

Leskov's *Notes of the Unknown* (*Zametki neizvestnogo*)

The Aesthetic Role of Language Stylization in Deconstructing the Characters and Circumstances of the Traditional Russian Culture of the 18th–19th Centuries

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Abstract: The article gives a linguistic and literary analysis of N. S. Leskov's fiction. The author compares some hitherto unpublished manuscripts related to the church life of the 18–19th centuries with the cases and situations described in *Zametki neizvestnogo*. One of the main ambitions of the author is to reveal the possible correlation between the attributes of N. S. Leskov's heroes and the Russian cultural traditions of the past. Some original and vivid examples of the speech of specific Russian professions and estates are analyzed as well as linguistic parallels between complicated church language and the writer's system of stylistic devices are defined. New interlinks between the historic, the linguistic and the literary aspects of the text and, especially, N. S. Leskov's unusual world as a form of culturally-historically determined consciousness are detected.

Keywords: language stylization, archaic text, linguistic parallels, book language, Slavonicisms, text semantics, literary speech, metaphorical sense, uncommon vision of world

A strange feeling took possession of me when I read Leskov for the first time. An astonishing world from the past opened before me. It was not dead, neither was it crowned with laurels, but it was lively and spontaneous, a bit ironic but cheerful, sometimes severely denouncing and at the same time most human. First of all it was the author's apt and vivid language that struck me as most interesting, where different semantic elements and archaisms lived together used with an original flavour and subtly charged with a new shade of meaning. It was also remarkable to see Leskov's ability to give a truthful representation of genuine Russian reality which at the time was more or less forbidden and was, indeed, skilfully avoided by his contemporaries. And besides, there was Leskov's all-forgiving identification with everything—nature, people, history. This comes from his philosophy and the depth of the suffering of his soul, a soul that was firmly loyal to the motherland and fully committed to serving her most resolutely. Leskov considered this service his mission.

During all his life Nikolaj Leskov would take steps which have never been treated adequately and for which he has been blamed and stigmatized again and again. It is a paradox but a fact now that Leskov's literary works were excluded from the school curriculum after the October Revolution. In higher educational establishments his activities and creative works were studied in selected passages (and so they are even today). For a long time his fiction (to say nothing about his religious and political writings or about his literary criticism) was inaccessible

for the common reader. It was only his anticlerical stories, small domestic sketches and some novels which were discussed, but the critical response was limited due to the moralizing ethos of the time defined by the concept of socialist realism. The critics and advocates of socialist realism were too blind to see Leskov's superb craftsmanship and the disguised implications of his work. When the term socialist realism is used it should be remembered that Russian realism is a very capacious and complicated notion as compared to what it was stated to be in the Soviet theory of literature with its strictly confined boundaries and its submission to the exigencies of the revolutionary movement. There can hardly be any similar definition of realism, for instance, that would apply to the 19th and the 20th centuries. It can even be claimed that the 18th century in Russia was the age of progressive aesthetic and literary norms which are responsible for the kind of realism that appears in the masterpieces of Radiščev and Puškin, Žukovskij and Karamzin. The Russian cultural tradition appeared as a natural source of inspiration for writers. To the abyss of the coming *agitculture* they opposed the only value-man. The humanistic—and, in this sense, realistic—character of classical Russian literature consisted in a humane *Weltanschauung* which respected the dignity of man, and, in consequence, the principle of the independent, involuntary development of a human being. That was an ideology of *добролюбие* (goodness) and wisdom which was eradicated later.

The fact that Leskov swam against the current of the time can be said to have determined the complexity of his vision as well as his creative attitude. On the whole, the entire inner world of his fiction is obviously permeated with an ideal or, better to say, disposition—*духовность* (spirituality). That is not only a reflection of a system of constant and firm moral values, of a commitment to a definite conception of art as a form of enlightenment but also of the quality of a soul, wistful and searching, tormented and plagued by contradictions. It is a prevalence of spiritual and intellectual interests over material being. It is the lot of few. Not to be crushed by gossip and threats, falsifications and mockery—such was the reward prepared for him. His adversaries never even pretended to forgive Leskov his spiritual truth and pure intentions, on the contrary, they tried to crush him by hook or by crook. Leskov, however, bore no grudge against them. His life and works are evidence of that.

The Russian dictionaries of the Soviet period define the notion *духовность* as 'obsolete' (!)—as though available but incompatible with the modern mentality and mode of life. Actually, it is not a slogan (that would not be typical of Leskov at all), *духовность* offers no promises of any kind, neither does it open up false perspectives. *Духовность* might be to some extent conservative, but it is not hostile to progress. It does not belong to any political party. On the contrary, it pleads for the protection of the best traditions and ideals of the past from inexperienced or ruthless usage and interpretation by adherents of 'new' convictions. It should be remembered that the Latin *conservativus* means 'standing guard over smb., safe-guarding, protective'. 'Safe-guarding' has often boiled down to a complicity with inertness and stagnation. That is why Leskov was

invariably shown to have been a writer of secondary importance, an effort to which the *Okhranka* (Secret Political Police in tsarist Russia) contributed, too. Leskov, however, was a guardian in the primary sense of the word—a guardian of the most important traditional values and ideals, i.e. the humanism and the spontaneity of the Russian character. That is why he resisted every attempt to level its originality, to blunt the intensity of the Russian spirit. In that we can see an actual necessity of our own time: the obligation to uphold the noble ideals of the ancient times, to adjust them to modern social processes and to look for ways in which they can be passed on to the future. That is where the great vitality of Leskov's power lies. His restitution has already come. Leskov for us is one of the modern authors occupying in the civil society of today.

The following note which Leskov jotted down in the album of G. P. Danilevsky seems to reflect his innermost pains; his words will help us to see him in a brighter, more appropriate light:

In my literary time there was not a writer slandered more than I; nevertheless not in the least have I ever been sorry about that. I've always tried to accept the sufferings which have been falling to my lot through all the malice and libels for my good and have been very thankful for them: they've taught me to put up with them, and God help everybody in that. Nikolaj Leskov (Stebnitsky). 14th May, 1872. SPb.¹

A lot has been said about the persuasiveness of Leskov's language, but the specific attributes of his style have never been properly defined, although the clarification of his reasons for the use of specific discourses might disclose much of the nature of his artistic world. It seems to be especially rewarding to try to detect the sources he drew upon while he elaborated his linguistic medium.

His essays and articles often touch upon questions of church life and as a matter of fact they frequently read as investigations of artistic problems. It was natural for the author to base them on documentary materials. For instance, *Синодальные персоны. Период борьбы за преобладание (1820–1840 гг.)* ['Representatives of the Synod. The period of struggle for predominance'], *Иродова работа. Русские картины в Остзейском крае* ['Tyrant's Work. Russian pictures in the East See region'], *Церковные интриганы. Исторические картины* ['Church intrigants. Historic pictures'], *Поповская чехарда и приходская прихоть. Церковно-исторические нравы и картины* ['Priest's reshuffle and parish whims. Morals and pictures from the history of the Church'] and some other works written by Leskov and published in the journal *Istoričeskij vestnik* in the 1880s. Some of the aforementioned essays were later included by the author in the larger and prominent short stories and novels, others were organized into cycles like *Zametki neizvestnogo*.

Leskov had testified to their authenticity: in the article *Поповская чехарда...* he says:

I would like to offer the readers an interesting story (here and further on emphasized phrases are spaced by us—O. N.) I have borrowed from the original inquiry made in the

¹ GPB. F. 236, № 174, p. 56. Cited from: (Лесков 1991: 37). [Here as hereafter all translations into English are my own.—O. N.].

Moscow department of the Holy Synod about priest Kirill about whom forty two persons from the parish of Spas in Nalivki “croaked”.²

And in the introduction to the *Notes of the Unknown* the narrator describes an ancient manuscript which he has found introducing it to the readers in detail, besides declaring its authenticity. Then the author characterizes it substantially, and eventually he adds:

Засим я предлагаю в подлиннике заметки неизвестного летописца в том порядке и под теми же самыми частными заглавиями, под какими они записаны в полууничтоженной рукописи (Лесков 1973, IV: 257). (Hereafter I present the original notes of the unknown annalist in that order and with those and the same separate titles under which they appear in the half-destroyed manuscript.)

This is an interesting peculiarity of Leskov’s not only in this instance but in general terms as well. In another article, *Благословенный брак. Характерный пропуск в исторической литературе раскола* [‘Blessed marriage. A distinctive omission in the annals of the history of the Schism’] the writer again refers to a rare manuscript book entitled *О бракосочетании* [‘On matrimony’], quotes the complete text and gives a minute description of it.³

One more important piece of information is offered by Leskov: as he begins his story the author points out to a familiar second-hand bookseller from the Sukharev tower from whom he claims he has bought a manuscript (Лесков 1973, IV: 257). It is known that since the middle of the 19th century Sukharev Square had been the venue of the famous book and art market. That was a centre of antiquities in Moscow (later on, at the time of Stalin, the tower was demolished). We may assume that Leskov the bibliographer knew that place and went there often enough to buy books.

Thus, fact and true-to-life fiction seem to merge. Those two references to reality are complemented by the writer in an inobtrusive, a most sophisticated way by a hint to an “artless presentation of events which in its own time seems to have interested an apparently very respectable, seriously disposed social circle” («безыскусственное изображение событий, интересовавших в свое время какой-то, по-видимому весьма distinguished, оригинальный и серьезно настроенный общественный кружок») (Лесков 1973, IV: 257).⁴

This circle was a mixed group of people including the secretary (from *Ис-*

² Исторический вѣстник 11 (1883) 2: 265. Though A. N. Leskov did not find a real manuscript with original *Notes* (see: Звезда 1935, 7: 226), I assume that linguistic and source studies will lead us to us some possible parallels.

