

THE EMERGENCE OF LITERARY ETHNOGRAPHY IN THE RUSSIAN
EMPIRE: FROM THE FAR EAST TO THE PALE OF SETTLEMENT, 1845-1914

BY

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the intersection of ethnography and literature in the works of two Russian and two Russian Jewish writers and ethnographers. Fyodor Dostoevsky, Vladimir Korolenko, Vladimir Bogoraz, and Semyon An-sky wrote fiction in the genre of literary ethnography. This genre encompasses discursive practices and narrative strategies in the analysis of the different peoples of the Russian Empire. To some extent, and in some cases, these authors' ethnographic works promoted the growth of Russian and Jewish national awareness between 1845 and 1914. This dissertation proposes a new interpretive model, literary ethnography, for the study of the textualization of ethnic realities and values in the Russian Empire in the late nineteenth-century. While the writers in question were aware of the ethnographic imperial discourses then in existence, I argue that their works were at times in tune with and reflected the colonial ambitions of the empire, and at other times, contested them. I demonstrate that the employment of an ethnographic discourse made possible the incorporation of different voices and diverse cultural experiences. My multicultural approach to the study of the Russian people, the indigenous peoples of the Russian Far East, and the Jews of Tsarist Russia documents and conceptualizes the diversity and multi-voicedness of the Russian Empire during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition, my dissertation contributes to the field of Russian and Jewish studies by primarily examining works that are either unpublished, less well-known, or have been ignored by scholars. My research methodology combines archival research with the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin, James Clifford, Roman Jakobson, and Homi Bhabha, and features close readings of a diverse body of texts, including both canonical and non-canonical Russian and Yiddish fiction.

This dissertation addresses the following analytical categories: ethnicity, empire, colony, and their representation in the genre of literary ethnography.

Acknowledgements

I started thinking about the intersection between the ethnography and literature back during the summer of 2008. At that time, my dissertation advisor Professor Harriet Murav and Professor Eugene Avrutin were working on An-sky's photographs from his ethnographic expedition. Right away, I knew that An-sky would be one of the protagonists of this dissertation. A year later, I attended the Nevzlin Summer Research Seminar in Budapest where I learned about the works of Vladimir Bogoraz. When I started working on Bogoraz's Gomel' sketches, I discovered his famous colleagues-ethnographers such as Lev Shternberg and Vladimir Iokhelson. It was during archival work in the Academy of Science in St. Petersburg in the Fall of 2010 that I came across Vladimir Korolenko's short correspondence with Bogoraz. Korolenko asked Bogoraz to attend the trial about the Gomel' pogrom. I became interested in Korolenko because like Bogoraz he was exiled to Siberia and wrote about indigenous cultures, as well as Russian and Jewish culture.

The first person who read the first draft of the dissertation proposal was the late Larry Schehr, professor of French at the University of Illinois. He would see me often in the hall of the second floor of the Foreign Language Building and would ask about my work. Our offices were in close proximity to each other. He possessed genuine curiosity about Yiddish and Russian writers. One afternoon, he offered to read the draft. I sent it to him late at night, thinking that he would never read it. I was wrong. The next morning, I got Larry's email with an attachment that was twice the size of the original document I had sent him. The draft, with his red track changes, looked like a Greek tragedy. There were more track changes on each page than written text. His comments and suggestions

were eye opening. This is how I remember Larry and I think of him whenever the French reference comes up in this dissertation.

My dissertation advisor Professor Harriet Murav set up a strict schedule of deadlines that spurred the writing process. Her direct critique and toughness helped to make the argument more succinct. I am indebted to her for helping me finish the writing. I am also thankful to Professor Eugene Avrutin and Professor Michael Finke for their suggestions, comments, and encouragement. I am grateful to Professor Richard Tempest who spent many hours discussing this dissertation with me. Over the years, my friend Paul Weichsel tirelessly answered my questions about Yiddish and helped me to decode An-sky's questionnaire. Finally, my friends Michael Bruen, Elise Benveniste, and Jeff Crean listened to, discussed with me, and read different parts of this dissertation. The mistakes and faults in this work are solely mine.

In transliterating Russian words, I follow Library of Congress Transliteration. For transliteration of the Yiddish words, I follow the transliteration of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, although I transcribe Fyodor Dostoevsky, Gogol, Semyon An-sky and Sholem Aleichem's names as they are known in English. All translations from Russian and Yiddish into English are mine, unless otherwise specified. Russian quotes and names are transliterated according to the Library of Congress style, but traditional English spelling, such as the first names Semyon, Fyodor, and Emelyan have been retained. I capilize the first word of the Yiddish articles and books, even though Yiddish does not have capital letters.

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Introduction

This dissertation examines the intersection of ethnography and literature in the works of two Russian and two Russian-Jewish writers, populists, and ethnographers. Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881), Vladimir Korolenko (1853-1921), Vladimir Bogoraz (né Natan Mendeleevich Bogoraz, 1865-1936), and Semyon An-sky (né Shloyme Zanvl Rapoport, 1863-1920) wrote in the genre of literary ethnography, sharing discursive practices and narrative strategies, and using diverse forms (novels, sketches, diaries, short stories, and plays) in the analysis of the multi-ethnic peoples of the Russian Empire.¹ By looking at the literary ethnographic works of these four writers, I plan to develop a dynamic understanding of their model of literary ethnography. For Dostoevsky, Korolenko, and Bogoraz, undertaking ethnographic fieldwork was not entirely a voluntary decision, while for An-sky, it was.² Dostoevsky, Korolenko and Bogoraz became ethnographers during their exiles in Siberia,³ whereas An-sky was banned from residing in the capital, St. Petersburg. All four turned to documenting diverse multiethnic imperial experiences. During their respective periods of exile, when Dostoevsky, Korolenko, and Bogoraz found themselves surrounded by the different peoples of the Russian Empire, they incorporated their diverse ethnographic experiences into their subsequent literary works. But how they did this differed in significant ways. My turn to these four writers is not accidental. Korolenko, Bogoraz and An-sky knew each other and shared a common interest in ethnographic fieldwork, in collecting folklore, and in using material and

¹ Anthropologist Jack Kugelmass argues that An-sky's ethnographic work wasn't based on the scientific

² For more on Bogoraz, see his autobiography: *Avtobiografiia*, F. K-1, op. 1, papka 380-81 (St. Petersburg: Arkhiv instituta etnografii, Kunstkamera).

³ Like the Decembrists, Dostoevsky, Korolenko, and Bogoraz became ethnographers during their exile. For the ethnography of the Decembrists, see Wladimir Troubetzkoy, "Les Décembristes, ethnographes de la Sibérie," *L'Ethnographie* 81 (1980): 135-73.

ethnographic methods in their fiction. They read Dostoevsky and were in dialogue with his works in a Bakhtinian sense.

All were either current or former members of political movements seeking to overthrow the tsarist regime and effect social change. Their rebellion against the tsarist government was the driving force behind their revolutionary ethnographic works, which aimed to register and conceptualize the diversity of the ethnic voices previously suppressed by colonial discourse. All four writers were personally involved in the radical political movements of their times. The writers' involvement in these revolutionary movements resulted in their arrests and sentences to periods of internal exile, during which they became ethnographers, collecting folklore and writing about the ethnic communities surrounding them.

As a young man beginning his literary career at a time of revolutionary upheaval in Western Europe, Dostoevsky was drawn to radical utopian ideas, and even after he abandoned the revolutionary enthusiasm of his youth, he continued to be fascinated by revolutionary and terrorist character types. Dostoevsky was a member of the Petrashevsky⁴ circle, whereas the other three writers were committed to populist ideology and directly participated in political propaganda among the peasants. Because of his affiliation with the Petrashevsky circle, Dostoevsky was arrested in 1849, tried, sentenced to death, reprieved, and sent to the Omsk stockade in Siberia for hard labor. Korolenko, Bogoraz, and An-sky, who belonged to a later generation, were active during the period leading up to the 1905 and 1917 revolutions. The four writers in question were not only engaged with revolutionary politics, but also shared a

⁴ The Petrashevsky group was a secret group in St. Petersburg, named after its founder Mikhail Petrashevsky (1821-1866), during 1844-1849. Its members were interested in the socialist utopian ideas of Charles Fourier (1772-1837) and of Saint-Simon (1760-1825), as well as the revolutionary movements of Western Europe. Most members were arrested and sent to exile in Siberia. For more, see Joseph Frank, *The Seeds of Revolt: 1821-1849* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 239-57.

common literary and analytical approach to studying and describing the ethnic groups the writers encountered while exiled. Korolenko was an active member of the revolutionary populist movement that aimed to bring social justice and to subvert the tsarist regime. He was arrested several times; once, he refused to sign an oath of allegiance to the new tsar Alexander III in 1881. As a result, he was sent to Yakutiia for four years. Similar to Korolenko, Bogoraz was also fighting against the autocracy. He was a member of the “People’s Will,” a terrorist organization plotting to overthrow the tsarist government and transform the peasantry into a political body that would lead to a political and social revolution. Together, Bogoraz and his colleague anthropologist Lev Shternberg edited the last issue of the newspaper of the same name in 1885.⁵ Like his colleagues and contemporaries, An-sky was a populist and socialist, who rebelled against his traditional Jewish upbringing, but still maintained close links with both Russian peasants and Jewish folk, using this connection to seek the peasants’ engagement in political activities. From 1896-1900, he was a secretary to Petr Lavrov, a socialist and a populist who believed in socialist revolution and the potential for the intelligentsia to educate the peasants and make them politically active. An-sky was also an active member of an agrarian Social-Revolutionary party that played a vital role in the February and October 1917 revolutions.

⁵ Shternberg (1861-1927) was born Khaim-Leib, later he changed his first name into Lev. According to the historian Oleg Budnitskii, Bogoraz and Shternberg were arrested because they had dynamite in their office. For more on the “People’s Will” and terrorism, see Oleg Budnitskii, *Terrorism v rossiiskom osvoboditel’nom dvizhenii: ideologiia, etika, psikhologiia (vtoraia polovina XIX – nachalo XX veka)* (Moscow: Rossiiskaia politicheskaia entsiklopediia, 2000). Even though the anthropologists Bruce Grant and Sergei Kan have examined Shternberg’s ethnographic works and his collaboration with Franz Boas, none of them looked at his Jewish populist writings or the fictional ethnographic sketches that were intended to make Russian Jewry more politically involved. For more on Shternberg, see Bruce Grant, “Empire and Savagery: The Politics of Primitivism in Late Imperial Russia,” in *Russia’s Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917*, eds. Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 292-310; Lev Shternberg, “Foreword,” in *The Social Organization of the Gilyak* (New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1999), xxiii-lvi; Sergei Kan, *Lev Shternberg: Anthropologist, Russian Socialist, Jewish Activist* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).

Korolenko, Bogoraz, and An-sky were born in the Pale of Settlement,⁶ and Dostoevsky in Moscow. The experience of growing up in the Pale informed the writers' multicultural awareness of the status of the *inorodtsy* (literally means "people of different origin," aliens, the imperial Others)⁷. Bogoraz and An-sky belonged to the *inorodtsy* until Bogoraz converted to Russian Orthodoxy for "revolutionary reasons" in 1885. The conversion had no religious value. Rather, the possession of a Russian passport secured Bogoraz's legal status outside of the Pale of Settlement.

Despite a huge volume of scholarship on Dostoevsky, a much smaller number of works on An-sky, and only a few published studies on Korolenko and Bogoraz, there is as yet no comparative literary study of the interrelation between ethnography and literature. This dissertation aims to fill a conceptual gap in the scholarship by examining the synthesis of ethnographic and literary practices in the works of these authors. Dostoevsky, Korolenko, Bogoraz, and An-sky each studied different social classes, ethnicities, and cultures. My multicultural approach to the study of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century literary ethnographic narratives of the Russian people, the indigenous peoples of the Far East and Siberia,⁸ and the Jews relies on a recognition of these texts'

⁶ The Pale of Settlement (*cherta postoiannoi evreiskoi osedlosti*) was the western area of the empire where Jews were assigned to live (1791-1917). It stretched from Kovno (Kaunas) in the north to Odessa and the Black Sea in the south. It bordered the Prussian and Austro-Hungarian Empires in the West. The Kingdom of Poland that was a part of the Russian Empire was not included in the Pale. Until the second half of the nineteenth-century, Jews were prohibited to live in Kiev, Nikolaev, and Sevastopol'. Only four groups of Jews - merchants, converts, craftsmen, and soldiers - were allowed to cross the Pale freely. Jews were not allowed to reside in the Russian big cities without permission. For the history of the Pale, see John D. Klier, *Russia Gathers Her Jews: The Origins of the "Jewish Question" in Russia, 1772-1825* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986), and Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). For the legal status of Jews and their mobility in the Pale of Settlement, see Eugene M. Avrutin, *Jews and the Imperial State: Identification Politics in Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010).

⁷ I define the term *inorodtsy* later in this "Introduction."

⁸ The Far East (*Dal'nii Vostok*, also known as "Amur Region" in the nineteenth-century) is a geographical term that includes the Southeastern territory from Bratsk, Lake Baikal, and the Amur River (as it was known "Amur Region") to the Pacific Ocean. Dostoevsky's stockade was in Siberia, whereas Korolenko

generic and ideological diversity, polyphonic and heteroglossic dimensions, and their dialogic connection to the Russian imperial discourse.

Despite the striking differences in format and content – Dostoevsky’s ethnographic examination of the lives of convicts in the Omsk stockade (1849-1854), Korolenko’s exploration of the Yakutified Russian peasants and settlers during his exile in Yakutiia (1881-1884), Bogoraz’s ethnographic study of the language and folklore of indigenous peoples of the Far East (Chukchi, Eskimos, Evens, 1889-1899), and his investigative journalistic work during the Gomel’ trial of 1905, and An-sky’s ethnographic survey of Jewish *shtetl* life in the Pale of Settlement (1912-1914) – their ethnographic activities in effect preserved these cultures’ pasts, shared their knowledge with the Russian readers of the empire, and furthered the preservation of these cultures in the present.

