-Danchenko and actor-director Stanislavsky adopted Wagner's approach to play production as high art.

Directors would now determine how a drama would be staged, as well as their atmosphere and style – an innovation in Russian theater. The Moscow Art Theater was saved from financial ruin in its initial season by its sixth production, *The Seagull* by Chekhov which opened on December 17, 1898. Its first performance two years earlier in St. Petersburg had been a disaster, and Chekhov was understandably hesitant to give his permission for a second production of his play. However, Nemirovich-Danchenko's persistent pleading paid off and Chekhov was more than rewarded by the reception his play received from its second production. The following year in 1899 the Moscow Art Theater staged *Uncle Vanya*, and

Chekhov wrote his two last plays, *The Three Sisters* and *The Cherry Orchard* with the Moscow Art Theater in mind. In 1902 the theater put on the play *Lower Depths* by Maksim Gorky.

*Reading Assignments:*

- 1- Malnick, B., The Origin and Early History of the Theatre in Russia, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 19, No. 53/54, The Slavonic Year-Book (1939 - 1940), pp. 203-227
- 2- The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture, Edited by Nicholas Rzhevsky, Cambridge University Press, 1998, Ch. 11.
- 3- Senelick, L., Historical Dictionary of Russian Theater, The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2007.
- 4- Figes, O., *Natasha's Dance*, A Cultural History of Russia, Metropolitan Books, New York, 2004.
- 5- Varneke, B.V., History of the Russian Theatre, The MacMillan Company, New York, 1951.
- 6- A History of Russian Theatre, Edited by Robert Leach and Victor Borovsky, Cambridge University Press, 1999, Ch.1.

Russian internet sources:

- 1- Sumarokov, <http://az.lib.ru/cgi-bin/seek>

*Questions:* (Write an essay of 200 words, including full bibliography and footnotes, in answer to each of the following questions):

- 1- Talk about the Skomorokhi and their importance in the history of Russian theatre.
- 2- Read Sumarokov's *The False Demetrius (Dimitrii Samozvanets)* and discuss why the play is considered the beginning of the tradition of political criticism in Russian literature.
- 3- Compare Sumarokov's and Fonvizin's conception of the virtuous ruler and their treatment of this subject in *The False Demetrius (Dimitrii Samozvanets)* and *The Minor (Nedorosl)* respectively.
- 4- Read Chekhov's *The Seagull (Chayka)*. What does the seagull symbolize in his play? Why did he name his play *The Seagull*? Can we consider the play a comedy?

**Week VIII Unit VIII** Music

*Introduction*

When Prince Vladimir converted to Orthodox Christianity in 988 he ruled a land that had not yet become a sovereign state and whose culture was pagan in nature. As a result, the Church moved quickly to become the dominant cultural force in Kievan Rus'. However, Vladimir's decision to convert to Orthodoxy led to Russia's political isolation from its neighbors, and in order to prevent outside religious influences from entering Russia the Russian Church became isolationist. One area of culture in which the Church sought to assert its influence was music, both religious and secular.<sup>43</sup>

Like Orthodox Christianity itself, the music of the Russian Orthodox Church was imported in the 10th century from the Byzantine Empire. Initially, musical instruments were not used in

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<sup>43</sup> Ritzarev, M., Russian Music before Glinka, A Look from the Beginning of the Third Millennium, <http://www.biu.ac.il/hu/mu/min-ad02/ritzarev.html>

the liturgy, as their use was considered sinful by the Orthodox Church, an attitude which would not change until the middle of the 17th century. Another aspect of this hostility towards the use of musical instruments was the church's long, bitter struggle against folk musicians, in particular instrumentalists. This animosity was fueled by the Orthodox Church's rivalry with the Catholic Church, which allowed instrumental music, and by its struggle against Russia's pagan heritage, a heritage which folk instrumentalists were continuing in the church's view.

Liturgical music in the Orthodox Church was sung a capella by all-male choirs who performed a monodic chant in unison. Over time this type of liturgical music began to evolve into new forms that were unlike the Byzantine chants. One of these, developed some time around the 12th century was the *znamenny chant* (*znamenny raspev*). These chants were performed using a system of eight voices.