³ Исторический вѣстник 20 (1885) 6: 506–509.

⁴ Ibid. P.257. Later on Leskov said that he wanted to write *Заметки раскопани* [‘Notes of the unfrocked’]; the hero of the story would be a young, sensitive and modest gentleman who becomes a priest in order to do what is possible (we keep here the authors spacing out of the words—*O. N.*) *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*, and discovers that there is nothing to do for God’s glory. But this could hardly be published in our Fatherland,—inferred the writer. (See the epilogue by A. N. Leskov to one of the first publications of some stories from *Notes of the Unknown* in the journal Звезда 1935. 7: 226).

кусный ответчик), the assessor's wife with her small son Ignaty (*Излияния материнская нежность*), "the spiritual student" («Чужеземные обычаи только с разумением применять можно»), etc. But the main characters of the cycle are, among others, a bishop, priests, a consistory man and the principal of the church seminary.

Leskov's acquaintances occasionally tried to exercise some pressure on him disapproving of his sharply critical views on the problems of church life. They wanted to soothe his anti-clerical leanings. Colonel Pashkov wrote to Leskov on the 22nd of September 1884:

I find it unbearably regrettable to see that you, whose heart responded formerly to everything true and good, now sneer at... what was taught by the apostles... (Другов 1957: 88).

The Slavophile I. S. Aksakov also approached Leskov with similar letters. But he had his own notions in this context: he fought for the moral purity of the custodians of religious traditions and despite the pressure of his friends or the censors' prohibition he never wavered in his position. (The cycle of short stories *Notes of the Unknown* was first published in *Gazeta A. Gattsuka* in 1884, № 2, 5, 9–14. Then publication was stopped by censorship, and it was only in 1917–1918 that the last three stories appeared in *The Niva*. In Leskov's view people who are ordained should be inspired, i.e. inwardly ennobled and filled with elevated feelings and aspirations. These are people of Faith. Under the *klobuk* (headgear of Orthodox monk) and black robe with a smooth radiant cross Leskov saw not only a God's minister but first of all a man. Observing a deep abyss between the words of God's preachers and their deeds which hardly conformed to the established rules of morals the writer could not keep silent. It should be emphasized that the anti-clerical writings of Leskov should not be seen as an indication of a departure from God or Faith or religious feelings. They reflect no rejection on Leskov's part of God's commandments. They should be seen instead as true sketches of the life of the clergy, their domestic life and relationships. Some arguments of V. O. Klučevskij reflect the same view, e.g. his ironic question: "Do the clergy believe in God? They do not understand that question because they officiate God", or his statement: "In the West the Church has no God, in Russia God has no Church" (Ключевский 1990: 384).⁵

It has been established that it was scrupulous and protracted work in the archives that helped Leskov to realize the profound sense of the mentality of the past. That also considerably supplemented the knowledge derived from life. And, indeed, *Notes of the Unknown* contains much documentary information. Even some traits of the characters of this cycle were taken from the inquest deeds of the Synod. That is why what is presented in his narrative should be interpreted more than a fruit of Leskov's fantasy. It is the result of persistent research as

⁵ When writing this narrative Leskov's personal position was rather difficult. Besides the fact of having to stop publishing the *Notes*, there is one more detail. In that period E. M. Theoktistov (whom the writer called "a pig from Theatre Square") was the Head of the Central Department of State Seal. The Minister for Education D. A. Tolstoy who "disliked people who took their own stand", as Leskov said, was also ill disposed to him.

well as the observation of the actual prototypes of his fiction. Leskov can actually be considered to have been a scholar, an explorer of the Russian antiquities and an investigator of the spirit of the past. Our suppositions are confirmed by looking through the files of the former Record Office of the Synod. A substantial part of them now is concentrated in the Russian State Record Office of Ancient Acts in Moscow. I was fortunate enough to be able to read some manuscripts kept in File № 1183 'Moscow Synodal Office' and analyze them.

In a manuscript entitled "The case of the shock which hieromonk of Novospassky Monastery, Arseny, had during divine service in Peter-and-Paul's Parish Church" there is the report of the following incident:

...during the service of the hieromonk Arseny was overcome by a shock, he, however, had finished the liturgy; by the time he finished he had lost his tongue, the left arm and leg were paralyzed; soon after that a vomiting followed with eruption of holy donations at the altar; the ejected remained in a washbasin; after the exposure he had been taken to the church ward...⁶

At the end of this personal file a resolution was placed: a prohibition of divine service in churches of the Moscow eparchy. Later we shall see how Leskov used these sad and ironic facts in his domestic sketches.

From the other document under the heading 'About the presentation of a book for recording the evil deeds to the permanent inhabitants of the abolished George's Monastery' it is clear that a certain Grigory Nikolayev was lazy and negligent in performing his duty and showed no proper industry, and Zakhar Efimov abandoned himself to hard drinking and even violence. With reference to that, the applicant writes, your most humble servant asks the Office of the Holy Synod to give us a book for putting down in it every case of their improper conduct⁷.

Here is another interesting and important document which helps us to find the sources of Leskov's prose. It testifies, in our opinion, to a curious accident, or as the writer might have said, to an extraordinary occurrence of a very unpleasant nature. Under the title 'About the expulsion of the novice Vasily Shiriayev from Voskresensky Monastery for improper conduct' it is told that "the lay brother Vasily Shiriayev was seen in a drunken state all during the Easter week..."⁸

Does not all that is cited above look like artistic discourse? Could not those picturesque passages connected with some actual events and facts be related to Leskov's *Notes of the Unknown*? At least we catch a likeness between them and the narrative. For instance, in his conduct and action "the regent of the bishop's choir", who was much of an Adonis (*«красук»*)— a dandy in Leskov's view.— O. N.)

was so completely confused by the love stories of ladies who arrived for vespers, that ... [he] wondered away from the choir or started winking at important females who were about to leave the

⁶ RGADA. F. 1183. L. 1, part 37, № 129, p. 1.

⁷ Ibid. № 134, p. 1.

⁸ Ibid. № 176, p. 6.

church... (так в переплете любовных историй от приезжавших ко всенощной дам запутался, что... [он] с хор утекал или с направлявшимися к выходу женскими особами глазами перемигивался...) (Лесков 1973, IV: 287),

and Grigory Nikolayev who “was negligent and showed no proper industry in performing his duties”. Who could know what was meant by such an impersonal definition? Only Leskov's creative imagination could see so clearly this *class maxima* which was engraved on the worn and burnt pages of the invaluable manuscripts.

An old hierodeacon, who during the Lent was crazy about billiard, drank so truly that he became tipsy of empty wine-glasses (Лесков 1973, IV: 284–285), reminds the reader of the very *cunctos morum* who “all the Easter week was seen in a drunken state”.

Lastly, Farther Ioann from the story *Как нехорошо осуждать слабости* [‘It is wrong to blame foibles’] being intoxicated permitted himself an “indecent thing”: “having uttered an exclamation fell asleep, and did not wake up for a long time” («сделав возглас, заснул и не скоро пробудился») (Лесков 1973, IV: 259), and hieromonk Arseny who had a “shock” during divine service. In both of the examples veiled irony is implied.

After some possible parallels have been pointed out, a comparison of Leskov's style and approach to the description of every day events with some of the possible sources of his narrative style has been carried out. Our investigation suggests that the style of the business documents of national history, especially those of investigatory evidence connected with church life, is in a certain correlation with the text of Leskov's narrative. That interaction becomes particularly pronounced in the use of the words which have characteristic and determined meanings and may have served as formative models for him like *буйство* (tumult), *разоблачение* (unmasking), *извет* (false denunciation), *справищик* (corrector), *дознание* (inquiry), *обыскная книга* (a church book for registration of matrimonies), *обыск* (a note on marriage in a church book), *консисторский приказный* (consistorial bailiff). All these words had been used actively in the Old Russian legal system and in manuscripts in their primary meanings with different semantic and stylistic shades. For instance, the lexeme *извѣтъ* had nine ways of interpretation: 1. Pretext; excuse. 2. Cause. 3. Fraud, illegal actions. 4. Accusation; slander, calumny. 5. Proof, confirmation, evidence. 6. Denunciation. 7. Report, dispatch. 8. Advice. 9. Justification; apology, forgiveness (Словарь русск. яз. 1979: 116–118). Leskov accumulated them into a specific cover with a new meaning invented by him—‘doubt’. On the one hand, it was a peculiar trait of his protagonist, the secretary of the consistory, who, after having been decorated with an order he had coveted, understood that

after the departure of the foreign *predicant* (here preacher—*O. N.*) many of the simple folks who before in their lapsed life had never read the Gospel, appeared with the New Testament... Though,—the narrator proceeds,—in each of them were printed particulars as to the place and date of the publication, the secretary conceived an anxious *doubt* that those books were made at some printing-house in London, and the Russian imprint was put in by fraud, in order to reduce the incomes (!—*O. N.*) of the orthodoxial department in Russia (‘по отъезде иностран-

ного проповедника у многих простого звания людей, кои в прежде прошедшей жизни никогда Евангелия не читали, появились в руках книжки Нового Завета... и хотя под какою из оных было подпечатано обозначение выхода их из духовной типографии, но секретарь возымел беспокойное сомнение, что те книги произведены в типографии в Лондоне, а выход российский им обозначен обманно, собственно для подрыва доходов (?!—O. N.) православного ведомства в России') (Лесков 1973, IV: 303–304).

On the other hand, the writer ridicules the pathological inclination of some protectors of orthodoxy who give in to the temptation of engaging in an absurd and feigned search of enemies of the national religion. Leskov's irony expressed in a veiled form takes another turn when the narrator gives a parody of the inquiry trial. It is held according to the secretary's *извет*. Being an expert in the Gospel he asks the chief *справщик* (corrector) from the gubernia printing-house, a German by birth, ... to give him an explanation that would lead to conclusive evidence («призвал к себе из губернской типографии главного справщика, происхождением немца, ... и предложил: не можете ли дать на сей предмет сведущего разъяснительного заключения») (Лесков 1973, IV: 304).