I employ Bakhtin’s term polyphony as a medium for representing different voices as updated and recontextualized by James Clifford for the analysis of ethnographic texts. He states that

[a]s Bakhtin [...] has shown, dialogical processes proliferate in any complexly represented discursive space (that of an ethnography, or, in this case, a realist novel). Many voices clamor for expression. Polyvocality was restrained and orchestrated in traditional

and Bogoraz spent their exiles in the Far East. The Chinese and Russian empires set up borders in the so-called Nerchinsk Treaty of 1689, where Russians lost the territory of the Amur River. However, two hundred years later the treaty was revised and the Russians acquired back the lost territories. The *Brokgauz Efron Encyclopedia* states that the term gained prominence during the end of the nineteenth-century when the “Vicegerency of the Far East” (“Namestnichestvo na Dal’nem Vostoke”) was formed in 1903, which existed only until the Russo-Japanese war of 1905. Mark Bassin, in his book *Imperial Visions: Nationalist Imagination and Geographical Expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840-1865*, examined the acquisition and importance for the empire of the Amur region as a “political-territorial expansion into non-Russian areas as an important part of [...] national advancement and renewal.” See *Imperial Visions: Nationalist Imagination and Geographical Expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 13. On the history of the indigenous people of the Arctic, see Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 1994. Among several branches of the Imperial Geographical Society were ones in Omsk (Western Siberian branch, 1877) and Khabarovsk (Amur River branch, 1894).

ethnographies by giving to one voice a pervasive authorial function and to others the role of sources, “informants,” to be quoted or paraphrased.⁹

Polyphony stands for different voices, speeches and genres, is helpful here because it transcends the borders between the *shtetl* (Jewish small town in the Pale) and the *mir* (peasant community), uniting them into a single conceptual whole while becoming a part of an urban-based literature featuring different classes, cultures, origins, and world views. The idea of a multiplicity of voices is useful when examining the works in question, but Bakhtin’s concept of heteroglossia is more suitable for analyses of ethnographic texts rather than the weighted term polyphony. Examining texts as heteroglossic narratives enables the writer- ethnographer to present a palette of cultural experiences without prioritizing any of them, eliminating the “monophonic authority” of the writer. I use the term *heteroglossia* (*raznorechie*) in the Bakhtinian sense, as a procedure for analyzing different registers of voices, a valuable record of multiple idiolects and speeches, which if applied to the text might generate intriguing results.

This project makes use of a theory of culture that recognizes this plurality of voices and takes into account the voices of marginalized groups and peoples. Clifford’s definition of culture as “contested, temporal, and emergent” and of ethnography as a “hybrid textual activity [that] traverses genres and disciplines” identifies national identities as constant works in progress.¹⁰ By virtue of their competition, these identities are in flux, with continuously evolving notions of who belongs and who does not. If ethnography traverses cultural borders, transcends the social hierarchy, and investigates the tension between the monarchy and underground political activity, between the secular and the traditional, as well as between high and

⁹ James Clifford, “Introduction” in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 15. Though Bakhtin was referring to polyphony in literary works and not to folklore, in his seminal work *Rabelais and His World* (originally titled *Rabelais and Folk Culture of the Middle Ages*), he turned to folk Renaissance culture, especially that of carnival and the grotesque.

¹⁰ See “Introduction: Partial Truths,” in *Writing Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 19, 26.

low cultures, then it can allow literary scholars to register the components of ethnic construction in the cases of Russians, the indigenous peoples of Siberia, and the Jews.¹¹

The four writers treated folklore as a distinct cultural factor that binds a people to its history as well as to everyday practices and applied this approach to the Russian *narod*, to Jewish *folk*, and to indigenous cultures. Broadly speaking, despite the divergences among the four authors, they shared the same “language,” the same discourse. The ingredients of this common discourse included lexical elements (they used shared terms), ideological orientation (writers gave voice to the subjects of the Empire, and privileged objectivity, scientific rigor, empirical verifiability, and quantifiable conclusions), and an orientation towards power (they confronted the state’s imperial and colonizing practices; and insisted on the values of the authentic religious, linguistic, and cultural ethnographic material they collected). In their interactions with the cultures they studied, they strove to promote a deeper understanding of them, serving not only as their observers, but also as their translators within this discursive frame of reference. Drawing on Homi Bhabha’s definition of a nation as a “system of cultural signification”¹² that exists through literature (texts), art, architecture, and folklore, we can begin to trace how these writers identified folklore (folk beliefs and tales) as a dominant characteristic of Russian and Jewish national self-awareness.

¹¹ Russian and Yiddish literatures have a long tradition of employing literary devices and tropes to explore social, political, and cultural concerns. Works such as of Alexandr Radishchev’s *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* (1790) relied upon the literary conventions of the Enlightenment, Sentimentalism, and Romanticism to denounce the serfdom, poverty, and bribery of the tsarist regime. One can also categorize Alexandr Pushkin’s depiction of Emelyan Pugachev’s uprising of 1773-74 in *The Captain’s Daughter* (1836) as a historical investigation. In the twentieth-century, Alexandr Solzhenitsyn’s *The Gulag Archipelago* (1958-68) had the subtitle “an experiment in literary investigation” (*opyt khudozhestvennogo issledovaniia*), highlighting the author’s attempt to employ literature as a tool for historical exploration. I discuss Yiddish works in Chapters Three and Four.

¹² Homi K. Bhabha, “Narrating the Nation,” in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1992), 1. This was also Roland Barthes’s idea from his book *Mythologies* (1957).

The comparison of the four writers side by side is necessary, because the similarity of the circumstances under which they became ethnographers and writers, their overlap in time period, the similarities of their political and social concerns, and their influence on one another, shows the coherence among them. To illustrate this, I analyze the following texts: Dostoevsky's semi-autobiographical novel *The Notes from the House of the Dead* (*Zapiski iz mertvogo doma*, 1861); Korolenko's stories "Makar's Dream" ("Son Makara," 1883), "Fedor the Homeless" ("Fyodor Besspriutnyi," 1885), "The Day of Atonement. Yom Kippur. The Ukrainian Tale" ("Sudnyi den'. Iom-Kippur. Malorusskaia skazka," 1890), "At Night. A Sketch" ("Noch'iu. Ocherk," 1888), and his memoir *The History of My Contemporary* (*Istoriia moego sovremennika*, 1909-1920); Bogoraz's sketches "Silhouettes from Gomel" (1905); and An-sky's Russian version of the play *The Dybbuk* (1912) and his ethnographic questionnaires *Der mentsch* (*The Human Being*, 1914). Although An-sky's ethnographic expedition of 1912-1914 has been thoroughly examined by scholars, the works of his predecessors Bogoraz and Korolenko on Jewish ethnography have yet to be explored from a comparative perspective. These texts illustrate the ways in which writers imagined the empire.¹³ I define the imperial

¹³ The term has been used by scholars to analyze literary works, paintings, and movies by Western artists that represent the Orient as an exotic and savage place. Linda Nochlin analyzes the works of French painters of the late nineteenth-century who aimed to present the Orient and French colonies, hence her concept of "the imaginary Orient." "The Imaginary Orient," in *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society* (New York: Harper, 1989), 33-59. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam show the connection between the emergence of the cinema and the ways in which it depicted and envisioned the world imperial colonies and nations, -"the imperial imaginary." Similar to Anderson's concept of the "imaginary community" that views the circulation of printed texts (novels and periodicals) as a binding force that unites a group of people that share the same language, Shohat and Stam point out how films share the same social function of creating a sense of an imagined nation. See, "The Imperial Imaginary," in *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (London: Routledge, 1994), 100-36. Some other works that engage into the discussion of the "imperial imaginary" are: Geoff Eley, "Imperial Imaginary, Colonial Effect: Writing the Colony and the Metropole Together," in *Race, Nation, and Empire: Making Histories, 1750 to the Present*, eds. Catherine Hall and Keith McClelland (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2010), 217-36; Paula Krebs, "The Imperial Imaginary – The Press, Empire, and the

imaginary as a set of literary texts, tropes, archetypes, and masterplots, which together represent the mythopoetical dimension of the imperial project, illustrating and arguing for the notion of Russia as an empire and the empire as Russia. The imperial imaginary shares conceptual similarities with Said's Orientalism, which I will discuss later in this "Introduction." It is a discourse, a way in which Western writers depict and "imagine" the colonial subjects of the empire. Each one of the four authors has his version of the imperial imaginary in the sense that they recognized the existence of the imperial imaginary but critiqued it in their own way based on their aesthetic and ethical position. The relevant question is the common ground and the differences among them. The common feature is that they address the theme of empire and acknowledge the presence of imperial images and the values in the societies and cultures they depict. Korolenko, Bogoraz, and An-sky are fascinated by the empirical contradictions between the narrative of the empire and imperial assimilation and the reality of ethnic Russian settlers, by the ostensible imperial expansion, and by intermarriage and cultural assimilation. The difference is how each of them employs literary devices and narrative modes and, ultimately, the ways in which they codify their characters.

Let us now look at Vasily Kliuchevsky's (1841-1911) reading of Russian history as a continuous process of territorial expansion and population migration. In his famous five-volume work *The Course of Russian History* (1900), he writes

[t]he history of Russia is the history of a country that is in the process of being colonized. The realm of colonization expands along with the state territory. Sometimes falling down, sometimes raising up, this century's long movement continues into present days.

Literary Figure," in *Gender, Race, and the Writing of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 143-78.

[i]storiia Rossii est' istoriia strany, kotoraiia koloniziruetsia. Oblast' kolonizatsii v nei rasshirialas' vmeste s gosudarstvennoi ee territoriei. To padaia, to podnimaia's', eto vekovoe dvizhenie prodolzhaetsia do nashikh dnei.¹⁴

For Kliuchevskii, therefore, Russia's colonization efforts constitute a defining aspect of its historical development. This observation is supported by the Siberian exilic experience and subsequent literary ethnographic works of Dostoevsky, Korolenko, and Bogoraz, who not only encountered the Russian *narod* and indigenous subjects during their exile, but also lived through an experience that defined their own ideological position vis-à-vis the colonized. These writers' works reveal that even after Siberia was colonized, it remained an unknown place. Only through the work of these exiled and ostracized rebels of the empire could Siberia and its peoples gain a presence in the form of literary ethnographic explorations. If an empire presupposes the founding and control of colonies, then the Russian empire was one that was evolving territorially, "in the process of being colonized." It also discovers its own colonial subjects, it is always in flux, and it is not fixed in space or in the interplay of colonial and imperial identity. Because of inherent instability and mutability (*zybkost'*), the concept of empire is contingent upon the writer's geographical location and his writerly relationship with the scripted subjects.¹⁵

¹⁴ V. O. Kliuchevskii, "Lektsiia II," in *Kurs russkoi istorii*, accessed February 6, 2015, <http://www.kulichki.com/inkwell/text/special/history/kluch/kluch02.htm>.

¹⁵ Eric Auerbach, who wrote his seminal work *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (1946) from exile in Istanbul, pointed out that most Russian novels take place either in Moscow, in St. Petersburg, or in some unspecified geographical locus known as the city "NN..." (from Latin: *Nomen nescio*, literally "I do not know the name"). Whereas Auerbach states that most Russian novels take place in these unknown locations, texts of writers-ethnographers, on the contrary, are situated in recognizable ethnic places saturated with specific locations.

Inorodtsy

Mostly drawing upon the archival sources of the writers-ethnographers kept in the archives of Moscow, St. Petersburg (Russia), Kiev, and New York, this dissertation analyses how writers represented and gave voice to the aliens, *inorodtsy*, of the empire. In this connection I would like to note that dissertation employs the following terms to denote the non-Russian populations of the empire: *inorodtsy* (aliens), the Other, and the colonial subject. I employ these terms interchangeably. For the definition of the Other, the otherness, and the colonial subject, I rely upon Homi Bhaba's notion of the

‘otherness’ which is at once an object of desire and derision, an articulation of difference contained within the fantasy of origin and identity. What such a reading reveals are the boundaries of colonial discourse and [how] it enables a transgression of these limits from the space of that otherness.¹⁶

Inorodtsy are the imperial Other. They exemplify this ‘otherness’ through their linguistic, religious, physiognomic, and cultural markers. The Other serves as “an articulation of difference.” This dissertation considers both the imperial and the colonial discourse. By imperial I mean the narratives, values and practices as they were generated by the disparate, mutually centrifugal centers of power that constituted the core governing structures of the Russian Empire. By colonial discourse I mean that part of the imperial discourse that covers the practices of conquest, governance and control over the populations that are defined as aliens, *inorodtsy*. Literary ethnography operates at the conjunction of two phenomena, the imperial and the colonial, and devises a new vocabulary and a new set of narrative and conceptual approaches meant to resolve the discontinuities and contradictions between them.

¹⁶ Homi Bhabha, “The Other Question,” in *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory*, ed. Padmini Mongia (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 38.

Inorodtsy (literally means people of different origins) was a legal term used for all non-Russians, including Jews, the chief collective Other of the empire from 1822-1917. Initially the term *inorodtsy* was applied to “nomadic or semi-nomadic Siberian natives” in 1822.¹⁷ Only in 1835 were Jews included into the category of *inorodtsy*. The historian John W. Slocum shows that the evolution of the term *inorodtsy* reflects the colonial expansion of the empire, as well as the changing discourse of what constitutes Russian nation. An anthropologist, contemporary and friend of Korolenko, Bogoraz, and An-sky, Shternberg presented two meanings of the word *inorodtsy*. First, *inorodets* is anyone who speaks a language other than Russian even Georgians, Ukrainians and Poles (who are Christian and the latter two speak a Slavic language, though they are not Russians). It is not race (*rasa*), religion, or even political loyalty, but rather language which defines them as *inorodtsy*. Second, the legal (*zakonodatel’nyi*) meaning of the word applies specifically to non-Slavic “tribes” (*plemena*) or ethnic groups. These are: 1. Indigenous Siberian peoples; 2. Uralo-Altaic peoples; 3. Kalmyks of Astrakhan’ and Stavropol’ provinces; 4. Kirghiz; 5. Caucasian mountaineers; 6. Indigenous peoples of Turkestan; 7. Tatars/Muslims (*ordyntsy*) of the Trans-Caspian region; 8. Jews.¹⁸

Shternberg raises the question of why indigenous peoples and Jews are in the same group, although they have distinct cultures, religions, and different levels of national awareness. He disagrees with both of the above classifications, stating that neither language nor legal division plays a role in dividing peoples into these categories. Rather, for his purpose of defining the characteristics of the national movement, he

¹⁷ John W. Slocum, “Who, and When, Were the *Inorodtsy*? The Evolution of the Category of ‘Aliens’ in Imperial Russia,” *The Russian Review* 57 (April 1998): 174.