Before the introduction of Christianity the musical instruments found in Russia were similar to those used throughout medieval Europe. Among these were the *svirel*, an oboe-like instrument; the *gusli*, similar to a zither; the *gudok*, similar to a fiddle; and horns. In addition there were tambourines, assorted noise makers, drums, and small bells, instruments more typically associated with shamanic rituals. These instruments were played during religious and court ceremonies, and for entertainment. They were also associated with the *skomorokhi*, folk musicians in Kievan Rus and Muscovy who often played at weddings.

However, the *skomorokhi* found themselves officially banned during the "Time of Troubles", the period when Muscovite Rus' was being transformed into a secular, centralized state between the 14th – 17th centuries. The reasons for this ban are not entirely clear; they may have been sacrificed to maintain relations between the church and the state, or they may have been regarded as a threat to the state. Whatever the true reason, pressured by the church Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich issued the decree banning the *skomorokhi* in 1648. After having been an integral part of Russian popular culture for over 700 years, the *skomorokhi* found themselves exiled to northern Russia or Siberia, and their instruments destroyed.

The Russian tsars saw their position as rulers as having not only a secular aspect, but a spiritual one as well, an attitude that would not change until the late 17th century when Peter I became tsar. The tsars believed that they were the spiritual leaders of an Orthodox state and servants of God as well. For example, Tsar Ivan IV composed a number of church chants and was said to be a talented church musician. As a result of this view of their religious role, the tsars were against secular music, both foreign and domestic. Anyone giving public performances of secular music, like the *skomorokhi*, were treated as criminals.

The hostile attitude towards secular music changed dramatically when Peter the Great ascended the throne. He set in motion a number of reforms to transform Russia from what he saw as a backward society into a modern, Western-style country. In his new capital, St. Petersburg, he held court balls in the manner of Western Europe where his aristocrats attempted to perform unfamiliar European dances. Copying the Germans, he formed "staff orchestras" that played at court ceremonies, and even travelled with his army in the field. Hoping to marry Peter's daughter, the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, Carl Friedrich brought a German chamber orchestra with him to St. Petersburg in 1721. The orchestra played works by a number of contemporary composers, and chamber orchestras soon became a requisite element of aristocratic society. In the years after Peter the Great's reign musicians and



composers continued to be brought from Europe and paid well for their talents. Private orchestras and choirs, as well as opera and ballet theaters had become feature of the estates of a number of Russian aristocrats by the end of the 18th century. This trend provided a new opportunity for some former serfs; trained by teachers from Europe they went on to become some of the most famous performers of the day.

In the early 18th century most of the developments in Russian music took place in St. Petersburg, as this was both the location of the tsar and his court, but also the center for the secular culture that was developing. For example, St Petersburg was the site of the premiers of two operas by the “Father of Russian Music”, Mikhail Glinka, *A Life for the Tsar* and *Ruslan and Ludmila*. The latter, which was first performed in 1842 would be the first in a long line of operas based on Russian fairy tales. Glinka’s compositions mark a turning point in Russian music, the point at which Russian music truly becomes a part of European music, while still retaining its folk music traditions.

Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna and the composer Anton Rubinstein established the *Russian Musical Society* in 1859. Its primary aim was to encourage and expand the musical study and performance in the country. Regarded as Russia’s first school of music, the Society provided instruction to anyone who wished to study music.

As Russia had no conservatories prior to the 1860’s, Russia’s first composer, Mikhail Glinka, had to travel abroad to obtain the majority of his musical training. This allowed him to study the folk music of many different countries and to make the acquaintance of many well-known European composers. After his return to Russia Glinka would greatly influence Russian music’s development in general, and opera in particular.

A number of composers after Glinka followed his lead and composed music based on Russian fairy tales; among them were Rimsky-Korsakov, *The Golden Cockerel*; Stravinsky, *The Nightingale*; and Prokofiev, in *Love for Three Oranges*. In the compositions for ballet, Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky and Prokofiev would also be influenced by Glinka’s use of fairy-tales.

One of the most important events in the growth of Russian music occurred with the opening in St. Petersburg of Russia’s first conservatory in 1862.

The following year, Mily Balakirev established the Balakirev Circle, a musical group, in St. Petersburg. The Circle studied a wide spectrum of musical traditions to employ in their own compositions: Russian folksongs, classical composers and music from Spain, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Exoticism was becoming as important a part of Russian music as it was in European music. This can be seen in the Middle Eastern influences in *Scheherazade* by Rimsky-Korsakov, and the Central Asian elements in Borodin’s opera *Prince Igor*.