Because he had no doubt that an English publishing company, however hard they strived to falsify a legitimate Russian edition published with established blessings, would never be able to do so

английское общество сколько бы ни стремилось всеми силами к тому обману, чтобы подделаться к законному русскому изданию, с установленного благословения изданному, никак того достичь не в состоянии.

— А почему?

— Потому, что там с такими грубыми несовершенствами верстки и тиснения и на столь дурной бумаге уже более двухсот лет не печатают (Лесков 1973, IV: 304)

— And why? (asked the secretary—O. N.)

— Because there with page-reading and editing so imperfect, and on paper of such poor quality nothing has been printed in the last two hundred years).

A fine and subtle hint of the title of this short story, *Стесненная ограниченность англического искусства* ['The constraining limitation of English art'], gave Leskov the possibility to show the absurdity of the official Church and the pseudo-patriotism of the Russian zealots. It was his manner to invent affected titles, overloaded and intricate. The titles reveal the psychological attitude of Leskov to the specific tradition in question. He created his own system which distinguishes the notions 'book language' and 'local patois', 'living' and 'literary speech'. As a rule, the titles of his works are complicated and full of metaphors. This helped him to protect the original text from censorship covering the content behind the same neutral phrases which were hard to discern. In this episode the Old Russian word *извѣтъ* could have also been interpreted in a new sense because of the polysemanticism of its root: *извѣтъ*—*вѣсть*—*вѣкъ*—*извѣчный*, i.e. a primordial, old (difficult) problem. And in our view, the writer meant to make a step toward solving it by means of humour and irony, defending *русскость* (Russianness) and fighting against its mystifiers.

The sarcasm with which he describes God's servants might suggest that

Leskov's soul was entirely torn by the contradictions of reality. His characters are, to some extent, reflections of his own spiritual conflicts and awareness of social injustice. But his prose does not give the impression of despair concerning man's moral potential or lack of belief in the future. On the contrary, the writer was nourished on quite different stuff. Once he wrote to S. N. Shubinsky: "You should not at all be in time with 'the monde', but keep yourself to whatever is better than what it now approves of and encourages..." (*Русские писатели* 1955: 223). Leskov deeply felt the coming tragedy of nihilism. It was not only a trend in the environment of *разночинец*.⁹ It was the beginning of a tyranny under which everyone would be left to the mercy of fate. That was an absolute negation and rejection of all human and social standards, principles, values established before. In this situation he was looking for bright ideals, and he found them in the rural provinces of Russia. Leskov listened to its spirit and movement with great attention. There he saw natural people and felt at ease. Leskov studied them through their customs and habits, through their language. Explaining the specific manner of the pronunciation and behaviour of people in the countryside Leskov retorted to the opponents of the 'artificiality' of his language:

That very common, vulgar and artificial language in which many pages of my works are written is no invention of mine, it was collected while eavesdropping on the speech of a *мужик*, of a half-wit, of a *краснобай* [phrase-monger—*O. N.*], of a *юродивый* [God's fool—*O. N.*] and of *святоши* [hypocrites—*O. N.*] (*Русские писатели* 1955: 221).

When travelling about in the remotest places in Russia Leskov met uncommon characters having exceptional fates and strong tempers. Such is Ivan Severyanovich Flyagin the *Очарованный странник*, depicted in a tale of the same name, who is a «типический, простодушный, добрый русский богатырь, напоминающий дедушку Илью Муромца» (Leskov 1973, III: 4–5) ('a typical, open-hearted, kind Russian *богатырь* [Hercules.—*O. N.*] reminding us of grandpa Ilya Muromets'). All Russia is compressed into his story. The Archpriest Savely Tuberozov (*Соборяне*), whose life is part of Russian hagiography, has gracelessly sunk into oblivion. In these characters Leskov saw the potential of a mighty spiritual force able to resist the general chaos of nihilism.¹⁰ The writer visited a lot of monasteries where he could listen to unusual stories and read the messages of unusual, desperate souls from the past. Leskov found a way to reflect in a natural though elaborate form the innocent spontaneity of whatever he came across. For an example here is the entire text of a manuscript which deserved Leskov's attention:

⁹ *Разночинец*—intellectual not belonging to the gentry in 19th-century Russia.

¹⁰ *Нигилизм* in its origin is borrowed from Latin *nihil*—'nothing'. N. O. Lossky gives a substantial analysis of the problem of Russian nihilism and its functions in literature. In his view the word "nihilism", not in an old theological but in the social sense, was used for the first time by N. I. Nadeždin in 1829. At that period it meant new tendencies in literature and philosophy. N. O. Lossky considered nihilism "the seamy side of the good qualities of the Russian people". See: Лосский 1991: 338–350.

Честнѣйшій отецъ казначей Епифаній!

Извѣстно вамъ, что уже у насъ на Крестно(м) островѣ открылся питѣйный домъ, то во о(т)вращеніе противны(х) слѣдствій, по хр[и]стіанской любви прошѣ, а по должности моей и приказываю, сохраните пожалѣйте какъ себя, так и дрѣги(х) братій в порядочно(м) воздержаніи, в незазорно(м) поведеніи, і в добродѣте(л)номъ состояніи, что бѣдетъ Б[о]гу пріятно, о(т) ближни(х) заслужите себѣ почтеніе, а мнѣ во утѣшеніе и спокойствіе дѣха, ва(м) сіе порѣчено, и порѣчаю наблюда(т) сей порядокъ благосостоянія о чемъ на васъ надѣюсь и не сѣмнюсь. Знаете, в противно(м) случае какая мнѣ о(т)рада, я принѣжден, но бѣдѣ соо(т)вѣтствова(т) моей должности. Извѣстны вы, что Б[о]жією милостію, и монарши(м) благоволеніемъ доволнѣ пожалованы, со временемъ почѣвствѣете сами свою ползѣ. Сіе мое приказаніе, или паче усердіе, обявите и про(т)чей братіи. В про(т)чемъ желая вамъ всѣхъ благъ, пребываю

Вашъ доброжелательный Архимандритъ Макарій.

Маія 28 1780 года. Онѣга.¹¹

That manner of speaking and style was very close to Leskov's as he pointed out himself:

My priests speak ecclesiastically, my nihilists—in a nihilistic way, my *мушкетеры*—in a manly manner, the parvenus of them and the *скоморохи* [buffoons—O. N.]—freakishly, etc. (Русские писатели 1955: 221).

Without any commentary the document will give an idea to the reader of the style and manners of the time so that he can compare it with the text of Leskov's *Notes of the Unknown*. The comparison will hopefully lead us to a new interpretation and a better understanding of the contents. The manuscript seems to be rich in the varieties of microstyles and syntactic constructions belonging to the church tradition, distributed in an appointed succession and with consistency which must have had an important meaning to Leskov. In the broad sense the writer drew upon the best traditions of classical Russian style so highly estimated in former times. Thus he could convey the inner world of his characters in a special language where „ornate sound of the words”, he thought, was inadmissible. Here he followed the traditions of the literary language elaborated by M. V. Lomonosov and N. M. Karamzin, A. F. Vel'tman and the Russian Romantics, but he preserved, at the same time, his own individual voice, coherence of ideas and the linguistic character of his own vivid and clear style.

In this narrative Leskov, who was an outstanding experimenter, used striking Old Slavonic collocations and citations from the Holy Writ. That was an expressive recreation of the language used by the clergy, and it was a most

¹¹ RGADA. F. 1195. L. 4, № 445, p. 84 r. s. This manuscript is written in the traditional type of Russian handwriting of the 18th century—*скоропись* (tachygraphy). It is to some extent more developed as compared to the beginning of the century, and is closer to the modern manner of writing. It is characterized by a variety of letter scripts, an abundance of signs carried above the line and the absence of an elaborated system of punctuation. Figures representing the date of the composition of the document in the second part of the 1700s are not substituted for letters as a rule. In “()” we put letters written in the original above the line; in “< >”—the letters omitted but implied by the author, “[]” are used for the letters carried out under the title. Orthography and punctuation are given without any corrections in the original form.

ingenious device to achieve the ironic overtone of *Notes of the Unknown*. In the context of his own time we can call his style even avant-garde because specifically Russian elements are presented alongside with Slavonicisms like «...ни-мало сумняся...» (Лесков 1973, IV: 272) (not in the least doubting), «...его же любяше» (Лесков 1973, IV: 277) (whom he had been loved by), «до умертвия...» (Лесков 1973, IV: 277) (up to death), «...в превыспренние...» (Лесков 1973, IV: 279) (to the heavens), «нози» (Лесков 1973, IV: 280) (feet), «новоначатие» (Лесков 1973, IV: 259) (innovation), «мироносицы» (Лесков 1973, IV: 304) (here the meaning is not directly connected with myrrh, the referentiality of the word is altered and it means: female admirers of the chief of some sect), «войственники» (Лесков 1973, IV: 326) (put by the author instead of *воины*—soldiers), «борзяся» (Лесков 1973, IV: 330) (hastily), and others. And what is more, the writer borrows phrases from the Bible, which he uses in a slightly altered form to show the false learning of the ecclesiastics. The quotations in Leskov serve not for argument or evidence. They have the role of artistic analogies in relation to events and the characters' inner reality. Such a style gave the writer the possibility to disclose something of the secret deeds of God's servants. When explaining an episode which happened to Father Grigory, who was undecided as regards the difference between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant concepts of the sacrament of the holy penance (Лесков 1973, IV: 270), the narrator put his own thoughts into the Archbishop's words who "cleared up" the Father's problem in this way:

Они (взгляды—*O. N.*) весьма противоположны, но я их не осуждаю, а даже скажу: обоим не худы. Но мы, как православные, должны своего не порицать и держаться—тем более, что у нас исповедь на всякий случай и особое применение в гражданском управлении имеет, которого нам лучше не касаться (Лесков 1973, IV: 270)¹² (These [views—*O. N.*] are very contradictory but I don't condemn them and even say: neither of them is wrong. But we, as orthodoxials, should not dispute ours and should actually keep to it—especially because our creed has an application to every situation and a particular application in civil life, which should rather not be touched upon).