¹⁸ Lev Shternberg, “Inorodtsy. Obshchii obzor,” in *Formy natsional’nogo dvizheniia v sovremennykh gosudarstvakh; Avstro-Vengriia, Rossiia i Germaniia* (St. Petersburg: Izd. T-va “Obshchestvennaia pol’za,” 1910), 531-32.

suggests using the word in the ethnographic sense of “groups of people who are absolutely foreign, or just not adjusted to European culture. Thus neither race, language, nor religion play any decisive role in it.”¹⁹ Shternberg’s measure of determining of who belongs to Russia is European culture. Neither Korolenko, Bogoraz, nor An-sky in their literary and journalistic works compared *inorodtsy* to Western cultures; they valued and praised cultures in their plurality and diversity. In this study I show that four writers employ racial discourse, different languages, religions, and cultures to indicate the otherness of *inorodtsy*.

By turning to the ethnography of the Jewish *folk*, the Russian *narod*, and indigenous cultures, I propose a comparative literary ethnographic approach that examines the “science of peoples” in a broader imperial and discursive context. To date, scholars have focused in isolation on purely national ethnographies such as Russian, Ukrainian, or Jewish, thus failing to understand that Russian-Jewish writer-ethnographers were studying not one but several national ethnographies and were thereby capturing the multiple ethnic voices of the Russian Empire. In my work, I intend to define the governing codes of literary ethnographic writing and to explain how individual authors used the ethnographic method of studying peoples and cultures. Clifford Geertz has interpreted ethnography as a process of literary creation; he points out to the “literary turn” in anthropology.²⁰ A Russian literary critic and ethnographer, Alexander Pypin (1833-1904), a cousin of Nikolay Chernyshevsky, in his monumental work on *The History of Russian Ethnography* (1890-1892) also points out to the literary moment in ethnography. In this sense, ethnographers, when conveying their experiences and in their

¹⁹ Ibid., Shternberg, 532.

²⁰ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 4.

interpretations of their ethnographic material, employ fictional devices similar to those used by writers. They rely upon topoi and tropes in textualizing their interaction with the people they study, and interpreting the material they have gathered. Two of the four writers belong to Russian Jewish literature. In analyzing their works, I adopt an interdisciplinary approach and place these writings in the context of Russian-Jewish history as well as Russian intertext. Moreover, through their texts, writers transcended cultural borders. In addition, this dissertation contributes to the field of Jewish studies by examining mostly works that either are as yet unpublished, less well-known, or neglected by scholars.

As of now, there are few scholarly works which deal with the relationship between ethnography and literature.²¹ I argue that writers employed the ethnographic method in order to give voice to certain collective ethnic identities within the Russian Empire and to demonstrate its multiethnic character. Their engagement with the ethnographic material went through two stages. First, they recycled the material as well as engaging in an initial (re-)textualization of it. Second, they disseminated their interpretation in published form as well as academic and quasi-academic exchanges. Since Jews in the Russian Empire did not live in isolation and had close contact with Russian and Ukrainian cultures, a comparative perspective can demonstrate that Jewish folklore borrowed considerably from Russian and Ukrainian folklore and vice versa, and

²¹ The recent collection of essays *An Empire of Others: Creating Ethnographic Knowledge in Imperial Russia and the USSR*, edited by Roland Cvetkovski and Alexis Hofmeister, examines the production of “ethnographic knowledge” during the imperial and Soviet periods. In it, Sergey Glebov briefly analyzes the evolution of Siberia’s ethnography, as well examining the ethnographic fiction of the Polish exile Vatslav Seroshevskii on “Siberian savages” from 1882-1892. “Siberian Ruptures: Dilemmas of Ethnography in an Imperial Situation,” in *An Empire of Others: Creating Ethnographic Knowledge in Imperial Russia and the USSR* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014), 281-309.

that the writers under investigation shared the same ethnographic and literary methodology.

Proto-ethnography and Ethnography

One might argue that proto-ethnographic elements are present in *The Primary Chronicles of Russia* (*Povest' vremennykh let*, c. 1113), a history of Kievan Rus' traditionally attributed to the monk Nestor, which contains accounts of a variety of tribes and peoples. During the reign of Peter the Great (1682-1725), foreign travelers were commissioned to explore, collect exotic objects and map out unknown territories of the empire.²² *The Lay of Igor's Campaign* (*Slovo o polku Igoreve*, c. 1185), an epic which was discovered by Alexei Musin-Pushkin in the 1790s, enjoyed an enthusiastic reception among early nineteenth-century readers that reflected the educated elite's emerging quest for a distinct national spirit (*Geist*).

The development of the ethnographic method was preceded by the scientific method, which was applied to the natural sciences from the seventeenth-century onwards and included measurements, testing, experiments, and observation. Later, the scientific method entered the literary world with the emergence of Romanticism. During this period, writers of fiction became interested in scientific experiments — for example, Mary Shelley's Gothic and Romantic novel *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818).²³ At this time, Romantic German thinkers (Friedrich Schelling, Johann Goethe,

²² See article by Sergei Glebov: "Siberian Ruptures: Dilemmas of Ethnography in an Imperial Situation," in *An Empire of Others: Creating Ethnographic Knowledge in Imperial Russia and the USSR* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014), 281-309.

²³ In Russian Romanticism, the interest in scientific discoveries and utopian fantasies could be found in the works of Faddei Bulgarin's *Plausible Fantasies, or a Journey into the Twenty Ninth Century* (*Pravdopodobnye nebylitsy, ili stranstvovaniia po svety v dvadtsat' deviatom veke*, 1824), and Vladimir Odoevsky's *The Year 4338* (1835) and *Russian Nights* (1844).

and Alexander von Humboldt, among others) were also experimenting with and writing about science as well as proclaiming the unity between science and nature.

Russian authors of the Romantic period adopted Gottfried von Herder's idea that every nation is animated by a unique spirit, which is found among the uneducated people (*narod*) and its oral folk traditions (songs, fairy-tales, legends, etc.). They perceived the nation as an organic being, animated by a unique spirit, and as a dynamic unit whose identity derives from the total interaction of all its parts, rather than from a few individual characteristics, as Linnaeus's taxonomies have suggested. Later on, Vladimir Dal (Dal' in Russian), Aleksandr Afanas'ev, and Fyodor Buslaev, collected the folk sayings, tales and legends with the intention of capturing the spirit and diversity of Russian dialects and folklore.²⁴ Russian canonical works often focused on the Russian people, excluding the cultures of the *inorodtsy*. My project aims to fill this gap by showing that the *inorodets* has a voice, even though it is a mediated one.

With the rise of positivism and emergence of Realism, the notion of science changed. The Russian Natural School developed partly under the influence of the French *feuilleton*, and *l'école frénétique* was a great inspiration for the genre of the Russian physiological sketch in the mid-nineteenth-century. It could be called a “proto”-ethnography and a scientific study because it also employed the scientific method that Balzac and later Zola applied to analyze human beings. It is “proto”-ethnographic because it presents an external description of certain urban professions (doorman, organ-grinder), or classes (peasants, gentry, poor clerks, soldiers). Dal, Dmitry Grigorovich,

²⁴ F. Buslaev, *Istoricheskie ocherki russkoi narodnoi slovesnosti i iskusstva. Russkaia narodnaia poeziia*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg: Obshchestvennaia pol'za, 1861); A.N. Afanas'ev, *Narodnye russkie skazki* (Moscow: Tip. Vysochaishe, 1897); Vladimir Dal, *Tolkovy slovar' zhivogo velikorusskogo iazyka; Poslovitsy russkogo naroda* (Moscow: Goslitizdat, 1971).

Nikolay Gogol, Ivan Turgenev, and Dostoevsky turned to urban and rural characters of lower social origins, depicting the disturbing and raw nature of their everyday lives. Later, the publication of Darwin's theory of evolution²⁵ marked a new step in a cultural paradigm in which fiction writers were appropriating medical, physiological, and scientific methods, and, at the same time, exploring religion and tradition. References to the methods, problems, and practitioners of science begin to populate the works of European writers. French and Russian naturalism were influenced by Darwin's theory of evolution. If in the writings of the naturalists a character's development is determined by social conditions and heredity, an ethnographer, on the contrary, would challenge these assumptions. The physiological sketch introduced not only the new environment with the emphasis on insalubrious aspects of life and types of characters, but it also developed a new type of reader who consumed the works and apprehended new fictive style counterbalanced by reportage. Turgenev's 1862 novel *Fathers and Sons* reflected this shift. In that work, the main protagonist - the nihilist Bazarov - dissected frogs and stated that "nature is not a temple, but a workshop, and man in it is a workman." Soon after the publication of Turgenev's novel, Chernyshevsky, in his novel *What is To be Done?*, referenced the French physiologist Claude Bernard, who defined the scientific experimental method in his *An Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine*

²⁵ Darwin's scientific theory of evolution and natural selection was published in England in 1859 in his book *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. It was translated into Russian in 1864. On the reception of Darwin in Russia, see James Allen Rogers, "The Reception of Darwin's *Origin of Species* by Russian Scientists," *Isis* 64 (1973): 484-503. Also, Alexander Vucinich, *Darwin in Russian Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). On the influence of Darwin's theory on literature, see Joseph Carroll, *Evolution and Literary Theory* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995) and also by him, *Literary Darwinism: Evolution, Human Nature, and Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2004); A.N. Wilson, *God's Funeral: The Decline of Faith in Western Civilization* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999); *Evolution, Literature, and Film: A Reader*, eds. Brian Boyd, Joseph Carroll, and Jonathan Gottschall (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010); Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

(*Introduction à la médecine expérimentale*, 1865). This method was adopted by Émile Zola in his *The Experimental Novel* (*Le Roman expérimental*, 1880). Zola wrote that “[m]edicine is an art, in the eyes of a great number of people, is still an art, as is the novel.”²⁶ Thus, the experimental method utilized to examine physical life was transplanted into the study of man’s life and his social environment, heredity, and determinism. He quoted Bernard saying that “the observer [...] should be the photographer of phenomena [of human life].”²⁷ Bogoraz also wrote in sketches that he was giving snapshots of the Gomel’ events of 1904. The writer, Zola continues, should “possess a knowledge of the mechanism of the phenomena inherent in man, to show the *machinery of his intellectual and sensory manifestations*, under the influence of heredity and environment.”²⁸ In contrast to Zola, ethnographers raised different questions during their research. They did not share Zola’s interest in exploring the history of characters’ evolution from the diachronic perspective, instead preferring to represent the present moment of people’s lives, the synchronic perspective.

In 1904, Lev Shternberg wrote an article on ethnography for the *Brokgauz-Efron Encyclopedia* (*Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, literally *Encyclopedic Dictionary*). His impetus for defining ethnography as a science of primitive peoples came from his experience of studying the Nivkhs (Giliaki), who he believed were becoming extinct, and therefore needed to have their dying culture documented and salvaged. He defined ethnography as “a science that studies the culture of primitive peoples.”²⁹ First mentioned in Germany in 1791, ethnography is an interdisciplinary practice since it borrows from

²⁶ Émile Zola, *The Experimental Novel*, trans. Belle M. Sherman (New York: Haskell House, 1964), 2.

²⁷ Ibid., 7.

²⁸ Ibid., 20-21. Emphasis are mine.

²⁹ “Etnografiia,” in *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, eds. F.A. Brokgauz and I.A. Efron, vol. 41 (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Akts. Obshch. Brokgauz-Efron, 1904), 180-90.

history, sociology, psychology, and it eventually became incorporated into the discipline of anthropology. But even though Shternberg argued that ethnography sought to describe the culture of primitive peoples, he in fact contradicted himself by postulating that folklore and pre-historical archeology were integral parts of the formation of ethnography. Furthermore, he offered the example of the Brothers Grimm, but he did not mention well-known Russian ethnographers such as Dal, Afanas'ev, and Buslaev. By comparing ethnography to the natural sciences, he emphasized the importance of the precise, exact and unbiased observation method, which was referred at the time as the participant observation method.

As some scholars have stated, all people are in some way observers and participants of culture, but only a “few engage in the systematic use of this information for social scientific purposes.”³⁰ The qualitative method of analysis, which is essential for cultural anthropologists nowadays, was carried on by four writers. Especially Vladimir Bogoraz and his colleagues Shternberg and Iokhelson in particular employed this method systematically during their exiles as well as later with Franz Boas. Even though the term participant observation method was coined later by the Polish anthropologist, Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942),³¹ it was vital to their collection of ethnographic and anthropological materials in Siberia and the Pale. Since then, scholars began asking how the attitude of the ethnographer may exhibit a bias towards the subject he studies.³² Bias in this kind of fieldwork is unavoidable, since the ethnographer arrives with the

³⁰ Kathleen M. Dewalt, Billie R. Dewalt, and Coral B. Wayland. “Participant Observation,” in *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, ed. H. Russell Bernard (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 1998), 259.

³¹ See George Stocking, “The Ethnographer’s Magic. Fieldwork in British Anthropology from Tylor to Malinowski,” in *Observers Observed: Essays on Ethnographic Fieldwork*, ed. George Stocking (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 70-120.

³² Kathleen M. Dewalt, Billie R. Dewalt, and Coral B. Wayland, “Participant Observation,” in *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, ed. H. Russell Bernard (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 1998). 259-99.

“baggage” of his cultural upbringing and knowledge. Striving towards the “scientific observations of people and their culture” by means of the participant observation method gives the reader insight into the life of the community that is based on concrete experience, systematic observation, prolonged stay within the community, and the interaction of the ethnographer with his subjects.³³ All these elements are present in the methodology used by four writers under investigation, although each of them produced a unique literary representation of the colonial subjects.

I argue that ethnographers such as Korolenko, Bogoraz, and An-sky did not alienate their ethnographic subjects. On the contrary, they gave them voice and agency, thus challenging the imperial colonial representation of the Other. These writers invite readers to reread the canonical colonial texts, and see their own works in the light of a new ethnographic writing that represents the diverse cultures and peoples of the Empire. Bogoraz explicitly talks about this shift in moving from a belief in one civilized culture to a belief in the heterogeneous nature of cultures in his sketches on Gomel'. During Bogoraz's era, as James Clifford has shown, the word “‘culture’ [used to] refer [...] to a single evolutionary process” and was replaced by a new notion of multiple cultures, which Clifford calls an “ethnographic conception of culture.”³⁴ This development, insofar as it occurred during a discrete period of time, corresponds to Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia.