In 1866 Russia’s second conservatory was established in Moscow by Anton Rubinstein from St. Petersburg and Nikolai Rubinstein from Moscow. Both brothers would play important roles in making Russian music more professional. Famous graduates of Russia’s first two conservatories include Tchaikovsky (St. Petersburg) and Rachmaninoff (Moscow).

At approximately the same time, five composers from St. Petersburg formed a group which became known as *moguchaya kuchka*, “The Mighty Handful” (or “The Mighty Five”). They

shared common political and aesthetic opinions and held that music made by Russians should accurately reflect the people of Russia, and not what was taught by Germans in the conservatory. The group's leader was Balakirev, with Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin and César Cui making up the rest of the group.

They advocated the use of Russian elements such as folk music and folk lore in compositions, and were disturbed by the predominant position of European music and European musicians. Because of their ability to convey a narrative message they preferred song, symphonic poems and opera over other genres. Despite the group's early solidarity, by the mid-1870s Balakirev and the other members were no longer on good terms and the group was, for all practical purposes, dissolved.

A number of well-known works would be composed by members of the Mighty Handful, among them the operas *Sadko* and *The Snow Maiden*, and the symphonic poem *Scheherazade* by Rimsky-Korsakov; *Khovanshchina* and *Boris Godunov* by Mussorgsky; *Tamara* by Balakirev; and *Prince Igor* by Borodin. All are regarded as masterpieces of romantic nationalism and are inspired, as many of the Mighty Handful's works were, by Russian literature, history and folk stories.

One of the first graduates of the St. Petersburg Conservatory, Pyotr Tchaikovsky disagreed with the Mighty Handful over the composition of classical music, in particular which tradition, Western or Russian, should determine how it was composed. Although Tchaikovsky's interest in nationalistic music grew in the late 19th century, he remained opposed to the Mighty Handful's nationalistic bent. Despite his disagreements with the Mighty Handful, Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* shows the influence of Balakirev.

After 1917 musicians were subject to extreme pressure from the state to follow aesthetic standards determined by the government. State control over musicians was extended by Stalin in 1932 with the formation of the Union of Soviet Composers. This was a regulatory body whose mandate was to direct all musical activity for the government's own political purposes. One result was that all Soviet composers were compelled to follow very specific regulations concerning the types of music they produced.

#### *Reading Assignments:*

- 1-Russia and Western Civilization, Edited by Russell Bova, ME Sharpe, New York, 2003, Ch. II, Sect. 6.
- 2- Billington, J.H., *The Face of Russia*, TV Books, L.L.C., New York, 1998, Ch. III, Sect.4.
- 3- *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture*, Edited by Nicholas Rzhevsky, Cambridge University Press, 1998, Ch. 10.
- 4- Sargeant, L. M., *Harmony and Discord, Music and the Transformation of Russian Cultural Life*, Oxford University Press, 2011, Ch. 1.
- 5- Taruskin, R., *On Russian Music*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2009.
- 6- Jensen, C. R., *Musical Cultures in Seventeenth - Century Russia*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2009.

*Questions:* (Write an essay of 200 words, including full bibliography and footnotes, in answer to each of the following questions):

- 1- Discuss the early developments in Russian music. Why would the Skomorokhi be treated as criminals?
- 2- Discuss Westernization and its effects on Russian music.
- 3- Discuss the Mighty Handful and their political views.
- 4- Discuss how 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian composers were influenced by Western composers and how they influenced the popular culture of the West.

**Week IX Unit IX**      Submission of Final Papers

Final Written Assignment: One essay of 10,000 words, including full bibliography and footnotes.

Write an essay of 10,000 words on the following topic:

Talk about the concept of Nationalism and Westernization in Russia in general. How were these two concepts realized in Russian cultural development?

**Requirements:** The total size of each week's assignment should be a minimum of 1 - 1.5 pages, double-spaced, page numbered; in 12 point Times New Roman (or Calibri) font, with 1-inch margins. The assignments must be saved as Word Documents (.doc/.docx).

**Late submission penalty:** A written assignment and final paper submitted late, without serious reasons for delay and without prior notification of the instructor about possible delay, will be graded  $\frac{3}{4}$  of its real "weight".