The passage suggests that the author considers it an obligation for the priest to denounce political offence if he gets to know about it through a confession. It is not too much to say that Leskov, the avant-garde artist, applied Slavonicisms in a function not exploited before. It was not even their phonetic cover (the though decorative phonetic design of the word as a special stylistic method was originally adopted by the writer) he was interested in. Leskov used archaic expressions not for their lack of pleophony and abstruseness of meaning, for specific initial combinations or availability of compound sounds, etc. What mattered for him was the possibility to convey implicating intonations by means of Old Slavonic and express satirical laughter filled with the mixed feeling of sorrow and joy thanks to its spiritual rhythm.

We can find confusion of language units close in form in the prose of Pust-

¹² Compare the statement by N. O. Lossky: "Reducing the Church to the stage of servitors of the state, the government converts ecclesiastics into social servants" (Лосский 1991: 248).

ozersk, i.e. in *Житие протопопа Аввакума* and in his *челобитные* (petitions) to Tsar Alexey Mikhaylovich, and in 'literary' works (messages) by his copri-soners, *инок* (anchorite) Epiphany, priest Lazar', deacon Feodor. In these writings we can often see the Holy Scripture as interpreted by the authors correlated with what they want to say, which is similar to Leskov's way of giving parallels to the convulsions of modern life, as for example: «...свет его может просветиться пред человеки...» (Лесков 1973, IV: 309) (let his light so shine before men)—a free borrowing from the Gospel of Matthew, or «...что ми хотите дати?» (Лесков 1973, IV: 312) (what would you give me)—the question of Judas about the reward for his betrayal; or one more example: «...мня ся быти яко первым по фараоне...» (Лесков 1973, IV: 313) (I imagine myself to be as though the first after Pharaoh)—in Leskov's narrative it is said in honour of Father Pavel who considers himself to be the first after Pharaoh, and who, being very much displeased with refreshments prepared for him on a day of fast, finds an excellent remedy:

a glass of undiluted punch rum with chemists' drops of English mint-*kholodianka*..., and, as a token of what it often compels, to alleviate pains... (Лесков 1973, IV: 315).¹³

According to the biblical legend Joseph, who had been sold by his brothers into Egyptian slavery, became the first in Egypt after Pharaoh. A similar method of the interpretation of the Holy Writ was artistically used by Avvakum: he read contemporary events by the light of the holy rites. This elevates the occurrence described to the rank of a holy mystery (Пустозерская проза 1989: 33). In it his life-story and the end of the history of the world gets entangled:

Ты, Господи, изведый мя из чрева матере моея, и от небытия и бытие мя устроил и аще меня задушат, причти мя с митрополитом Филиппом Московским... (Пустозерская проза 1989: 45).

Epifany in *Житие* says somewhat similarly:

Господи Иисусе Христе, Сыне Божий! Помилуй мя, грешного, по благодати спаси мя, а не по долгу, ими ж веси судьбами (Пустозерская проза 1989: 199).

Like in the case of Avvakum, where the change of the personal tone and the stylization of language lead to exposing the pathos of the preacher, Leskov uses archaic church elements in the oral colloquial speech of the characters in his *Notes* as well. In both works we see symbolic parallels corresponding to different parameters of view: *житие*-narrative, saturation of the texts with church Slavonic terms, creative intuition to show events which happened during the life of each author, and eventually their religious moral stance is conveyed in the ancient book style in its primordial state. All that gives us the possibility to formulate the following conclusion: the permanent use of the literary aesthetic tradition and language heritage enables Leskov to create his own stylistic system. He was an avant-garde artist searching new ways of using words in their original and nonartificial hypostases. Just as Avvakum himself embodied a novel literary

¹³ The very remedy was called by the spiritual males *есмирмисменно вино* from *ес мир ми*.

and language intention, Leskov tried to appropriate what he found there and accommodate it to the fresh conditions thereby developing his own standards. Our task is to understand this 'unintelligible' system of material linguistic integument and the means of its interior aesthetic organization.

When studying the problem, however, the danger of mixing up the two notions, style in its diachronic conception and the "normative" comprehension of it, might arise. The historic approach presupposes some system and we may easily be bogged down in multilingual and multicultural problems. Normative style is more or less a static category representing a whole complex of questions. It is a totality of indications characterizing an art or literary piece of a definite period and a tendency in attitude to the substantial idea and the artistic form. Here style has found its position on the basis of timelessness. We have a propensity for source study. It might appear an absolute necessity for anyone to develop analysis in such a key because Leskov compiled his work from original sources, and to elucidate his historic method has always born more substantial fruit than concentrating research exclusively on the text. It is also important to remember that "various styles of speech within limits of one and the same written language... can go back to different historic traditions" (Винокур 1959: 232).¹⁴ For instance, it is known that in Russian literary speech of the beginning of the 19th century some Slavonicisms like *млеко*, *брег*, *выя*, *вран*, etc., which had their primordial Russian synonyms-duplicates, were in active use. In that particular period this trait characterized literary language on the whole in contrast to secular, epistolary or domestic language in its written form. Closer to the '30s the use of Old Slavonic was not any longer an attribute of the artistic mode of speech, it was rather a characteristic of the language of poetry as contra-distinguished from that of prose. Thus it would be an error to consider every language feature in Leskov's narrative as evidence for his use of the real language situation of his time. Here we should keep a linguistic distance and take into consideration essentially different conditions for the language in diverse spheres. That is why the writer's Slavonic world should be explained in the context of the literary aesthetic traditions of his time as well as of his own views expressed in letters, articles, etc. Seen in this way the abundance of Church Slavonic lexemes and syntactic constructions can be said to make no impression of a surcharge of the text as a result of primitive stylization. His comprehension of the notion of stylization is entirely different from some of the definitions we can find in modern dictionaries, e.g. "1. Stylization—imitation of outward [i.e. superficial—*O. N.*] forms, typical illustrations of a certain style.(...) 2. Literary

¹⁴ In his other article G. O. Vinokur posits an interesting thesis which can be usefully adapted to historical analysis. He claims that "in application to the tasks of the reproduction of an old *glossa* the means of language of the following four types can be distinguished: firstly, the means of generally historic and folk colouring; secondly, the means with bookish colouring imitating Church Slavonic speech; thirdly, the means of narrow chronological colouring; in the forth place, the means in expressiveness of which the dialectally estranging momentum suppresses the historical momentum proper" (Винокур 1991: 424).

work being as to the form an imitation of some style” (Лексические трудности 1994: 455). Stylization for him was not mere imitation, it was not even connected seriously to it (in this period of his creative activities). Leskov’s inward requirement ‘to stylize’ comes out of his own artistic struggle against any unreasonable treatment of language ligatures on the one hand, and out of his speculations on artistic taste on the other. It is evident that Slavonicisms have a special part to play in the structure of his texts. Their emotional mood, musical pitch and grammatical harmony create a fascinating atmosphere of skilful puns and whimsical imagination. They are very carefully attributed to the oral characteristics of his protagonists and do not upset the balance of composition. Look at their inner phonation: *епитимейка* (Лесков 1973, IV: 269) (penance)—here used with the diminutive hypocoristic suffix instead of *епитимья*; *притязание* (Лесков 1973, IV: 257) (in the meaning of grabbing); *дражае* (Лесков 1973, IV: 284) (dearly, here in the sense ‘having more importance’); *снемлются* (Лесков 1973, IV: 299) (are gathering); *оспособлять хозяев* (Лесков 1973, IV: 298) (to help the hosts); *...возгреваема духом благочестивой ревности...* (Лесков 1973, IV: 299) (warming by the spirit of pious zeal)—describing the anger of a bishop; *быв же через немалое время увещеваем...* (Лесков 1973, IV: 309) (having been admonished during a long period of time); *благочинный градских церквей...* (Лесков 1973, IV: 305) (rural dean of the urban churches); *...[быть] в напрасно постыждающем конфузе* (Лесков 1973, IV: 300) ([to be] in unfoundedly shameful embarrassment); *...помещик... возмнил себя уже видящим небо отверсто и стал проповедовать...* (Лесков 1973, IV: 298) (the landowner got too high an opinion of himself just seeing the Heaven open and began to preach); *...отец же Иван... благословил его, а потом... лег паки* (Лесков 1973, IV: 260) (Father Ivan blessed him, and then lay down again). Obviously, the use of archaic models of official business style filled with Slavonicisms and lexemes of religious meaning let us come to the conclusion that there is an appreciable connection between Leskov’s language and some of the language features of the 17th century but Leskov’s medium is more stylized. Leskov relied on a tradition which emerged in a later period, in the 1700s, when Old Slavonic words which used to have mostly ecclesiastic and cult semantics before were subjected to a redefinition of their language status, sometimes their field of dissemination was narrowed down (or changed in a way) and they preserved their primary sense only in obsolete stylized church speech. Leskov was also right when he noticed the most peculiar feature of written business style in the 18th century: the collation of church speech with phraseological locutions with figurative meaning.¹⁵ This made wordy modifiers metaphoric and inimitable in artistic beauty.