³³ Ibid., 291.

³⁴ James Clifford, “On Ethnographic Self-Fashioning: Conrad and Malinowski,” in *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 92-93.

Writing in 1912, Shternberg emphasized that the The Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of Primarily the Peoples of Russia in St. Petersburg³⁵ (Музеи по антропологии и этнографии преимущественно народов России) focused on a general ethnography (obshchei etnografii)³⁶ that aims to study the culture of all mankind and of all the different peoples of the world, except for contemporary European culture because its evolutionary development was so fast that it would be impossible to trace it in a museum. Shternberg had been the museum's chief ethnographer since 1901. The Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Shternberg continued, focused "on the "cultures of lower and higher types"³⁷ that were not part of the European influence. The museum was interested in "anachronisms," that is in "the cultural relics of the past" (perezhitki kul'tury proshlogo vremeni)³⁸ that could be traced among peasant communities in Europe. The museum had three major departments: ethnographic, archeological, and anthropological. Aside from that, the museum had strong didactical, scientific, and educational functions. Shternberg stressed that the museum fully represented the Russian *inorodtsy*, especially the Paleo-Asiatic peoples of the Asian part of Russia, such as Ainy, Nivkhs, Chukchi, Kamchadal, and many other indigenous

³⁵ Peter the Great's purchase in Amsterdam of the famous collections of the apothecary Albert Seba of objects from India and China, as well as of stuffed animals and of the anatomical collection of Frederik Ruysch in 1715-1716, laid the foundation of the Kunstkamera (German for room of art). The collection aimed to present the diversity of art and species from around the world. In 1837, the name was changed to the "Ethnographic Museum." In 1878, the museum expanded by adding the anthropological collection of Karl von Baer, and the museum's name became "The Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of Predominantly Russia." Lev Shternberg, "Russkie etnograficheskie muzei i sobrania. Muzei antropologii i etnografii imeni Imperatora Petra Velikogo" (St. Peterburg: Tipografiia B. Bezobrazova, 1912), 453-72.

³⁶ Ibid., 454.

³⁷ Ibid., 455.

³⁸ Ibid., 455.

peoples.³⁹ However, not all *inorodtsy* were presented in the museum. Jews, for example, were not represented.

The same year he wrote this article, he and An-sky began to work systematically on Jewish ethnography. Shternberg was an editor of An-sky's *Jewish Ethnographic Program: The Human Being (Der mentsh, 1914)*. At the time when Shternberg defined ethnography in 1904, his colleague, the anthropologist Bogoraz, who was an expert on Chukchi language and folklore, was already using the ethnographic participant observation method for documenting Jews during the trial of the Gomel' pogrom of 1904. Bogoraz and Shternberg were self-trained anthropologists, and their experience of studying the indigenous peoples of the Far East and Sakhalin Island informed their understanding of the ethnography of the Pale of Settlement. Thus, ethnography became a science that studied not only indigenous peoples or Russians, but also culturally diverse groups of the Russian Empire.

Definition of Anthropology

In the *Brokgauz-Efron Encyclopedia*, the leading imperial anthropologist Dmitrii Nikolaevich Anuchin (1843-1923) defined anthropology as “a science about [the] human being [...]” that first included the two areas of study - physiology and psychology.⁴⁰ The

³⁹ Ibid., 464.

⁴⁰ *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, eds. F. A. Brokgauz and I. A. Efron, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg: Semenovskaia Tipo-Litografiia I.A. Efron, 1890), 867-71. On the history of anthropology in the Russian Empire, see works by Marina Mogilner: *Homo Imperii: A History of Physical Anthropology in Russia* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013); “Beyond, Against, and With Ethnography: Physical Anthropology as a Science of Russian Modernity,” in *An Empire of Others: Creating Ethnographic Knowledge in Imperial Russia and the USSR*, eds. Roland Cvetkovski and Alexis Hofmeister (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2013), 81-119; *Homo Imperii: istoriia fizicheskoi antropologii v Rossii, (XIX--nachalo XX vv.)* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2007); “The Most European Science in Russia: Defining Empire Anthropologically,” in *Emerging Meso-Areas in the Former Socialist Countries: Histories Revived or Improvised?*, ed. Matsuzato Kimitaka (Sapporo: Hokkaido University, 2005), 285-310.

term originally was introduced by Aristotle, as Anuchin pointed out, and focused on the “spiritual matters” (“dukhovnoi storone”).⁴¹ In the second half of the nineteenth-century, the French anthropologist Paul Broca (1824-1880) introduced the metric methods that influenced Russian anthropologists. The discipline focused on the external and internal characteristics of peoples. It explored the physical, anatomical, psychological, and psychiatric nature of the human being and included such methods as craniometry, osteometry, and anthropometry. Anuchin mentioned works by the Russian professors Karl Ber and Anatolii Bogdanov, who studied physical anthropology in the empire. In 1867, Bogdanov also initiated the creation of the Society of Laymen of Anthropology (Obshchestvo liubitelei antropologii) that carried out a large number of craniometrical studies. In 1888, The Anthropological Society at the Imperial St. Petersburg University was founded. It expanded its scientific expertise by including psychological observations and the study of the brains of the mentally ill. In contrast to ethnography, anthropology focused on the physical aspect of the human being, whereas ethnography focused on culture and everyday life.

In 1890, Chekhov was engaged in “ethnography” at a time when Shternberg was performing physical anthropology and collecting folklore of Nivkhs (Giliaki) and other indigenous peoples of Sakhalin Island during his exile 1889-1897.⁴² The two writers were

⁴¹ *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, eds. F. Brokgauz and I. Efron, vol. 1 (St. Peterburg: Semenovskaia Tipolitografiia I.A. Efrona, 1890), 868.

⁴² On Chekhov's ethnographic experience on the Sakhalin Island, see Cathy Popkin's article, “Chekhov as Ethnographer: Epistemological Crisis on Sakhalin Island,” *Slavic Review* 51.1 (Spring 1992), 36-51. She argues that Chekhov's goal was to make sense of the knowledge about a remote part of Russia. However, the scholar Conevery B. Valencius argues that the trip was not ethnographic but rather represents the sort of medical geography that was popular in the nineteenth-century. “Chekhov's *Sakhalin Island* as Medical Geography,” in *Chekhov the Immigrant: Translating a Cultural Icon*, eds. Michael C. Finke and Julie de Sherbinin (Bloomington: Slavica, 2007). Also, see Juras T. Ryfa, *The Problem of Genre and the Quest for Justice in Chekhov's The Island of Sakhalin* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1999). The anthropologist

working at the same time, but their findings exhibit differing anthropological and ethnographic methods of studying people. This diversity in methods - physical anthropology (the study of types of peoples) and ethnography, what we would now call cultural anthropology (the study of oral tradition, everyday customs and beliefs) - point out to the variety of scientific practices in the late imperial period.

Literary Ethnography

This dissertation examines literary ethnographic texts that were produced within the Russian imperial cultural space by Dostoevsky, Korolenko, Bogoraz, and An-sky beginning in the second half of the nineteenth-century from a reader-response perspective, while also looking at the manner in which these works actualize heteroglossic and polyphonic discourses in the Bakhtinian sense. These writers created an audience by redefining a new type of ideal reader, rather than by rewriting the Russian imperial imaginary, which, instead, their works effectively decentered.

My employment of the term “literary ethnography” is broad. Unlike previous scholars, I interpret the genre of literary ethnography as a discursive, analytical practice, which questions authors and texts, both in relation to one another and in relation to the reality of the empire. Literary ethnography featured multiple agendas, not only the imperial colonial, but also a nationalizing endeavor, which was a driving force for cultural and ethnic preservation. It functioned as a tool for social criticism. However, I always frame these writers with reference to the imperial colonial project, showing the degree, if any, by which they diverged.

This dissertation proposes a new interpretive model, which I term literary ethnography, for the investigation and textualization of ethnic realities and values.⁴³ I employ the term literary ethnography to describe the confluence of the fieldwork experience of these four writers with the literary methods they relied upon when they were transforming the material they collected into structured narratives. Like anthropology, ethnography is a research practice that posits an awareness on the part of the researcher of the limits imposed by one's own culture on one's understanding of other cultures. The fundamental innovation of this dissertation is its interdisciplinary dimension, the reconceptualization of the ways in which scholars examine the connection between imperial and non-imperial ethnographic explorations and literary texts in the late imperial period. By analyzing the narrative strategies of the texts that contain literary ethnographic material, I argue that they reflect different agendas. Within the ethnographic discourse of the nineteenth-century, there was no "official," fixed model of understanding whether the tsarist regime was using knowledge about the *inorodtsy* to "fix" them more firmly as subjects of imperial power, or whether literary ethnographers themselves echoed Russian imperial colonial discourses and operated within the stereotypes of representing the Other, or whether these writers created texts that subverted the colonial power. I argue that these writers at times were in tune with and reflected the colonial ambitions of the Empire, while at other times, they contested it, depending on their individual political and cultural agendas. In every case, however, ethnography as a cultural practice made possible the incorporation of different voices and of diverse cultural experiences into a literary or quasi-literary narrative. Accordingly, I apply the

⁴³ In sociology, the term "literary ethnography" is used to describe the practice of employing literary texts and techniques to examine social life. In addition to its application in the social sciences, literary scholars employ it for analyzing fictional works.

term to works by Dostoevsky, Korolenko, Bogoraz, and An-sky in which we observe the textual dynamic described above.

Ethnography as a nineteenth-century discipline shares with fiction the function of recording cultural similarities and differences, and drawing conclusions about them. The fact that a Russian reader of Dostoevsky's, Bogoraz's, Korolenko's and An-sky's works would be exposed not only to Russian culture, but also to several different cultures of his predecessors and contemporaries is a shift to a new model of scripting the peripheral colonial remote territories of the empire. The writers in question - Dostoevsky, Korolenko, Bogoraz, and An-sky - move away from Russian-centric fiction to the hybrid texts that complicate and often destabilize the imperial imaginary. This new literary practice generates a hybrid text. My interpretation and exploration of the intersection of literature and ethnography, where I define ethnography as writing about the peoples of the Russian Empire, and literature as the imaginative representation of the same populations that focuses on stylistic tropes and narrative strategies such as heteroglossia and hybridity of the language. But the connection between ethnography and literature is not simply unidirectional. Both focus upon cultures and peoples. While ethnography does not always conflate truth and fiction, literature sometimes may obscure the real events by employing more elaborate aesthetics and literary devices.

My interest in the narrational (telling mode) aspect of literary ethnography is connected to my focus throughout this dissertation on how the peoples of the empire were depicted by Dostoevsky, Korolenko, Bogoraz, and An-sky, and how their characters or narrators report on those peoples as well as how they tell us about themselves, what ethnographic markers, or codes, to use Tsvetan Todorov's term, the texts employ, and

how the narrative strategies for representing the *inorodtsy* in the works of the four writers differ from each other.

Literary ethnography is a genre that, using James Clifford's term, is of a "hybrid textual activity."⁴⁴ It is hybrid because it employs diverse genres, fictional and journalistic styles; it incorporates several cultures, languages (Russian and Yakut), religious beliefs, and literary traditions (Russian Orthodox, Yakut and Russian folk stories). Literary ethnography as a genre gravitates towards the centrifugal model that Bakhtin described as the fundamental structure of the novel. Even Bogoraz's and Korolenko's sketches exhibit novelistic qualities because they contain elements of heteroglossia (different types of speeches), and narrational multilayeredness, and they hinge on the mimetic representation of the multiplicity of languages, cultures, religions and identities that are not integrated with the imperial center. I argue that there is no homogeneity within the literary ethnographic genre itself. Moreover, the discourse of literary ethnography is unstable and, depending upon the geographical location and ideological position of the writer, the key element of the relationship between the imperial subject and colonial object can be represented in a variety of ways. I also show that there are multiple imperial narratives, and the imperial discourse coming into being contains inherent discontinuities and even contrary elements.

The topos of literary ethnography reveals several purposes. First of all, it sheds light on the colonial project the Russian Empire was carrying out throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Alexander Etkind points out that the wars that

⁴⁴ James Clifford, "Introduction: Partial Truths," in *Writing Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. Clifford, James and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 26.

the empire was involved in between 1815 and 1917 were colonial wars.⁴⁵ Secondly, it reveals a particular discourse, a set of ideas that, according to Foucault, constitute a “rule-governed language” which controls the rules and conventions that govern the way one would discuss the ethnic minorities in the empire. Third, it refers to the different narrative strategies of the text, such as when literary ethnography rearranges and narrates ethnographic encounters into a sequence that expresses the culturally coded customs and life cycles of a particular community and of a certain time. Fourth, it constitutes a hybrid genre that combines different stylistic elements and discourses, such as scientific ethnographic, folkloric, documentary, fictional, popular, and mundane. Consequently, literary ethnography is embedded in the imperial colonial discourse, which seeks to control the peoples of the empire by means of constructing literary texts where these peoples are portrayed as the “Other.” I must clarify that not all literary ethnographic texts portray inorodtsy as Other, not all writers use the ethnographic knowledge as an imperial tool of control. I share the position of Nathaniel Knight, who argues that some ethnographers, for instance the orientalist Vasilii Grigor'ev, were serving the science of ethnography and not the colonial ambitions of the tsar.⁴⁶ Knight's position spurred a discussion in the journal *Kritika* where the historian Adeeb Khalid disagreed with him, stating that knowledge of the ethnographers was mobilized for the service of the control of the Other.⁴⁷ Fifth, the analyses of the function of the literary ethnography shows that

⁴⁵ Aleksander Etkind, “Russkaia literature, xix veka: Roman vnutrennei kolonizatsii,” *NLO* 59 (2003): 103-24.

⁴⁶ Nathaniel Knight, “Grigor'ev in Orenburg, 1851-1862: Russian Orientalism in the Service of Empire?” *Slavic Review* 59.1 (Spring 2000): 74-100.

⁴⁷ Adeeb Khalid, “Russian History and the Debate over Orientalism,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 1.4 (Fall 2000): 691-99. See Nathaniel Knight's response to Adeeb Khalid, “On Russian Orientalism: A Response to Adeeb Khalid,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 1.4 (Fall 2000): 701-15. Maria Todorova challenges and discusses Knight's critique of Said in her article “Does Russian Orientalism Have a Russian Soul? A Contribution to the Debate Between Nathaniel Knight

even though peoples were marginalized by the empire, the literary ethnographic sources gave them voice by bringing them into the center of the narrative.

In contrast to Knight's position, the literary scholar Catherine B. Clay employs the term literary ethnography to refer to Russian literary works that served imperial colonial projects. Clay argues that writers who produced literary ethnographic texts were serving the state, particularly during the period of imperial naval expansion (1855-1862). It is not clear, however, how they were serving the empire, since she does not give any historical evidence. One of the writers that Clay mentions was Ivan Goncharov who participated in a two-year-long voyage on the imperial frigate *Pallada*. As a result of it, he produced the travel sketches *Frigate Pallada* (1856), which gave an account of different colonial powers but it did not aim to serve the dissemination of imperial expansion.⁴⁸

In 1931, twenty-six years after Bogoraz wrote "Silhouettes from Gomel'," he published the article "Ethnographic Literature" ("Etnograficheskaia belletristika") in the journal *Soviet Ethnography*. The article employed a Marxist ethnographic discourse. He identified several types of ethnographic novel: imperial (Pushkin, Lermontov), colonial (Rudyard Kipling, Claude Farrère, Jack London, Joseph Conrad, Henryk Senkevich and the Russian writer Nikolay Karazin who wrote on Russian colonization in Turkestan); liberal-romanticism (liberal'no-romanticheskaiia) (Pierre Mille; Korolenko's "Makar's

and Adeeb Khalid," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 1.4 (Fall 2000): 717-27. In her recent book, Vera Tolz also questions the applicability of Said's concept of Orientalism by examining the scholarship of Russian orientologists, the so-called Rosen School, whose scholars not only anticipated the critique of the dichotomy of "East" and "West," but were also critical of the "power-knowledge relationship." *Russia's Own Orient: The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 19-21.

⁴⁸ For a discussion of Russian writers and the colonial projects, see Catherine B. Clay's article, "Russian Ethnographers in the Service of Empire, 1856-1862," *Slavic Review* 54.1 (Spring 1995): 45-61; "Ethos and Empire: The Ethnographic Expedition of the Imperial Russian Naval Ministry, 1855-1862" (PhD diss., University of Oregon, 1989).

Dream;” Wacław Seroshevskii); and realism (Bogoraz). In it, he also criticized Soviet writers of the 1920s and 1930s for their banality and vulgarity (poshlost’). If one leaves aside the ideological Marxist orientation of the article, one sees that Bogoraz implemented the scientific ethnographic method into his ethnographic literature. He emphasized knowledge of the local languages and customs, and direct contact with the people, all reflecting the constituent elements of the participant observation method.

The variety within the literary ethnographic genre points out the diverse ways in which writers grappled with the empire’s multiethnic subjects. Dostoevsky was not a member of the Russian Imperial Geographical Society, but he worked with the two prominent ethnographers and explorers Chokan Valikhanov and Petr Semyonov (later known as Tian-Shanskii, was a director of the Society), who were members of it. In this dissertation, my main focus where Dostoevsky is concerned is his novel *Notes from the House of the Dead*. Its main “ethnographical” narrator and protagonist, Gorianchikov in the *Notes*, exemplifies the power of scientific knowledge and imperial colonial domination as enacted through the ethnically and socially codifying authority of the Russian language. I therefore argue that the ambitions of the fictional narrator Gorianchikov to “classify the inmates” for the purpose of establishing control over them are orientalizing, in the sense of Edward Said. That scholar offered several definitions of Orientalism. He defined it as “the mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarships, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles.”⁴⁹ He also stated that it was “a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and [...] ‘the Occident.’”⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 2.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

Ultimately, Gorianchikov carries out his task by juxtaposing not only East and West, but also the tensions and anxieties within the empire itself between Russian noblemen and Russian peasants. The problem arises: how does one classify inmates, who belongs to the “East” and who to the “West?” Does the only Jew, Isai Bumshtein, represent “East,” or “West?” Also, how does one classify the Russian Old Believers or the cantonist Petrov? They are ethnic Russians, although with very different religious and cultural backgrounds as compared with the Empire’s majority Russian population. Gorianchikov consistently attempts to exert power over the *inorodtsy*, especially through his knowledge and manipulation of the Russian language. Still, his ambitions fail on the epistemological level because of his core belief that “the reality aspires towards fragmentation.”⁵¹ How is one supposed to embrace ethnic diversity if it is truly a cumbersome project? I agree with Nathaniel Knight’s concerns and reservations of applying Said’s Orientalism to the Russian texts. As he states, one should not limit the analyses to the “overarching East/West dichotomy [but rather explore] how binary thinking functions to define identity in a broader range of cultural settings.”⁵² This is exactly why Gorianchikov fails in his endeavor. He uses the Russian language when describing, discussing and classifying the other inmates, including those of non-Russian ethnicity, while employing rigid conceptual markers that impose a hierarchy of cultural, religious, and ethnic valuations on the identities of his fellow-prisoners, in which Russian, Russian Orthodox and Russian-speaking trumps every other identities.

⁵¹ F.M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii v tridsati tomakh (PSS)*, ed. G. M. Friedlender et al., vol. 4 (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo “Nauka,” 1972-90), 197. All in-text quotes are taken from this edition of Dostoevsky’s “Zapiski iz mertvogo doma.” All translations into English are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

⁵² Nathaniel Knight, “On Russian Orientalism: A Response to Adeeb Khalid,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 1.4 (Fall 2000): 713.

Bogoraz and Shternberg were exiled because they were members of the terrorist organization “People’s Will.” They opposed the tsar and wanted to bring social justice to all peoples of the empire. Even though they worked during their exiles for the Russian Imperial Geographical Society, by no means did they want their scientific knowledge to be used as a controlling tool against *inorodtsy*. Bogoraz and Shternberg were Jewish *inorodtsy* who studied the *inorodtsy* of Siberia. During his exile in Srednekolymsk (Yakutiia region), Bogoraz first collaborated with the Eastern Branch of the Russian Geographical Society during his political exile in 1894; then, for his contribution, he became an honorable member of it. He participated in collecting the materials on Yakut and Even (Lamut) in Srednekolymsk during the so-called Sibiriakov expedition under the supervision of the ethnographer Dmitrii Klements. He was as well collaborating with Dmitrii Anuchin, an imperial anthropologist, who asked him to send some ethnographic objects to St. Petersburg’s museum of anthropology and ethnography. While Bogoraz was in exile, he was able to publish his literary and ethnographic works in imperial periodicals. He published his findings on Chukchi folklore in the Society’s publications, such as the *Ethnographic Observer* (*Etnograficheskii obozrevatel’*, 1896), the *Proceedings of the Eastern-Siberian Branch of Russian Geographical Society* (*Izvestiia Vostochno-Sibirskogo otdeleniia Russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestva*, 1899), the *Proceedings of the Russian Imperial Academy of Science* (1899), and the journal of the Imperial Geographical Society entitled *Alive Antiquity* (*Zhivaia starina*, 1899). In addition, he also published his short literary-ethnographic story “Crooked-Legged” (“Krivonogii,” 1896) in Korolenko’s journal *Russian Wealth* (*Russkoe bogatstvo*, 1896). The story is reminiscent of Korolenko’s “Makar’s Dream” (1883). Korolenko’s writings

on Russian-Yakut hybrid culture had a tremendous aesthetic impact on Bogoraz's poetics. These publications, I contend, were of a scientific nature and were intended for the scientific advancement of the ethnographic field, and not for imperial colonial governance.

I build my definition of literary ethnography upon linguistic studies and German scholarship where the concept is widely applied for literary textual analysis. I provide an overview of selected secondary works on German literature that point to a broad definition of literary ethnography. The cultural anthropologist Fernando Poyatos uses the term "literary anthropology" to analyze patterns of non-verbal communication, paralinguistic, and kinesic behaviors in the literary works of the past for the purpose of understanding present patterns of behavior. He defines literary anthropology broadly as a "documentation about human life cycles" and the development of cultures based on the "narrative literatures."⁵³ He examines narrative literatures as a source for extracting information on bodies, tastes, odors, emotions, and so on. This approach to cultural anthropology treats anthropology as a source of culture, and is attributed to the work of British anthropologist Edward Taylor (1832-1917). In his book *Primitive Culture*, he states that culture "in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."⁵⁴ This definition is important for

⁵³ Fernando Poyatos, ed. "Literary Anthropology: Toward a New Interdisciplinary Area," in *Literary Anthropology: A New Interdisciplinary Approach to People, Signs, and Literature* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1988), 4.

⁵⁴ Edward B. Taylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1920), 1.

understanding the aspects and the ways in which cultural anthropologists employ the concept of “literary anthropology” for extracting the semiotic markers of the culture.⁵⁵

Similarly, literary scholar Thomas G. Winner employs literary anthropology in a broader sense for analyzing Jaroslav Hašek’s (1883-1923) novel *Good Soldier Švejk* (1923), which he sees as “a repository of transformed cultural elements, from the language to the general cultural attitudes and value systems.”⁵⁶ He concludes by stating that rather than simply serving as a mere reflection of culture, the novel reveals the “aesthetic code.”⁵⁷ Here again, the employment of anthropology is not clear. Specifically, the problem remains of how exactly anthropology contributes to the interpretation of the text in a way that literary criticism would not.

Following Poyatos’s definition of literary anthropology, the anthropologist Vincent O. Erickson analyzes Thomas Mann’s (1875-1955) novel *Buddenbrooks* (1901). He shows that it both illuminates the cultural life of northern Germany in the nineteenth-century and can be seen as a “parody on burgher families everywhere.”⁵⁸ He observes that the writer and anthropologist come to the “findings [that] are sometimes far from

⁵⁵ Scholars of American, British, and Irish literature have employed theories of cultural anthropology to examine literary texts as ethnographic source of cultures. Slavic literatures still await the undertaking of an anthropological and ethnographic turn. Sean Heuston analyzes the poetry of Yeats, Frost, Warren, and Heaney using contemporary ethnographic and anthropological theories developed by Geertz and Glifford, just to name a few, and thus exploring “ethnographic authority.” *Modern Poetry and Ethnography: Yeats, Frost, Warren, Heaney, and the Poet as Anthropologist* (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2011). James Buzard examined Victorian novels using Geertz’s concept of “thick description” as ethnographic texts. She saw the novels as constituting what she called the “metropolitan autoethnography,” the novels providing urban ethnographic material about life in Victorian times. This anticipated the notion of *cultures* in its plurality. *Disorienting Fiction: The Autoethnographic Work of Nineteenth-Century British Novels* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

⁵⁶ Thomas G. Wiener, “Literature as a Source for Anthropological Research: The Case of Jaroslav Hašek’s novel *Good Soldier Švejk*,” in *Literary Anthropology: A New Interdisciplinary Approach to People, Signs, and Literature*, ed. Fernando Poyatos (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1988), 61.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁵⁸ Vincent O. Erickson, “Buddenbrooks, Thomas Mann, and North German Social Class: An Application of Literary Anthropology,” in *Literary Anthropology: A New Interdisciplinary Approach to People, Signs, and Literature*, ed. Fernando Poyatos (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1988), 122.

concordant,” since the two fields view reality from different viewpoints.⁵⁹ “For the writer of fiction the idea is first and foremost [...]; for the ethnographer the reality is first [...].”⁶⁰ This is a problematic statement. In both instances, reality could be employed for dubious purposes. How do we know that an ethnographer treats reality as it is and not as he wants it to be treated? Erickson states that Mann’s personal notes could provide a more accurate account of the North German life than his fictitious representation of it. The immediate question is then why analyze the novel? He does not dismiss the novel, and states that it could be useful to anthropology for describing the human condition and instructively identifying opportunities for improvement. Still, he emphasizes that anthropology and literature differ in how they represent reality. Despite Mann’s descriptions of North German life through gastronomical depictions, interior design, linguistic change (i.e., the replacement of Low German by High German) in the Lübeck patrician family over four generations, Erickson cautions the reader that in literature, cultural representation is unreliably true.⁶¹ In contrast to Erickson, I am interested in the narrative strategies, in the perspectives of the characters on the plot and the ways in which they employ language. Drawing from the Russian ethnographic tradition, I use the term “literary ethnography” for my analyses of the literary texts because I ask the question of how the writer-ethnographer captures cultural diversity, or does not, when representing the people(s) he is describing. The cultural anthropologists mentioned above raise the question of what cultural information could be extracted from the text, whereas I analyze the ethnographic poetics and writers’ intentions in representing the cultures.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 123.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 123.

⁶¹ Ibid., 115-20.

German scholars loosely use the concept of literary ethnography and anthropology for analyzing literary styles. Philip Schlesinger, in his article “W.G. Sebald and the Condition of Exile,” calls Sebald’s *Austerlitz* a “quasi-ethnographic travelogue” where the literary and the non-literary are conflated.⁶² He states that literary ethnography is a hybrid style because it mixes different genres and subjects such as autobiography, history, travelogues, and ethnography. In Russian scholarship, however, the exploration of the connection between literary and ethnography still awaits research to be done.

Genre of Literary Ethnography

I rely upon Tzvetan Todorov’s general definition of the genre to describe the genre of literary ethnography. According to him, the genre consists of “discursive property and codification.”⁶³ “Discursive property” includes the phonetic features (song vs. poem), rhythm (ballad vs. sonnet), subject matter (tragedy vs. comedy), plot organization, relying upon a real life experience (biography vs. novel). “Codification” is a detailed use of language and syntax that distinguishes it from other uses, for instance, the usage of language and syntax for writing formal letters is different from letter writing to a familiar person. In order for a new genre to emerge, the preceding “discursive” and “codified” practices should be violated, or the features of two genres could be conflated.

What makes literary ethnography a genre are the discursive properties that rely on a given writer’s experience with the peoples of the empire, his own observations and his

⁶² Philip Schlesinger, “W.G. Sebald and the Condition of Exile,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 21.2 (2004): 49, accessed March 15, 2013, tcs.sagepub.com.