¹⁵ Compare also Leskov’s following combinations to the business style of the 18th century: he uses the 18th century grammatical concord with prepositions thus ascribing to them the meaning they used to have then and brings them into correlation with one of their sensitive units to polysemantic Slavonicisms (we put them in the bold type): «...по принесении же белья эконом оное весьма смотрел в достоинстве проверял...» (Лесков 1973, IV: 278) (when the linen

This statement is corroborated by our analysis of changes in Leskov's attitude to the literary language. He began with imitative genres, and the main form of stylization was 'mimicking of style' (of course, we have his fiction and not his essays or journalism in mind). That was not, however, simple imitation or assimilation to the concrete manner of writing but its intentional and spiritually realized reproduction. Moreover, Leskov came to literature with a definite view of Russian existence. In his first story, *Овцебык* ('The musk-ox') [1862], the principal traits of his artistic stance was already outlined: recollection, aptly combined with fantasy, was based on exposing the biography of a hero by short and impressive episodes (ЛЭС 1987: 216); short stories inserted into the main body of the text; a heightened sensitivity to folk speech and its richness in unexpected turns; trustworthy sketches of the clergy.¹⁶

Житие одной бабы ('The life of a woman') [1863] anticipates the characteristic components of his further literary activities—the subtitle «Из гостомельских воспоминаний» ('From the Gostomel reminiscences') suggests that Leskov's interest in giving a biographic turn to his narrative has deepened, and the folk *skaz* (tale) in his fiction obtains a dominant position for the first time.

In the second part of the '60s and '70s, Leskov's writing is notable for the broad range of expression. In this period the following language and style features of his literary works can be distinguished: a significant presence of elements of language naturalism, an active search for style-forming elements and modes of organizing the genre system, heightened sensibility to the minute description of the representatives of national types, and last but not least, a graphically pronounced social orientation of turns of speech (*Соборяне, Зане-чатленный ангел, Очарованный странник*). Historic truth is subordinated to artistic truth in Leskov's literary works of this time just as in A. F. Vel'tman. The fantastic and real were the two principles forming the subject-matter of his fiction during the period. This perhaps indicated a shift from what is called conventional historicity, i.e. Leskov moved away from the important problems of modern life, which are screened by reveries and romantic dreams, to conscious historicism in which the tale as a source blends with a critical insight into the spiritual contradictions of the present.¹⁷

Later Leskov himself defined the method he used in the last period of his

was brought the house-(exchequer-) keeper carefully looked through it and in virtue checked it up); «... [граф] в Петербург возвратясь, в мануфактур-совет, для испрошения медали...» (Лесков 1973, IV: 308) ([the count] came back to Petersburg, to the manufactory council, for asking a medal); «...случился к той поре на селе некий опытный брат, приезжий из недалней обители за нуждою монастырскою. ... [он] сказал: „Брате, брате! Чего доспел еси?“» (Лесков 1973, IV: 311) (it came about at that time in the village that a certain experienced brother, a visitor from a cloister not far off, for monastery need. ... [he] said: "Brother, brother! What have you made up?").

¹⁶ It can be mentioned here that one of Leskov's sisters, Natalija (1836–1920), was the nun Gennadija. See: Гроссман 1945: 26.

¹⁷ Compare, for instance, A. F. Vel'tman's *Сердце и думка* ('Heart and haze') to Leskov's *Очарованный странник* ('Encharmed wanderer').

career. “I wrote in small chapters”,—he said. L. P. Grossman (Гроссман 1945: 265) comments on Leskov’s statement as follows:

Leskov mastered this gift to cut up a story and enhance the interest of the reader by a skilful distribution of parts to perfection. He created his *i n d e p e n d e n t* type of short story in sections: the general figure of his stories, which emerges in a series of quickly succeeding short chapters resumed nearly in every page, gives that lucid coherence to *t h e w h o l e* which is assimilated by the reader with no strain or tiredness (Гроссман 1945: 265).

Notes of the Unknown, indeed, consists of short but richly condensed chapters (all in all twenty two). Each of them has its own plot, each is certainly vivid, satiric and easily retained in memory. Every chapter has its own title, sometimes playful or ironic. Here are some of them: *Искусный ответчик* [‘The clever respondent’], *О вреде от чтения светских книг, бываемом для многих* [‘On the harm of reading secular books which affected a great many’], *Излишняя материнская нежность* [‘Superfluous motherly tenderness’], *Счастливому остроумию и непопозволительная вольность прощается* [‘The lucky wit is forgiven for inadmissible familiarity’], *О безумии одного князя* [‘About the madness of a prince’], *Остановление растущего языка* [‘The stoppage of the growing tongue’], etc. It was one of Leskov’s artistic habits to specify the title of the story by a subtitle either in brackets or without them, as for instance, *О слабости чувств и о напряженности оных. (Двойкий приклад от познаний и наблюдения)* [‘Of the weakness of feelings and the intensity of theirs. (The double assiduity of epistemology and observation)’] or *О Петухе и его детях. Гербальдический казус* [‘About Petukh and his children. A heraldic casus’]. A similar device to specify the main idea was applied by Leskov in his articles and essays, as we have already noticed. He thought that the title should be lively, sonorous, alluring and easy to memorize. Following this principle he created out-of-the-way, enigmatic and inviting titles.

The last story of the cycle is most remarkable in this respect. Let us first examine the title and its complex meaning—‘A heraldic casus’. It emphasizes the mystery of the contents and creates a considerable metaphorical aura. This is the result of an unusual concept of the *w o r d*, of its interior structure. In it the unit of the language appears not in the function of a conditional sign for expressing an idea but like an artistic image (Буслаев 1861: 1). We shall try to penetrate into the substance of this figurativeness. Thus, ‘heraldic’ can be traced back to the lexeme ‘heraldry’. The ‘Dictionary’ of foreign words (Полный словарь 1894: 266) gives the following definition: it derives from Middle Latin *heraldus* which can be traced back to herald. Heraldry is the science of insignia. The name comes from the fact that in the Middle Ages at the time of a tournament the armorial bearings of a new knight appeared, and the herald was supposed to explain the meaning of the arms depicted on the shield of the new contestant. But this interpretation does not contain the sense we are looking for, the very mysterious implication which Leskov managed to give the word. To reveal its concealed significance we shall follow the writer’s mode of treating language: having ‘turned’ the word to one side we shall now turn it to the other. ‘Herald’

springs from Old German *hariwalt*—‘steward of force’. It had three different meanings:

1. A public or town crier (in Russia—*глашатай*) in ancient times whose duty was to announce wars; 2. a person who proclaimed the names of knights in a tournament; 3. an official who announced important events to the public, e.g. coronations (Полный словарь 1894: 270). For the understanding of Leskov's intention the third meaning is of special interest. To get closer to it we have to remember that the word *герольдия*, which is obsolete today, was still widely used in the 19th century. This lexeme with some accurate definition would contain the main theme of the short story. *Герольдия* in Russia was a government institution which was responsible for the scrutiny of the rights of the nobles and for working out the insignia for various places and people. To confirm our hypothesis we shall address the short story ‘About Petukh and his children’.

In it Leskov made use (with good effect) of events which were connected with the public marriage of an officer, son of a land-owning woman and a serf maid as well as the juridically illegitimate entry of their marriage. Showing the pictures of pre-reform Russia the writer touches lightly upon the very intricate and complicated theme of Russian *cryptogamia* (here the word is used in the meaning of clandestine marriage). Leskov's story seems true to us because he explains some details of the unusual case by references to one of the legal documents. In the second part (‘A simple means’) he inserts a footnote with some interesting information which proves that the story is true to historical fact. He mentions in a casual way the forty second paragraph of ‘Instruction to Rural Deans’, which was published in 1857, and quotes a few words from it:

...in it the necessity is discussed to exercise “prudence in declaring couples husband and wife who were not married here” (где говорится об «осторожности в показывании супругами таких лиц, кои здесь не венчаны»),

and in witness of their marriage cannot produce evidence.

Apparently,—infers the narrator,—there must have been some reason that made this warning necessary (Очевидно, что предостережение это было чем-нибудь вызвано) (Лесков 1973, IV: 331).

As it becomes obvious by the passage quoted above, by inobtrusive signs and remarks the author tries to bring the reader closer to his true-to-life narrative style and tries to convince him of the authenticity of his words. As far as we can know on the ground of the written evidence, Leskov was elaborating this problem at the time of publishing the cycle and somewhat later in the articles *Благословенный брак...*¹⁸ and *Бракоразводное забвение. Причина разводов брачных...*¹⁹ [‘The divorce unconsciousness. A motive of divorce proceedings...’]. In particular, the writer cites a curious passage from a rare book which has an indirect relationship to *The Notes of the Unknown*. That is how Leskov describes an episode of Russian *cryptogamia* [spacing out and sequence of words made by the writer are presented here without any changes—O. N.]: “...i n t h e

¹⁸ See: Исторический вѣстникъ 20 (1885) 499–515.

¹⁹ See: Исторический вѣстникъ 22 (1885) 509–524.

accomplishment of marriage the church, i.e. 'the gathering of believers'..., does not participate neither does any 'executor of *treb*' [occasional religious rites: christening, marriage, funeral, etc.—*O. N.*]. All the chanters and benedictors only 'coattend', as witnesses, but 'the performer [of rites—*O. N.*] is absent'²⁰. This elliptical device artistically confirms 'A heraldic *casus*' in which Leskov, with grotesque metaphorical allusions, represents the fictive marriage (misalliance) of Petukh and Pelageya describing the essence of the matter as a criminal farce. What is more surprising, the writer finds quite a marvelous solution to settle the problem. It was really 'A Simple Means'—such is the title Leskov gave to the final part of this short narrative. The consistory bailiff comes to Luka's rescue who is so much in despair that he has no idea of what to do, saying that

отчаяние есть смертный грех, а на святой Руси нет невозможности (Лесков 1973, IV: 332) (despair is a mortal sin, but in holy Russia nothing is impossible).