⁶³ Tzvetan Todorov, “The Origin of Genres,” in *Genres in Discourse*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 18-26.

critical reading of the accounts by earlier writers, explorers, and ethnographers. Literary ethnography shares with imaginative prose the following characteristics: the presence of the plot, characters, the employment of tropes, and a programmatic orientation of the text towards inducing a suspension of disbelief in the reader. With ethnography this genre shares a closely recorded description of customs, religious practices, folk beliefs, artifacts, language, and a list of religious, family, social and economic practices. Ethnographic accounts are not invented, but based on author's recorded interactions with and observations of a given ethnic, or religious group. In literary ethnography, the sets of parameters identified by Todorov, the discursive and the codified, are each superimposed upon its analogue in literary prose and ethnographic writing, with the result that a new genre form emerges.

Within this genre, one accounts variations. One of the ways they differ is the level of factual accuracy, analytical sophistication and the ways in which the discursive elements are codified, i.e. the poetic language employed. To illustrate this point, one could take the description of a Jewish character, Isai Fomich, in Dostoevsky's *Notes* and Korolenko's presentation of a Jewish tavern-keeper, Yankel, in a fairytale "The Day of Atonement. Yom Kippur." In each case, the character is codified differently. Dostoevsky continues the typological ethnic interpretation associated with Gogol, who represented Jews as savages and outsiders, whereas Korolenko gives a more neutral account, accepting that there are cultural differences between ethnic groups.

I begin this dissertation project with the year 1845, when the Russian Geographic Society was founded in St. Petersburg.⁶⁴ Among its founding members were prominent

⁶⁴ By 1845, Geographical Societies existed in Paris (Société de Géographie, 1821), in Berlin (Gesellschaft für Erdkunde, 1828), in London (Royal Geographical Society, 1828), in Bombay (1831), in Rio de Janeiro

explorers such as Ivan Kruzenshtern, Fyodor Berg, Ferdinand Wrangel', Admiral Fyodor Litke, Nikolai Nadezhdin, scientist Karl von Baer (known in Russian as Karl Maksimovich Ber), astronomer Vasilii Struve, and writers such as Vladimir Dal and Vladimir Odoevsky just to name a few. The Society received the title Imperial in 1850. The society's first chair was a son of the emperor Nicholas I, Grand Duke Konstantin. The goal of the Society was to study the Russian Empire, though, as Nathaniel Knight perceptively points out, it occupied "an awkward juncture between the forces of science, empire, and nationality."⁶⁵ There was a discussion within the Society whether it should study the Russian people (Volkskunde) or other peoples (Voelkerkunde). For the ethnographer Baer, the society should explore ethnicities that were about to disappear, but for Litke, and Nadezhdin, it should focus primarily on the study of the Russian people rather than on other ethnicities. The society's Ethnographic Division defined ethnography as "the study of various people living within the current boundaries of the empire."⁶⁶ Thus, the question of national identity and the empire were at stake within the society.

(1838), and in Mexico (1839). By 1892, France had 31 societies, Germany 23, Great Britain 10, Spain 2, and Russia 12. By 1892 there were 902 members in the Russian Imperial Geographical Society; 14 journals were published in Russian on geography. A geographer and cartographer, Iulii Shokal'skii (1856-1940), who wrote the articles on the Geographical Society for the *Brokgauz-Efron Encyclopedia*, stated that the biggest and important societies by 1892 were in Paris, London, Berlin, and St. Petersburg. Besides the branch in St. Petersburg, there were 8 branches all over the empire: in Irkutsk (Eastern Siberian branch, 1851), Tiflis (Caucasian branch, 1851), Orenburg (1867), Omsk (Western Siberian branch, 1877), Khabarovsk (Amur River branch, 1894), Tashkent (Turkestan 1896), Vilnius (Northwestern branch, 1867-1876), and Kiev (Southwestern, 1873-1879). Since 1890, the Society had published a journal entitled *Alive Antiquity* (Zhivaia starina, 1891-1916) that appeared four times a year. The journal published folkloric material on Russians and *inorodtsy* with descriptions of customs, as well as linguistic reports on the peoples of the empire. There were no articles on Jews there, although there were on the Yakut people and other *inorodtsy*. Valikhanov, Bogoraz, Shternberg, and Iokhel'son published their works there. Iu. Shokal'skii, "Geograficheskoe obshchestvo" and "Geograficheskoe obshchestvo imperatorskoe russkoe," in *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, eds. F. A. Brokgauz and I. A. Efron, vol. 8 (St. Petersburg: Semenovskaia tipografiia, 1892), 369-71.

⁶⁵ Nathaniel Knight, "Science, Empire, and Nationality: Ethnography in the Russian Geographical Society, 1845-1855," in *Imperial Russia: New Histories for the Empire*, eds. Jane Burbank and David L. Ransel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 108.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 109.

The tension between the nation and empire are especially transparent in Dostoevsky's *Notes*. Often, the Society employed writers for imperial literary ethnographic exploration.

In 1855, the Grand Duke Konstantin asked the Imperial Russian Naval Ministry to employ writers to document the everyday life of the sea people living in Archangel'sk, Orenburg, Astrakhan', and the Volga area with the purpose of disseminating knowledge about the empire.⁶⁷ Among these realist writers, to name just a few, were Grigorii Danilevskii, Sergei Maksimov, Alexandr Ostrovskii, Aleksei Potekhin, Aleksei Pisemskii, and Mikhail Mikhailov. At the same time, when their reports were published in the journal *Morskoi sbornik*, the ethnographers Baer and Nadezhdin were working on a systematic study of the *inorodtsy* and the Russian people that was published in the society's periodicals. These writers produced very different literary outcomes that reflected their political, ethical and aesthetical positions vis-à-vis Russian subjects.

Outline of the Dissertation

The dissertation project consists of an introduction, four chapters, and a conclusion. Each chapter encompasses one geographic area and one writer-ethnographer who worked within it. This division allows the tracing of the evolution of the genre of literary ethnography across the period from 1845 through 1914. This dissertation begins with the founding of the Russian Geographic Society in St. Petersburg in 1845 with ethnography as one of its main branches. It ends with the World War I, when ethnography turned into a different ideological project.

⁶⁷ Catherine B. Clay, "Russian Ethnographers in the Service of Empire, 1856-1862," *Slavic Review* 54.1 (Spring 1995): 46.

Chapter One, entitled “Gorianchikov’s Epistemological Impasse of Embracing Empire,” explores the link between the proto-ethnographic activities of the former Russian revolutionary populist Fyodor Dostoevsky and his turn to literary ethnographic work while in prison in Omsk, Siberia, from 1849 to 1854. During his imprisonment, Dostoevsky kept a notebook in which he sketched some scenes, proverbs, songs that he learned from his prison-mates; he used some of this material in his *Notes from the House of the Dead*. The novel may be read as an ethnographic survey of the empire in fictional form that gives voice to a variety of characters with the status of colonial subjects including a solitary Jew, Poles, Tatars, Lezgians, and Chechens as well as Ukrainians and Russian peasants. The chapter investigates the intersection of ethnography and fiction, and the representation of the different peoples of the Russian Empire in his semi-autobiographical novel *Notes*. I argue that the novel exemplifies the genre of literary ethnography. It is true that Dostoevsky aimed to subvert certain dimensions of the tsarist regime’s policies toward *inorodtsy* (aliens), but at times his work echoed the regime’s efforts to define its subjects in rigid colonial ways. This chapter relies upon Bakhtin’s notion of heteroglossia. It situates Dostoevsky’s work in the context of the Russian imperial ethnography and his friendship to two prominent ethnographers, Chokan Valikhanov and Petr Semyonov Tian-Shanskii. Dostoevsky’s exploration of the multiethnic subjects of empire, as well as the employment of heteroglossia, is continued in the Siberian exilic writing of Vladimir Korolenko.

Chapter Two, entitled “Embracing Peoples of Empire in Vladimir Korolenko’s Stories,” further examines the genre of literary ethnography by analyzing Korolenko’s stories that he wrote during and after his exile in Yakutiia (1881-1884). Although,

Korolenko's texts share many similarities with Dostoevsky's *Notes*, his treatment of the diverse ethnic groups in his writing is different. The main difference is how the narrator positions himself vis-à-vis the *inorodtsy* and how he structures the narration to describe the ethnic diversity. Korolenko's narrator is all-inclusive; he does not privilege the Russian characters. Rather, he treats equally Jews, Yakuts, and Russian prisoners. The chapter examines the dream of the Yakutified Russian peasant Makar in the short story "Makar's Dream" (1883), the relationship between a nobleman-prisoner towards the peasant prisoner in "Fedor the Homeless" (1885), and the folk beliefs of Russians and Jews in "The Day of Atonement. Yom Kippur" (1890), and "At Night" (1888).

Korolenko was also famous for writing essays and short stories defending the Udmurt people (Votiaks) and Jews against ritual murder accusations. In addition, he wrote about the Gomel' and Kishinev pogroms of 1903. However, he was not able to attend the trial of the Gomel' pogrom in 1904. Instead, his colleague Bogoraz went to document it.

In Chapter Three, "Anthropology Against Injustice: A Literary Investigation of Bogoraz's 'Silhouettes from Gomel','" I analyze Bogoraz's sketches "Silhouettes from Gomel'" as a literary ethnographic text. In 1904, Vladimir Bogoraz went to Gomel', a city in the province of Mogilev, in the southwest corner of the Russian Empire, to document the trial of a bloody pogrom. The work that resulted, "Silhouettes from Gomel'," which Bogoraz published under the pseudonym Tan, gives voice to a diverse gallery of those who participated in the pogrom or witnessed it: Jews, Russians, men, women, children, the elderly, Old Believers, court officials, state rabbi, and injured victims. My chapter represents the first attempt to offer a scholarly analysis of Bogoraz's remarkable work in the context of the history of Jewish-Russian relations and the evolution of the genre of

literary ethnography to which this work belongs. I apply a Bakhtinian reading to Bogoraz, particularly to his practice of presenting a heterogeneous diversity of voices. The sketches were written during the 1904 trial and are based on the testimonies given by the accused, as well as confessions and interviews conducted by Bogoraz himself. The trial became famous due to the publicity surrounding Jewish self-defense efforts. I examine Bogoraz's semi-fictional sketches with reference to the ethnographic experience he acquired prior to going to Gomel'. He employed his scientific ethnographic toolbox and discourse for literary purposes, hence the term literary ethnography. The connection between ethnography and literature is that the former informs the latter, allowing Bogoraz to analyze Russian and Jewish subjects on their own cultural terms, and demonstrate the fluidity of cultural borders.⁶⁸

Similar to Dostoevsky and Korolenko, Bogoraz became an ethnographer during his exile in Siberia (Srednekolym'sk, Yakutiia), where he collected the Russian folklore of the Kolyma area and the language of the Chukchi people. He was the first to write the dictionary of the Chukchi language; he also collected folktales and wrote fiction based on them.⁶⁹ In the sketches, Bogoraz used the discipline of anthropology as it then existed to subvert the Russian chairman's obsolete racial prejudices against the Jews. Bogoraz emphasizes the voices of the Jewish victims of the pogrom whose testimonies during the trial, interviews, and confessions challenged the official narrative of these events. He

⁶⁸ The borders between Russian and Jewish culture are fluid, but the physical borders of the Pale of Settlement, as in the Gomel' pogrom, were fixed, though Benjamin Nathans has shown that people used all kinds of strategies to escape the Pale. See his book *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with the Late Imperial Russia*, Studies on the History of Society and Culture (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

⁶⁹ Bogoraz collected material on Russian dialect in Kolyma songs, proverbs, and tales that he published in *Regional Dictionary of Russian Dialect in Kolyma* (Oblastnoi slovar' kolym'skogo russkogo narechiia, 1901). Here are just several of his works that are based on his studies of the indigenous peoples during his exile in Srednekolym'sk (Yakutiia): "Chukotskie rasskazy" (1899), "Vosem' plemen" (1903), "Zhertvy drakona" (1909), and "Voskresshee plemia" (1935).

offers a factually and discursively supportive narratological matrix that he had already developed while working with the indigenous cultures of Siberia. Bogoraz continued working on Jewish ethnography when he helped An-sky with his *Jewish Ethnographic Program: The Human Being*. Similar to Bogoraz, An-sky was first involved with the Russian populists and then, most likely because of the wave of pogroms, turned to Jewish populism.

In the last Chapter Four, “Looking Through An Ethnographic Lens. An-sky’s *The Dybbuk*: Demonic Possession, Desire, and Death,” I continue exploring the genre of literary ethnography by turning to the bilingual Jewish Russian writer, populist and political leader An-sky. For him, the study of his own people in the Pale during 1912-1914, from whom he had distanced himself, was a conscious project of preserving Jewish cultural knowledge and thereby reviving the past. The preservation of knowledge and the cultivation of national self-awareness were seen as indispensable by both Russian and Jewish populists. It was probably no coincidence that An-sky’s *Jewish Ethnographic Program* focused thoroughly on the family, on the upbringing of a child, education, marriage, family relationships, and death. In addition, I analyze the Russian-language version of An-sky’s play *The Dybbuk* as a potential representation of popular Hasidic culture concerning his ethnographic questions. I argue that his play echoes Russian Silver Age poetics, particularly that of Symbolists. This chapter compares and contrasts An-sky’s ethnography of Hasidic life in the Pale with his contemporary in the Austro-Hungarian Empire - philosopher and writer Martin Buber. The comparative perspective enables me to reveal that the Podolia area of the Pale, particularly the Hasidic (mystical movement) traditional way of life, was a source of literary material for writers across the

imperial borders. An-sky was not the first Jewish ethnographer; rather, he had predecessors, among whom was Buber. However, these two writers treated the stories about Bal Shem Tov, the founder of the Hasidim movement, and Jewish life in a very distinct way. By moving away from the isolated study of Jewish, Russian, and indigenous peoples, I am thus able to examine the diverse literary ethnographic works of the Russian Empire in the comparative perspective.

While literary scholars and historians such as Eugene Avrutin, Nathaniel Deutsch, Jonathan Frankel, Harriet Murav, David Roskies, Gabriella Safran, and Stephen Zipperstein have explored the broad historical context of An-sky's ethnographic expeditions, virtually no studies have explored the comparative dimensions in which Dostoevsky, Korolenko, Bogoraz, and An-sky shared a common employment of the ethnographic method but differed in their goals. Furthermore, most literary studies of these authors have avoided the question of literary ethnography, particularly as a comparative study of Bogoraz's and An-sky's fieldwork.⁷⁰

Recent works on Dostoevsky by Linda Ivanits and Nancy Ruttenburg have shown that Dostoevsky's artistic crisis started with his exile among criminals of different classes (not only peasants but also noblemen) and ethnicities (not only Russians but other peoples of the Russian Empire), and that this eye-opening experience caused him to contemplate the influence of folk traditions and peasant values as significant components

⁷⁰ Eugene Avrutin and Harriet L. Murav, "Introduction: Photographing the Jewish Nation," in *Photographing the Jewish Nation: Pictures from S. An-sky's Ethnographic Expeditions*, eds. Eugene Avrutin, Valerii Dymshits, Alexander Ivanov, Alexander Lvov, Harriet Murav, Alla Sokolova (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2009): 3-25; David G. Roskies, "S. An-sky and the Paradigm of Return," in *The Uses of Tradition: Jewish Continuity in Modern Era*, ed. Jack Wertheimer (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992), 243-60; Gabriella Safran, "Jews as Siberian Natives: Primitivism and S. An-sky's *Dybbuk*," *Modernism/Modernity* 13.4 (2006): 635-55; "Ethnography, Judaism, and the Art of Nikolai Leskov," *The Russian Review* 59 (2000): 235-51.

of Russian self-awareness.⁷¹ However, literary scholars have yet to address the interrelation between ethnography and its literary appropriation. I intend to fill this gap with my dissertation by tracing the evolution of the genre of literary ethnography across these chapters.

⁷¹ Linda J. Ivanits, *Dostoevsky and the Russian People* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Nancy Ruttenburg, *Dostoevsky's Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

Chapter One: Gorianchikov's Epistemological Impasse of Embracing Empire

“Deistvitel'nost' stremitsia k razdrobleniiu.”
Reality aspires towards fragmentation.
*Notes From the House of the Dead*⁷²

By turning to Dostoevsky's proto-ethnographic and semi-fictional *Notes from the House of the Dead* (*Zapiski iz mertvogo doma*) and his publicistic *Diary of the Writer* (*Dnevnik pisatel'ia*), this chapter aims to analyze Dostoevsky's prison experience, which he shared with members of the diverse ethnic peoples of the empire, as an “anthropological experiment,” in Nikolai Berdiaev's words,⁷³ and an ethnographic experience that came to underpin the representation of the colonial subjects in his fiction and journalistic writings after his prison exile. This chapter argues that Dostoevsky's prison experience marked a shift in his depiction of the multiethnic colonial subjects of the empire. This chapter also explores Dostoevsky's representation of the colonial subjects of the empire in the context of his friendship with two prominent members of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society, Chokan Valikhanov, a Kazakh ethnographer and explorer, and Petr Semenov Tian-Shanskii, a prominent Russian explorer.

Dostoevsky's ethnographic fieldwork was involuntarily conducted due to his imprisonment from 1849-1854. As a young man, Dostoevsky was involved with the Petrashevsky circle and was interested in socialist utopian ideas.⁷⁴ This resulted in his arrest and a death sentence that was overturned by the tsar Nicholas I and replaced with four years of prison in the Omsk stockade in Siberia, located approximately 2,300 miles

⁷² PSS 4:197.

⁷³ Nikolai Berdiaev, “Otkrovenie o cheloveke v tvorchestve F.M. Dostoevskogo,” in *Tipy religioznoi mysli v Rossii. Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 3 (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1989), 69.

⁷⁴ For definition of Petrashevsky circle, see “Introduction.”

away from St. Petersburg. After he served four years in the Omsk stockade, he was released and returned to St. Petersburg only in 1859.

When he was in prison, he came into direct contact with the people (*narod*) and the multilingual and multiethnic peoples of the empire that he did not know before. This experience gave him insight into the reality of those on whose behalf he had sought the abolishment of serfdom after he already left the stockade in 1856.⁷⁵ The change in his perception of *inorodtsy* was also due to his favorable attitude to Tsar Alexander II, who proclaimed his intentions of abolishing serfdom around the same time in 1856.

Dostoevsky was also pleased because he learned from his friend Baron Wrangel that he would be granted a rank of a commissioned officer and that he would be allowed to publish. In 1918, almost seventy years later, the philosopher Berdiaev called Dostoevsky the “great anthropologist,” and placed his works in the field of “philosophical anthropology,” the study of human nature and human relationships. In his essay “The Revelation About the Human Being in the Works of F.M. Dostoevsky,” Berdiaev states that

All of his creative works are anthropological experiences and experiments. Dostoevsky is not a realist artist, rather an experimenter, a creator of sophisticated metaphysical human nature. All of Dostoevsky's art is simply a method of anthropological examinations and discoveries.⁷⁶

Vse ego tvorchestvo – antropologicheskie opyty i eksperimenty. Dostoevskii – ne khudozhnik-realist, a eksperimentator, sozdatel' opytnoi metafiziki chelovecheskoi prirody. Vse khudozhestvo Dostoevskogo est' lish' metod antropologicheskikh izyskaniy i otkrytii.

My employment of the term anthropology differs from Berdiaev's in the sense that I use

⁷⁵ Joseph Frank, “A Knight in Female Clothing,” in *Dostoevsky: The Years of Ordeal: 1850-1859* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 207-08.

⁷⁶ Nikolai Berdiaev, “Otkrovenie o cheloveke v tvorchestve F.M. Dostoevskogo,” in *Tipy religioznoi mysli v Rossii. Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 3 (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1989), 69. All translation from Russian into English is mine, unless otherwise noted.

it as a scientific discipline, as it was understood in Dostoevsky's time. Berdiaev uses anthropology in terms of its psychological and existential meaning, whereas I employ it in a scientific sense. Indeed, the novel's treatment of the Muslim Tartar prisoner Alei, of the Jew Isai Fomich Bumshtein, and of the Russian peasant Petrov, actualizes its "anthropological" and "experimental" quality by describing the ways in which these diverse ethnic subjects coexist and interact with one another as well as with the nobleman Gorianchikov. How does, in Berdiaev's words, the method of an anthropological experiment evolve in the prison environment? The experiment begins by describing the wide range of colonial subjects found in the prison that includes Russian peasants (including Old Believers), an only Jew, Bumshtein, six Poles, and three Tatars, and some other ethnicities. In his description, Dostoevsky transforms the prisoners from being voiceless objects into subjects that gain agency in the novel. Though Dostoevsky gives voice to these subjects, that voice is mediated by Aleksandr Petrovich Gorianchikov, a Russian nobleman and an outsider among the criminal and political convicts, the main narrator and author of the *Notes*, who represents the subjects with a fixed ethnographic lens. Gorianchikov distanced himself from the Russian common people and the marginalized *inorodtsy*,⁷⁷ but still presented voices of different ethnic groups. In this dissertation, I focus on Dostoevsky as a colonial ethnographer in his prison memoir-cum-novel, *Notes from the House of the Dead* while acknowledging that the novel may be read, and has been read, as a quasi-documentary investigation of the prison conditions and the different categories of prisoners.

Dostoevsky wrote the *Notes* at a time when the Russian Empire was in the midst

⁷⁷ For a definition and discussion of the term *inorodtsy*, see "Introduction."

of the process of “internal colonization”⁷⁸ but was also expanding southward (cf. the conquest of the Caucasus) and about to embark on the conquest of Central Asia. This was a context within which his position toward imperial discourse was evolved. The prison in Omsk held two hundred and fifty convicts from all parts of Russia.

And what types of people weren't represented here! I think that every province, every area of Russia had its representatives. There were inorodtsy, there were several exiles, even from the Caucasian Mountains.

I kakogo narodu tyt ne bylo! Ia dumaiu, kazhdaia guberniia, kazhdaia polosa Rossii imela tut svoikh predstavitelei. Byli i inorodtsy, bylo neskol'ko ssyl'nykh, dazhe iz kavkazskikh gortsev.”⁷⁹

Gorianshikov attempts to embrace the ethnic diversity at Omsk stockade, describing it in terms of a colonial ethnographer and organizing his fellow convicts into coherent groups. From the very beginning, he divides the convicts into categories based on their crimes, as well as their ethnic and religious backgrounds – groups of Poles, Ukrainians, Old Believers, Tatars, and a single Jew. He does this in a very fragmented way, due to both the great ethnic diversity of the convicts and the narrator's desire to maintain control over the text. He deliberately foregrounds his engagement with the *inorodtsy*, which allows him to gain access to different cultures while still privileging his Russian noble's point of view, and allows his preconceptions to remain largely intact. In addition to classifying

⁷⁸ Alexander Etkind points out that the term “internal colonization” was first used by a German scientist and writer August von Haxthausen who travelled in the Russian provinces in 1844 and wrote about it in his book in *Studien über die innern Zustände, das Volksleben und insbesondere die ländlichen Einrichtungen Russlands* (in English translated as *The Russian Empire, Its People, institutions, and Resources*). See, “Russkaia literatura, XIX vek: Roman vnutrennei kolonizatsii,” *NLO* 59 (2003). On the discussion of Russia colonizing itself, see works by Alexander Etkind: *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011); “Fuko i tezis vnutrennei kolonizatsii: Postkolonial'nyi vzgliad na sovetskoe proshloe,” *NLO* 49 (2001): 50-74; “Bremia britogo cheloveka, ili vnutrenniaia kolonizatsiia Rossii,” *Ab Imperio* 1 (2002): 265-299; “Russkaia literatura, XIX vek: Roman vnutrennei kolonizatsii,” *NLO* 59 (2003); Mark Bassin, *Imperial Visions: Nationalist Imagination and Geographical Expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Nathaniel Knight, “Was Russia Its Own Orient? Reflections On the Contributions of Etkind and Schimmelpennick to the Debate of Orientalism,” *Ab Imperio* 1 (2002): 299-310.

⁷⁹ PSS 4:10.

convicts into ethnic groups, there is also an attempt to organize them according to distinct psychological characteristics. He dwells on the psychological nature of the convicts, and of Petrov in particular, whom I analyze later in this chapter.

From the ethnically undifferentiated cast of characters in such pre-exile works as *Poor Folk* and *White Nights*, to post-exilic novels in which the characters invariably included representatives of the diverse ethnic groups of the empire, the tension between the reality of the imperial project and the imperial imaginary is always present.⁸⁰ The *Notes* depict prison as a microcosm of an empire, as Gary Saul Morson and Anne Dwyer have argued, populated by different classes, professions, ages, religions, ethnicities, and different types of prisoners (criminal and political).⁸¹ The microcosm embodies contradictions between the centripetal and centrifugal discourses and sociolects of the non-Russian subjects of empire. Dostoevsky's "anthropological experiment" was the result of an enforced cohabitation with diverse social groups in an enclosed space that provided ethnographic descriptions of the everyday life (*byt*) of the convicts. These two layers of interpersonal relationships and the personal practices constitute two complementary discursive narrative approaches of the *Notes*. Dostoevsky also described the experience as a "subject" – that is, as someone describing his own everyday life and hardships. Berdiaev's philosophical definition of Dostoevsky's works as an "anthropological experiment" stresses the mimetic content of the *Notes*. I, in turn, build my definition of the work upon this "experiment" by singling out three distinct

⁸⁰ I define imperial imaginary in "Introduction."

⁸¹ Gary Saul Morson refers to Gorianchikov's life in the stockade as a "Russia in microcosm." *The Boundaries of Genre: Dostoevsky's Diary of a Writer and the Tradition of Literary Utopia* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 10. Anne Dwyer in her article describes *Notes* as a "Russian microcosm." "Dostoevsky's Prison House of Nation(s): Genre Violence in *Notes from the House of the Dead*," *The Russian Review* 71 (2012): 210.

dimensions of the *Notes*: the paradigmatic, syntagmatic, and reportorial axes of the text.⁸²

The paradigmatic dimension refers to the fragmented structure of the text, to cultural transfers and transactions as exemplified in the main protagonist, Gorianchikov, who embodies cultural imperial power and exercises it by educating prisoners, and the way in which he circumscribes them within the larger imperial project. The syntagmatic aspect of the *Notes* refers to Gorianchikov's individual interactions with the colonial subjects - their culture, language, and religion. These three dimensions are each founded on their own set of rules. The paradigmatic refers to rules governing crosscultural and crossreligious identifications, cultural transfers as exemplified first of all by Gorianchikov, but also by other characters who in turn relate to Gorianchikov as a foreigner, an outsider, the Other. Gorianchikov selects, edits and interprets the selection on the paradigmatic levels, the utterances of his informants. The text illustrates meta-experiments that consist of a number of quantifiable cultural transactions between the imperially informed, such as Gorianchikov, and the colonial Others who receive voice through his selected representation. This latter brings us to the third dimension – the

⁸² I employ the terms paradigmatic and syntagmatic by equivalence to their linguistic meaning. It was Ferdinand de Saussure who first made a distinction between the “syntagmatic” and “associative” (also called paradigmatic) relationships between the words in a language. Roman Jakobson builds his work on poetic language upon this dichotomy in his essay “The Linguistic Problems of Aphasia” and “Twofold Character of Language” (1956). Under paradigmatic is understood the relationship between the words that are associated with or could be substituted by a similar group of words (synonyms and antonyms); or on the level of a phoneme, one makes a distinction between the contrastive pairs because they form different meanings (homonyms: hairy vs. Harry; phonemes p vs. f – pig vs. fig - Jakobson's examples). Jakobson calls this type of word grouping a “vertical selection” that is the basis for the metaphor. Metaphor is used not in the sense of the trope, but rather as the organizing mechanism of the poetic language. The “syntagmatic” relationship organizes words into larger structures, sentences, by combining words based on the rules of “contiguity,” i.e. the syntactical rules that make the structure of the sentence. Jakobson calls this “horizontal combination.” The connection based on “contiguity” is the foundation for metonymy which, as Jakobson states, is prevalent in prose. The connection based on “similarity” corresponds to metaphor that is a characteristic of poetry. Roman Jakobson, “Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances,” in *On Language*, eds. Linda R. Waugh and Monique Monville-Burston (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 115-33.

reportorial. Gorianchikov's discourse exemplifies the congruence of the imperial power of the Russian language that covers its colonized subjects, and the narrative aspect.

This chapter relies upon Mikhail Bakhtin's conceptual framework to analyze diverse, often conflicting, unstable, and fragmented voices that constitute dialogism and what he called *heteroglossia* (*raznorechie*). He defines the novel as "a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized."⁸³ Bakhtin's definition of the novel contains stylistic elements that are prevalent and essential characteristics for the hybrid genre of the sketches of *Notes*. For the purpose of this analysis, the definition of the heteroglossia as well as the distinction between it and polyphony is crucial.