What is his 'remedy'? It is not a forgery or a criminal act ("There is a mind not only in big heads but in small ones" = «Ум-то не в одних больших головах, а и в малых» Лесков 1973, IV: 333). So, Luka Aleksandrovich gets the book from the archives and finds the name 'peasant Petukh' in it written in a different ink in a scraped space. As soon as no one remembers who has done it, an investigation is undertaken. During it all testify that Pelageya married Luka, and Petukh was simply standing by. That proves to be a cogent argument, and the true matrimony is confirmed. "...but the bailiff did not do any forgery, he only added in the book the very thing that he had wiped out in it. That was his 'simple means'" («а приказный никакой фальши не сделал, а только подписал в книге то самое, что в ней и вычистил. То было его „простое средство“» Лесков 1973, IV: 333),—the narrator concludes finishing the story. This final section differs from all the rest. It manifests Leskov's greatness as an artist in the commanding humour, lenient irony and fully particularized (as to characteristics and description) form. This part is satiated with a special colouring supplied by the metaphorical devices and the amazing variety of verbalized emotions. In it we find a most unusual combination of circumstances skilfully brought together by Leskov and joined with various style and language constructions: the tradition of 18th-century business correspondence acquires completely new shades of meaning, the lexis of the inquiry deeds is put to very convincing use, vivid Slavonicisms are combined with picturesque phraseological locutions. Even the very plot seems as if it was borrowed from an ancient forensic manuscript with its typical colophon, and the miscarriage of justice is looked upon as a heraldic *casus*.

The second word of the subtitle has relatively richer semantic colouring. *Casus* means 'case'—this is the well-known definition today. In the earlier period it also had the meaning 'an awkward circumstance' or 'a remarkable case' (Полный словарь 1894: 438). Modern sources add to the aforementioned

²⁰ Cited from: Исторический вѣстникъ 20 (1885) 503.

definitions useful and pertinent semantic explications, i.e. 1. Case, usually difficult, intricate or uncommon, ridiculous; 2. *jur.* A case, an accidental action, having external signs of transgression but deprived of the element of a guilt therefore non-punishable (СИС 1990: 211).

All these possible interpretations of 'heraldic case' are important to take into account as they prompt us the idea that the very word in Leskov's fiction appears in the role of a literary image. It possesses not a single information ground but contains various groups of conditional indications and connotations which Leskov wants to mobilize.

Somewhat later, in 1886, Leskov would reflect on the problem of cases presenting highly convincing proofs based on his own experience in the article *Геральдический туман. (Заметки о родовых прозваниях)*. Alongside with some interesting facts he gives in it an analysis of names and surnames which seem foreign in origin, in term of their genealogy, however, they are primordially Russian²¹. At this point the literary historian, E. P. Karnovich's *Подобные прозвания и титулы в России и слияние русских с иностранцами* (СПб., 1886) ['Patrimonial nicknames and titles in Russia and the blending of the Russian with the foreign'] should be mentioned; Leskov appreciated his knowledge of life and artistic gifts very highly.

Critics have pointed out the most characteristic peculiarities of Leskov's fiction: his ability to create a language which can convey the inner processes and the spewch habits of his protagonists as well as the astonishing vividness of his description of domestic scenes. How is this manifested in the *Notes of the Unknown*, and what shades of textual meaning does his language display? We would like to return once more to the short story 'About Petukh and his children'. The narrator's speech is imperceptibly inserted into the dialogue so that what was said before could be explained:

Petukh was a *бестягольный* (having no family) *muzhik* in the master's poultry-yard—dirty and half-witted, with a red nose, jabbering away in a squeaky voice, and was forty or so (Был же Петух бестягольный мужик на господском птичьём дворе—нечистый и полоумный, с красным носом, и говор имел дроботливый с выкриком по-петушьему, а лет уже сорока и поболее) (Лесков 1973, IV: 324).

Here the author employs specific words to create a true-to-life domestic atmosphere. The words have their own shades of meaning peculiar to the nature of the person implied, e.g. *бестягольный* instead of *бессемейный*. In Old Russian *тягло* was used basically in two meanings: labour conscription or a family executing their duties at the time of serfdom. Interesting notes on it are given in the 'Dictionary' (Даль 1994: 900–901):

...*тягловой* крестьянинъ, который тянетъ полное тягло, за двѣ души; ... обычно крестьянинъ остается *тяглымъ* отъ женитьбы своей до 60 лѣтъ, затѣмъ либо онъ идетъ в полутяглые, и на четверть тягла, или смѣщается вовсе. ... *Тягло* ср. мужъ с женою или семья, въ крестьянствѣ, доколѣ мужикъ, по лѣтамъ своимъ и по здоровью, числится тяглымъ.

²¹ See: Историческій вѣстникъ 24 (1886) 598–613.

Leskov can very well be supposed to have known the numerous proverbs which were connected with this notion and which had wide currency in the social environment described by the writer in his cycle.

In the sentence quoted above Leskov uses *дроботливый говор* instead of more common words like quick, fast, pattering. And the sentence is immediately followed by the description of the conversation of the priest and his wife which is presented in another manner closer to *skaz*:

Попадья ничего не внимала, а сказала такой сказ, что если поп ее заранее осведомит, когда бригадишин сын съедет в город, а Поленьку с мужиком свенчают, то она никакого мешанья не сделает, но если он от нее это скроет, то ее любопытство мучить станет, и тогда она за себя не поручится, что от нетерпения вред сделает (Лесков 1973, IV: 324)²² (The priest's wife didn't listen to him but said such a tale that if the priest informed her in advance when the brigadier's wife's son was going to go up to town, and Polen'ka and the *muzhik* were going to be married, then she would not make any *мешанья* (trouble), but if he hid that from her then she would be tormented by curiosity, and then she could not vouch for herself and might, out of impatience, do some harm).

After this verbose *skaz* Leskov inserts a single statement: «поп уступил» (Лесков 1973, IV: 324) (the priest gave in). Nothing superfluous is added by the narrator. His syntactic phrases are efficiently constructed and thought out. This fluent passage gives the reader the impression that he can actually arrest the flow of the narrative and try to realize what is behind the narrator's words. That compositional device is called *retardation*. In connection with Leskov's *skaz* A. S. Orlov was the first to notice that particular narratological element. He claims that "the *skaz* of Leskov can be characterized by its excitement being supported by the curiosity of the listener to be able to hear how every person speaks in accordance with his typical nature" (Орлов 1948: 146). The priest uses a different language: there are no diffuse phrases, his voice sounds mild, and it is briefly interrupted by the narrator's elucidation:

Ну, ладно,—говорит,—я тебе лучше все скажу, только уж ты знай, да никому здесь не сказывай (Лесков 1973, IV: 324) (All right then,—he says,—I would better tell you everything, but remember you must not tell anyone here).

Soon enough the speech of the officers is defined: it is shaped in the imper-

²² The usage of the rusified French borrowing *бригадирша* is extremely significant. By probing into its genealogy the real contextual time can be revealed. The Russian *бригадир* springs from *бригада* (brigade) which has been known in Russia from the very outset of the 18th century. Since that time *бригадир* has been used as a military term. It was 'a brigade commander', an officer of the fifth class in the tsarist army of the 18th century, in between the colonel and the major-general, and in the navy it was the rank corresponding to the captain-commodore. Consequently, *бригадирша* (in the dictionaries it is defined as 'obsolete')—the wife of a brigadier—as a character's prototype could not exist beyond the first third of the 19th century. That is why we suppose that the real contextual time of this short story was the period between 1800 and the 1840s. See: Даль 1994: 313; Черных 1993: III; Макаров и Матвеева 1993: 47; ССРЛЯ 1991: 759. In the broad sense, Leskov gave a free rein to his imagination when describing pictures of pre-reform Russia. Apart from the aforementioned phenomenon, we think that there are some other striking illustrations of our conjecture, i.e. the problem of Russian *cryptogamia* described in this sketch, and the presence of *tableaux vivants* of the patriarchal mode of life in the Russian provinces in that period.

ative mood without any additions and explanations; *skazovost'* here is not an expressive stylistic device to be applied. The traits of the people of this social stratum require another artistic method in another linguistic medium:

— Сейчас нам отпереть! Ибо знаем, что в храме насильный брак совершается, и мы не допустим и сейчас двери вон выбьем... (Лесков 1973, IV: 326)

— (Open now [the door]! Because we know that in the church a forcible matrimony is happening, but we won't let it go on, we'll rather knock out the doors in no time...).

Their speech is an expression of their intentions. This approach to representing character is most subtle. As we have already suggested, each estate in Leskov's fiction has its own unique language and style. By the means of speech constituting his characters Leskov creates a comic atmosphere. Manipulating elements of comedy, irony and satire the writer defines the characteristic features of the heroes' interior speech and inner world.²³ Though retardation is a stylistic device widely spread in longer literary pieces, there it has a different function; it appears, for instance, in lyrical digressions, in descriptions of nature or interiors, in insertion of external personages and separate short stories, etc., Leskov's mode of using it in the *Notes of the Unknown* differs, to some extent, from his usual treatment of the device. As we have mentioned, the author tried to slow down the speed and delay the events by using various ways of expressing the vocal characteristics of his protagonists. It is attained through a sharp change of textual key and alteration of the tone of narration. There is also one more detail which brings *Notes* close to folklore. It is the sequential construction of the narrative and the threefold reduplication of the typical episodes, which builds up tension. We find the latter used four times. Thirst is used in *Излишняя материнская нежность* in this way: there is a mildly ironic and humorous depiction of Ignaty's fright which arises out of lying near *бабка-голландка* (Grandma Dutch) who keeps chuckling at him and making smacking noises with her lips up to the very morning (Лесков 1973, IV: 266). Here we see a two-way junction: the reinforcement of the inner tension of the hero (confirmed by him saying that he was looking forward to falling asleep with all his might) which takes place as if in a dream, and the skaz of two kinds when what happened in the past correlates to reality. We call this device an imaginary reduplication because the progress is infringed but the delay of the action is the result of the transmission of the thoughts and the voices of the characters through the sensibility of the narrator. In that particular episode skaz is one of the ways of showing reduplication where the situation of spontaneous improvisation conveys the disposition of the story-teller. We cannot fully affirm that this device is merely borrowed from national folklore. It is rather an element of sentimental prose which itself was affected by the oral folklore of the time. But the less it directly conforms to that

²³ L. P. Grossman observed that "[Leskov] liked the inner world of his heroes by recreating their enunciation: one had a speech dull and unintelligible—his character is reserved and sullen; another spoke with such canning word ligatures (*извития слов*), that one is likely to get astounded by his speech,—but had a light and captivating temper" (Гроссман 1945: 270). See also the article *О некоторых особенностях языка «Заметок неизвестного»* (Азбукин 1963: 59–63).

dominant tradition or the literary norm the more original and interesting it is as to its form and metaphoricity. The problem is psychological rather than linguistic: it indicates what lies behind the narrator's apperception. Some parallel examples of retardation might be useful to analyze.

In the story *Об иностранном проповеднике* retardation appears in a different form: in the dialogue between Farther Georgy and *владыка* (member of the higher orders of the clergy). They discuss the question of the prohibition of preaching to the foreign *проповедник* (here 'preacher'). First of all the incident is described which arouses the interest in the reader as to why Georgy has refused to forbid the preacher to preach in the house of the *предводительша* (the wife of a marshal of the nobility), Elena Ivanovna, who is called Elena Prekrasnaja for her 'delicate face' («за свое изящное лице») (Лесков 1973, IV: 299).

Первая моя причина, — говорит, — та, что моего запрещения могут не послушаться, и я тогда буду через то только в напрасно постыждающем конфузе (Лесков 1973, IV: 300) (My first reason is,—he says,—that they might disobey my prohibition, in which case I put myself in a disreputable *konfuz* in vain).

That idea does not seem convincing enough to the bishop—«Это не что иное как гордость ума» (Лесков 1973, IV: 300) ('This is nothing else but the pride of the mind'). The second argument is as follows:

...что проповедника того «развратителем» назвать будет несправедливо, ибо он хотя и иностранец, но человек весьма хороших правил христианской жизни... (Лесков 1973, IV: 300) (...it would be unfair to call that *predicant* "a seducer" because though he is a foreigner, but a person of high Christian principles...).

This reason does not seem to the bishop conclusive either who now begins to show his displeasure. To Georgy's third motive the bishop listens with testy impatience: "...it is not customary to the spirit of the orthodoxial belief to fear timidly any dissenting opinions, but on the contrary, it is characterized by laudable *веротерпимость* (toleration) and free expression and speech, just like the apostles advise: «Все слушать, а *хорошего* держаться» (Лесков 1973, IV: 300) (To listen to everything but hold to *the good*) [italicized by the author—O. N.]

The convincing argument for the bishop was that the governor himself was sitting behind the screen listening to the predicant.

Услыхав это последнее,—продолжает повествователь,—владыка остановился и сказал:—Так для чего же вы мне об этом последнем с самого начала не сказали? (Лесков 1973, IV: 301) (Having heard this,—the narrator continued,—the bishop stopped and asked:—Why didn't you tell me about this last thing at the very beginning?).

In this episode retardation comes after the second reduplication, and the dialogue serves the function of setting the story in motion. To some extent, the passage quoted above is connected with folklore motives (the name of the lady ironically corresponds to a similar character of a well-known Russian tale). Leskov used the same device in the story 'About Petukh and his children'.

This brings us to an analysis of the syntactic system of the writer which is based (particularly in the last story) on N. G. Kurganov's Latinate syntax together with a sham (бутафория) of the beginning of the 19th century (Орлов

1948: 164–165). Actually, here we come across constructions which are not customary in Russian, i.e. adverbial participles and verbs which change their positions and are placed by the author at the absolute end of the phrase, as for instance:

The priest's wife his grief *утишила* (Лесков 1973, IV: 325) (calmed down); the Brigadier's wife took a deep breath and crossed herself, but that was because of a great confusion instead of a wedding ceremony, heaven knows what *нето бяху* (had been sung), the deacon did not say... (Лесков 1973, IV: 330), or And you did not disgrace (*не опали*) for that either me or anyone else through the rage of yours, but, by your usual mercy all of us *покрыв* (shielding), deliberated calmly and decorously... (Лесков 1973, IV: 329), etc.

The examples quoted above are not exceptional. If we examine them we understand the function of the transformations. Leskov seems to have intensified the real semantic and temporal sense of the endings of locutions by means of the utilization of verbal inversion. Thus, the full implication of the events is moved to the verbal forms which speeds up action and precipitates the evolution of the plot. It is in the verbs where the author perceives the substantial kernel of the passage. In conformity to the positional structure of the sentence Leskov uses the method of substitution. The writer's narrative style requires this in order to determine words and constructions which can freely occupy any syntactical position. This device amplifies the ways of the semantic expansion of the vocabulary because the shift of syntactical position does not always conform to valid aspects of syntax. We can see some elements of the method of transposition here as well where the transfer of words or collocations from one syntactic position to the other creates a different tone and defines the relations between the form of the word and its function in the sentence. As we can see, Leskov's method is experimental and uncommon. We have already touched upon this problem in the discussion of the gamut of the language colours in his prose.

Leskov's special interest in heraldry has already been pointed out. In *Notes of the Unknown* the names of the representatives of the clergy are selected very carefully. They can be read as labels which anticipate the roles these protagonist will play in the narrative. Some of them function as mirror reflections of certain tempers and moral characteristics. Of course, behind the form of the bearer of a proper name stands the narrator's ulterior device. Leskov liked one of the statements of Theocritus which he used as an epigraph at the beginning of the article *Геральдический туман...*: "Everyone gets his name at a blessed hour"²⁴. Leskov himself followed this dictum in his creative writings. Thus, for instance, Father Ioann (the name is a translation of the Hebrew 'God's grace') «прежде во всю жизнь свою не пил» (Лесков 1973, IV: 259) (he had not drunk all his life before); Father Pavel (from Latin *paulus*—'small') «был роста высокого, осторожного понимания и в разговорах нередко шутлив» (Лесков 1973, IV: 261) (was of large stature, of keen comprehension, and in speech often enough jocular); Father Grigory (in Old Greek γρηγορέω—'be awake, cheerful, vigilant') «в служенье хорош и весьма способен, но католиковат, и то

²⁴ Исторический вѣстникъ 24 (1886) 598.

было в нем заимствованное...» (Лесков 1973, IV: 268) (in service is good and very carable, but *католиковат* (is like a Catholic), and that was borrowed in him...); hieromonk Theodosy (the name is compound from the two Old Greek words: *θεός*—‘God’ and *δόσις*—‘a gift’, ‘a donation’, i.e. granted to God) «на-рицаемая друг, но не верный, и втайне зложелатель...» (Лесков 1973, IV: 288) (called a friend, but not faithful, and secretly malevolent...); another Father Pavel, who imagined himself “to be as though the first after Pharaoh (мня ся быти яко первым по фараоне), endeavored to sit [in the *дрожки*] outstretched in a place for two...” (Лесков 1973, IV: 313); lastly, junior deacon (*причетник*) Porphyry (compare to Old Greek *πορφύρεος*—‘purple, crimson; dark-red, violet; generally dark’; the name also has the root meaning ‘purple clothes or a mantle’) who was named ‘the dull-born’ (*глупорожденный*) and ‘rough’ (*комоватый*), was tall and of a very submissive disposition (*нрав*) (Лесков 1973, IV: 313).

It might be surprising to see that Leskov practically never mentions the surnames of his characters, especially if they belong to the church. Surnames were not used in clerical circles. Besides, it could have been rather a stiff and artificial device. Their real temper and deeds are of the greatest importance for Leskov who in hardly visible traits created picturesque satirical portraits of the local clergy.

Leskov’s interest in the meaning of names and in their genealogy is obviously deeply rooted. In the 1870s he elaborated his own system of categorizing the surnames of the Russian priesthood. He established six categories: surnames which go back to the names of holidays (for instance, Rozhdestvensky), to the names of figures in antiquity like Platonov, or to words for virtues of character, etc. (Гроссман 1945: 272). Leskov’s names are artistic images which have a life of their own and a complex aura of connotations. Somewhat later, in the 1900–1910s, the philosopher Father P. A. Florensky also expounded his view of names. He thought it was a grave mistake to “declare all the literary names,—and the name as it is [italicized by P. A. Florensky—O. N.],—arbitrary and accidental... Names are the main kernels of the very images...” (Флоренский 1993: 25). As well as Leskov, he considered names artistic images forming complex spiritual organisms and characterizing the persons who carry them. According to P. A. Florensky’s concept, they possess various moods of their being (*бытие*): ecclesiastic, humiliated, diminutive (Флоренский 1993: 40, 94–96). The hypostasis of every name determines its significance and should be analyzed as part of the cultural process.²⁵ It may be interesting to compare the theological tradition with Leskov’s own concept of names. His gift as a creative writer, his idealism and severe critical views helped him find an artistic form to convey his experiences as well as the findings of his research. In point of fact he formulated the very group of notions which later on were to become the basis of

²⁵ Compare the following definition made by bishop Antony (Florensov): “Name is an omen of the moral education of a person, of a Christian, a testimonial of his individuality and inclination to one or another kind of activity”. See: Андроник (Трубацев) 1981: 76.

a modern branch of science—onomastics—the art of giving names (that is calque translation from the corresponding Old Greek word). Leskov's feelings and thoughts combined to find the concrete object of his writing—the representatives of the clergy. It was not only a coincidence but one of his stylistic devices permanently present in his literary works. This combination of satirical literary expressions and intellectual penetration to the depth of a problem seems to be the articulation of two features of his individuality: his intransigence as a social being confronting moral perversion and his profound intellect in search for truth. The very term 'onomastics' covers not only the art of giving names, but also scholarly proficiency in studying them. The latter now belongs to linguistics, Leskov, however, was the master of both approaches, and what is more, that ability of his appears in two forms: in scholarly conjectures and hypotheses which he managed to translate into the terms of the imaginative world of his art as a writer. Leskov's creative work, his world-view and his understanding of aesthetic problems merged all together in his fiction moulding his style and extending his penetration into national history and culture.

Leskov's work as a writer is most unique in the wide range of the questions he treats and the variety of ways he describes them. His narrative style is constituted of a great diversity of stylistic figures and dialects. The playful language abounds in parodistic elements given in a cover of archaic Slavonic expressions in combination with quotations from the Holy Writ which results in paronomastic effects. On the other hand, there are a lot of professional patterns and words of folk terminological lexis. Sometimes they are simply misrepresented in their meaning and structure. In another case, as though explaining the real sense of the word Leskov binds it in the consciousness of a speaker with a different lexeme. This device—attraction paronymique—is widely applied in *Notes of the Unknown*. It is used to express the difference in the cultural status of his characters (Орлов 1948: 167). Somewhere he changes the sense, and a wrong letter used by him, as if by mistake, has its own shade of meaning and colour indication. Thus, for instance, in the collocation *посторонние вольнодумки* (Лесков 1973, IV: 262) the letter o is substituted for u because those people were not 'free thinkers' (the correct root of the second word is *дум*), but people who stayed at home (*на дому*). In the sentence «Иеродиакон немолодых лет, но *могутной* (of mighty flesh) *плоти* ... имел страсть к билиiardной игре...» (Лесков 1973, IV: 284) the word *могучий* (might) is re-vi-sed and changed into *могутная* which now absorbs the nuance of suggesting a self-indulgent, unrestrained character who never hesitates to take liberties. Father Preferants (whose nick-name is associated with a card game preference) has a son *богослов* (theologian) who would better be called *бог ослов* (the God of donkeys) (Лесков 1973, IV: 291). In this example folk etymology is combined with the process of redistribution of the stem. As a result, quite an opposite meaning is suggested by the evocation of a curse commonly used in the 19th century in theological seminaries, an ironic nick-name for a foolish person, the same as 'ass' in English. After that statement the narrator defines the word by

the following reference: «...[сын] по пороку беспамятства никак не мог научиться служению...» (Лесков 1973, IV: 291) “...[the son] because of a defect of unconsciousness could hardly be taught to preach...”. This feature illustrates the significance of and the reason for the use of this rather uncommon idiomatic expression.

In the short story *Удивительный случай всеобщего недоумения* [‘A wonderful case of general perplexity’] Leskov uses the word combination *мадемуазель попадья* (as a reference to a priest’s wife) putting it in inverted commas. It is organized on the principle of placing together incompatible (because of their dissonant meanings) notions or of correlating words having contradictory meanings in a collocation. Similarly, for instance, to the French oxymoron *une sage folie* (a wise folly) (see: Марузо 1960: 186); or the Russian phrase: *звонкая тишина* (a ringing silence), etc.

This *alliance des mots* conveys a delicate sense of irony and humour, especially as those are words of different origins: *mademoiselle* (Fr.) + *попадья* (Rus.). When describing ‘the spiritual inclination’ to the unfrocked archimandrite the narrator says that

в числе писем, оставшихся после смерти расстриги, было одно от женщины настоящего высокого звания русских фамилий, которая даже называть его прежнего сана не умела и вместо того, чтобы писать «архимандрит», выражалась: «парфемандрит», что ей было более склонно к французскому штилю (Лесков 1973, IV: 310) (in the number of letters remaining after the death of the unfrocked monk was one from a lady of one of the really high rank Russian families, who did not even know how to name his former order, and instead of “archimandrite” she wrote: “parfemandrite”, which she found more familiar since it was closer to her French style).

In the passage quoted above Leskov’s neologism consists of the prefixoid *парфе-* which could be brought into correlation with the French adjective *parfait* (perfect, absolute). That is an instance based on an expression etymologically unclear for the national language environment. Here it is partly paraphrased just like *револьвер* at the turn of the 20th century when many borrowings were in active use. It was understood owing to its artificial rebuilding as *ребродер*²⁶.

Original puns are close in nature to folk etymology. They used to be organized as metaphoric idioms and constituted a phrase which had a double sense. Here are some characteristic examples of Leskov’s individual thinking-in-words: *неодолимая пассия* (Лесков 1973, IV: 319) (irresistible passion), *опытные резоны* (Лесков 1973, IV: 320) (serious reasons); “And Polen’ka... became idleless, and having, as one can see, from her mother innate French *кокетерия* (coquetry)...” (Лесков 1973, IV: 320); “If he [Father Grigory—O. N.] на духу (with courage) for the better perspicuity exhorted in French, then this moved the audience so intensely that they *гистерически* (hysterically) sobbed violently...” (Лесков 1973, IV: 320). The phrases quoted above can be interpreted in two ways: they provoke laughter because of a contradiction

²⁶ See the publication of ‘Terminological Glossary on Linguistics (1935–1937)’ from the Archives of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (now RAN) in: Поливанов 1991: 392–393.

between their meaning and the actual situation of the characters, on the one hand, and because of the reference in them to the protagonists' civilized temper and bent for French manners and mentality, on the other. This idea has an interesting justification. The Russian *каламбур* (pun) has a concrete event for its origin, which, we may assume, was used by Leskov as a subtextual device.

It was known that in 18th-century French aristocratic memoirs the term *calambour* was explained in terms of the following genealogy: in a gathering of high society it was decided that everybody was to make up some verses for fun. There was a dull-witted abbot who had no idea about poetry. When his turn came, after some vain attempts, in a sweat at last he invented the following lines:

*Pleurons tous dans ce jour
A bois de calambour...*

This rot made the whole *monde* laugh to excess, and the *casus* was not forgotten for a very long time. Leskov may be supposed to have wanted to make use of the episode. We can say that puns (here on the preciousness of French style and manners) were very popular in Russia in the 18th–19th centuries.²⁷

We can also quote some specifically Russian puns and language pigments from Leskov's narrative, e.g. *большая пристрашка* (Лесков 1973, IV: 331) (a great fear), *притязание* (Лесков 1973, IV: 257) (grubbing), *сивуха* (Лесков 1973, IV: 322) (in the context the horse is meant, but generally the word is associated with raw vodka), *усилок* (Лесков 1973, IV: 326) (strong man), *в животе* (Лесков 1973, IV: 329) (during his life time), [deacon] *положил ... всему такое краеграние* (Лесков 1973, IV: 328) (began fabricating a story); «Священник... в разговоре голландский джин, отбивавший во вкусе своим *мозжухой*, даже критиковал...» (Лесков 1973, IV: 308) (During the conversation the priest... even criticized the Dutch gin which savoured of *мозжуха*... (here the italicized word is associated with juniper having the specific suffix *-ух-* (compare to *краснуха*—ten rouble banknote, etc.). These phrases have undoubtedly a vivid appeal to the senses. They all look unusual (as to their structure and meaning), they do not, however, break the rules of the genre. The analysis of similar instances would require an approach which is not exclusively linguistic.

We have tried to correlate the elements of Leskov's language with his peculiar stylistic system, with the facts of his biography and with the traditions of the history of literature. Looking for the sources of his fiction we have also tried to clarify the theoretic positions which could be useful for textological and source studies.

²⁷ Some scholars have supposed that the term can be traced back to an anecdote about priest Kalember or about the German count Kalember whose command of French was poor. See: Поливанов 1991: 463; ЭСРЯ 1982: 24. P. Ja. Černych quotes a passage from "The Letters of the Russian Traveller" by N. M. Karamzin where the word "calanbur" was used, and considered that already from the beginning of the 19th century this expression was in use. In Russian dictionaries it is mentioned from 1804. See: Черных 1993: 370. As we know, anecdote is one of Leskov's vivid devices, which was artistically employed by him for language disguise.

Thus, in the *Notes of the Unknown* different stylistic devices are combined. Creating picturesque portraits of the people of many professions and estates gives Leskov ample scope to charge his style and language with vivid features of various manners of speech and enunciation. Leskov's later style becomes a very complicated system, thoughtfully organized and elaborated to a nicety. His linguistic expressiveness, sophisticated use of words, his kind and keen irony, his ability to bring the narrator's speech closer to the tale tradition as well as the polysemanticism of the plot of each story based on original archive material lead to a conclusion of the following character: stylization in Leskov's later creative activities develops into an artistic principle which enables the writer to convey the complex vision he aspired to articulate.²⁸

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СИС = Словарь иностранных слов. Москва 1990.

ДРС = Словарь русского языка XI—XVII вв. Вып. 6. Москва 1979.

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ЭСРЯ = Этимологический словарь русского языка. Под ред. Н. М. Шанского, II/8. Москва 1982.

Abbreviations

Ed. Edition

F. Fund

GPB Государственная публичная библиотека им. М. Е. Салтыкова-Щедрина (St. Petersburg). (now: Российская национальная библиотека).

L. List (= опись)

RAN Российская академия наук.

RGADA Российский государственный архив древних актов.

R. s. Reverse side