Bakhtin's Heteroglossia and Hybridity

Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) was arrested in 1928 for participating in the religious and philosophical circle "Voskresenie" ("Resurrection"). He produced his critical work on the novel *Discourse in the Novel* (*Slovo v romane*, 1934-35), as well as work on chronotope, carnival, and Rabelais in exile in Kostanai, Kazakhstan, only four hundred miles west of Omsk, where Dostoevsky was imprisoned. Although Bakhtin published his *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (*Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo*, 1929), prior to his arrest, he did not analyze the *Notes* in his works. Even though one could argue that the text exemplifies some of the polyphonic techniques, the fact that most of the narration and voices presented in the *Notes* are fragmented and appear to be disconnected would not illustrate polyphony, but rather heteroglossia. The difference

⁸³ M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 262.

between heteroglossia and polyphony is that the latter engages with and treats every voice equally.

In *Discourse in the Novel*, Bakhtin states that the “multiple styles” (“mnogostil’nost’”), “heteroglossia” (raznorechivost’) and “Babel of languages” (“raznogolositsa”) are the defining stylistic practices of the novel, which is characterized by “internal multilayeredness of the speech, its social heteroglossia and individual dissonance” (“vnutrenniaia rassloennost’ iazyka, ego sotsial’naia raznorechivost’ i individual’naia raznogolositsa”).⁸⁴ Although *Notes* is ostensibly not a novel, the above characteristics are the building blocks of the work and all stylistic elements are present in the text.

What is most significant are the multilayeredness and heteroglossia (rassloennost’ i raznorechie) of the novelistic text and its dynamic, which also embody the centripetal (tsentrostremitel’nye) and centrifugal (tsentrobezhnnye) forces that destabilize, “disunite” (raz’edenenie) and, paradoxically, “unify” (ob’edinenie) the language.⁸⁵ The novel entails “the speaking persons with their ideological discourse (slovo), with their language (iazyk).”⁸⁶ Whereas the novel exhibits the centrifugal dynamic, logic, and semantic and ideological decentralization, the genre of poetry, with its national ambitions, aspires towards unity.⁸⁷ A useful corollary to the Bakhtinian reading of the novel is Roman Jakobson’s classification of poetry and prose as respectfully metaphorical and

⁸⁴ M. Bakhtin, “Slovo v romane,” in *Voprosy literatury i estetiki* (Moscow: “Khudozhestvennaia literatura,” 1975), 75-78.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 85.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 145.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 86.

metonymical.⁸⁸ Bakhtin goes on to say that folk poetry that is cited at “the market booths and trade fairs was saturated with heteroglossia of buffoonery (*shutovskoe raznorechie*), with ridiculing of all the languages and dialects.”⁸⁹ In other words, it subverted the “official language,” the centripetal forces. At the market performances “all languages were masks, where there was no one true and decisive speaker of a language (*iazykovogo litsa*).”⁹⁰ Henceforth, according to Bakhtin, heteroglossia was not only a form of destabilizing the center of the national literary language, but it also was the direct and conscious opposition of it. Heteroglossia was “parodic and polemically sharpened against the official languages of the present times. It was dialogized heteroglossia” (“*parodiino i polemicheskii zaostreno protiv ofitsial’nykh iazykov sovremennosti. Ono bylo dialogizovannym raznorechiem*”).⁹¹ The “dialogized heteroglossia,” or dialogue of languages (*dialog iazykov*), is fundamentally grounded in Bakhtin’s understanding of the “internal dialogical nature of the discourse” (*vnutrenniaia dialogichnost’ slova*), which is always oriented towards the receptor, the interlocutor, and “the deep influence of the anticipated answer” (*glubokogo vliianiia predvoskhishchaemogo otvetnogo slova*).⁹² Polyphony, in turn, consists of the “multiplicity of independent and discrete voices and perceptions (*soznanii*)” and contains a “multiplicity of equal senses (*soznanii*).”⁹³ The distinction between the polyphony and heteroglossia is that the former treats all voices equally, whereas the latter does the opposite - it shows the clash of diverse languages,

⁸⁸ Roman Jakobson, “Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances,” in *On Language*, eds. Linda R. Waugh and Monique Monville-Burstin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 115-33.

⁸⁹ M. Bakhtin, “Slovo v romane,” in *Voprosy literatury i estetiki* (Moscow: “Khudozhestvennaia literatura,” 1975), 86.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 86.

⁹¹ Ibid., 86.

⁹² Ibid., 92-93.

⁹³ M. Bakhtin, *Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1963), 7.

social origins of characters, and ethnic backgrounds. In the polyphonic novel the characters are “not only the objects of the authorial voice, they are subjects of their own immediate meaningful discourse.”⁹⁴ In heteroglossia, the divide between the languages and the authorial voice (subject) and characters (object) is more prevalent. It embraces centripetal and centrifugal linguistic forces, i.e. the linguistic clash of official and unofficial languages. Henceforth, heteroglossia is introduced into the text through the inclusion of hybrid constructions. It implies that a character’s speech is comprised of “two diverse expressions, two manners of speech, two styles, two ‘languages,’ of two meaningful and insightful views.”⁹⁵ Bakhtin singles out three stylistic practices that create the language of the novel: 1. Hybridization; 2. Dialogic relation among the languages, and 3. Pure dialogue.⁹⁶ He stresses that hybridization “materializes in the images of the speaking persons, or as a dialogic background.”⁹⁷ For Bakhtin, heteroglossia is the stylistic mode employed by the narrator. He gives the following examples of famous narrators, such as “Maksim Maksimych (*Hero of Our Time*), [Gogol’s] Rudyi Pan’ko, the narrator of the “Nose” and the “Overcoat,” Dostoevsky’s chroniclers (khronikery), folkloric characters and narrators of Mel’nikov-Pecherskii, Mamin-Sibiriak, Leskov’s folkloric and popular narrators (*bytovye rasskazchiki*) [...].”⁹⁸ The speech of these narrators, Bakhtin continues, is an “outsider speech” (*chuzhaia rech’*) because it is juxtaposed against the literary language that it is contrasted with. Gorianchikov’s discourse (*slovo*) is always contrasted against the different languages of

⁹⁴ Ibid., 7.

⁹⁵ M. Bakhtin, “Slovo v romane,” in *Voprosy literatury i estetiki* (Moscow: “Khudozhestvennaia literatura,” 1975), 117-18.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 172.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 172.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 127.

the multilingual convicts. His discourse incorporates the “outsider speech” and gives him textual validity. My employment of the term incorporates Bakhtin’s definition of heteroglossia with its hybridity and extends it not only to the narrator, but also to the characters’ dialogues and to their direct speech. Gorianchikov privileges only his voice and views; he treats the convicts as objects; they are deprived of their agency because their speeches are mediated.

Homi Bhabha draws upon Bakhtin’s definition of hybridity and applies it to colonial power structures, showing ultimately that these power structures produce hybridity. He states that hybridity is a subversive power that challenges and disrupts the dominant rule. The inclusion of two distinct voices, the colonialist and the colonized, does not “resolve the tension between two cultures,” but “creates a crisis for any concept of authority based on the system of recognition [...] it is always the split, the self and its doubling.”⁹⁹ The crisis of authority is illustrated in my readings when I analyze the relationship between Gorianchikov and his cellmates.

The first four chapters of the *Notes* were published in the journal *Russian World* (*Russkii mir*) in 1860 and then the whole work appeared in the journal *Vremia* (*Time*, 1861-63) in 1861-62, which was founded by Dostoevsky and his brother Mikhail. Readers successfully received *Notes*, though a year later the journal was closed because of Nikolai Strakhov’s pro-Polish article “Rokovoi vopros” (“A Fateful Question,” 1863) on the occasion of the Polish Uprising of 1863. As Edyta Bojanowska argues, Dostoevsky, who assigned the critic Strakhov to write the article, had “a democratic or tolerant phase” towards the imperial subjects of the Russian empire during that time, including a positive attitude towards Poles, and his views “ran counter to the opinions of

⁹⁹ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 162.

both the government and the vocal nationalists of the Slavophile and conservative orientation.”¹⁰⁰ She continues that the April issue of the journal had “a broad-based proposal, complete with theoretical underpinnings and policy implication, for restructuring the Russian empire into one based on tolerance and the consent of its constituent populations.”¹⁰¹ However, Dostoevsky and Strakhov defended their positions, stating that they were misunderstood and denying that the article undermined Russians and privileged Poles, though Joseph Frank argues that Strakhov’s language was so ambiguous that his position could be easily misinterpreted. Bojanowska, in turn, disagrees, showing textual evidence that Strakhov employed language clearly arguing that Poles were more “civilized” than “barbarian” Russians and therefore should be independent.¹⁰² Ultimately, Bojanowska shows that for Dostoevsky and Strakhov the very question of Russian national identity is defined against the Polish question.¹⁰³

This anxiety about imperial national identity and its relationship towards the *inorodtsy* is the prevalent theme in the *Notes*. Gorianchikov’s experience in the stockade with the aliens is reminiscent of Dante’s journey through Hell. This rereading of the established canon of critical interpretation is my point of departure for *Notes*. The aim of this chapter is to read *Notes* as a revealing tension and paradox within Gorianchikov’s coexistence with the common people, Russians, and the *inorodtsy*. Even though there are tension and rupture in him being recognized by his own people, the Russian *narod*, and the *inorodtsy*, he needs them as the Other, in the Bakhtinian sense of the dialogue, who is his listener and the one who nurtures his self. This rupture points towards Dostoevsky’s

¹⁰⁰Edyta Bojanowska, “Empire by Consent: Strakhov, Dostoevskii, and the Polish Uprising of 1863,” *Slavic Review* 71.3 (Spring 2012): 3.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰² Ibid., 7-9.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 11.

emergent Russian nationalism, which privileges Russian needs at the expense of *inorodtsy*.

Dostoevsky's failed attempt to embrace and represent the multiethnic diversity of the empire situates *Notes* as an ethnographic project. No other work of his contained such ethnic diversity as the *Notes*. Several recent publications by Sarah Hudspith, Nancy Ruttenburg, Linda Ivanits, Robin Feuer Miller, and Susan McReynolds explore Dostoevsky's *Notes*.¹⁰⁴ In a recent article, Anne Dwyer examines Dostoevsky's "generic and narrative strategies" for representing the "microcosm of Russian Empire" in the Omsk stockade, focusing on the enigmatic nature of both the Russian people (*narod*) and non-Russian subjects.¹⁰⁵ In it, she asserts that the prison represented the "microcosm of the Russian Empire," taking for granted and leaving unanswered what exactly constitutes the Russian people, empire and nation, and what this "microcosm" includes and excludes.¹⁰⁶ It was a significant intervention because Dostoevsky was occupied with the question of what encompassed Russianness and what the Russian mission should be. If the microcosm was represented by several Tatars, Poles, old-Believers, Ukrainians, Caucasian mountaineers and a single Jew, where then are the voices of peoples of Siberia, Germans, Byelorussians, Estonians, Lithuanians, Finns, or Swedes, just to name a few, and where are the voices of women and children? Olga Maiorova argues that the Russian people were only a component of the Russian empire, shifting her attention to an

¹⁰⁴ These five authors explore Dostoevsky's representation of the Russian people: Sarah Hudspith, *Dostoevsky and the Idea of Russianness: A New Perspective on Unity and Brotherhood* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2004); Nancy Ruttenburg, *Dostoevsky's Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Linda J. Ivanits, *Dostoevsky and the Russian People* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Susan McReynolds, *Redemption and the Merchant God: Dostoevsky's Economy of Salvation and Antisemitism* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008); and Robin Feuer Miller, *Dostoevsky's Unfinished Journey* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

¹⁰⁵ Anne Dwyer, "Dostoevsky's Prison House of Nation(s): Genre Violence in *Notes from the House of the Dead*," *The Russian Review* 71 (2012): 210.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 209.

analysis of who is and is not Russian, what constituted Russian national characteristics and traditions, and what should be the position of the Russian people as a whole vis-à-vis the rest of the population of the empire.¹⁰⁷ However, Maiorova's assumption of a singular Russian people ignores their ethnic differences, and presupposes that the empire was more real than the supposed ethnic divisions within it. It could well be that what we understand to be Russian was profoundly affected by what happened among Jewish, Polish, and Turkic peoples; and similarly, that these other groups would find their identity to be inextricably linked with the identity of Russian Jews, and so on. However, as could be deduced from Maiorova's book, such a view did not serve the interests of social reformers who tried to build up nationalist movements such as were occurring in Europe. What distinguishes the Russian case from that of Western European models of nationalism was that it could not be characterized as a process of purely administrative homogenization (France, England, Germany), or as a liberation struggle (the Czechs, the Irish, and the Serbs). Instead, it was an administrative attempt to manage identities by multiplying them rather than homogenizing them into a single identity.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, Maiorova distinguished between patriotism and nationalism. The former was loyalty to the imperial ruler (tsar), while the latter was loyalty to the Russian people as a whole. However, she also remarks that during the times of Great Reforms these terms overlapped.¹⁰⁹

This chapter argues that despite Dostoevsky's representation of a multiethnic imperial diversity in prison and his giving voice to colonial subjects, his desire for

¹⁰⁷ Olga Maiorova, "Introduction: Cultural Myth and National Self-Perception in the Turbulent Reform Era," in *From the Shadow of Empire: Defending the Russian Nation through Cultural Mythology, 1855-1870* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 3-25.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 14.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 28.

cultural homogeneity undermined his ability to recognize and accept ethnic and cultural differences. This chapter shows that the ethnic and cultural diversity of the empire was filtered through the Russian lens of the noble-class (*dvorianin*) narrator, Gorianchikov, whose fragmented depiction of the prison as a microcosm cannot be reduced to a small sample of fictionally constructed characters whose agencies are contingent upon an unreliable narrator. Moreover, as Dwyer argued, the representation of prison as a microcosm of ethnic diversity goes hand in hand with the question of the ambiguous nature of the genre of the *Notes*, that “the multiple forms it engages is inherently violent, as it launches and then aborts forays into various genres, discursive registers, and literary modes.”¹¹⁰ What Dwyer called the ambiguity or “violence of the genre” I call the “hybridity of genre,” using Bakhtin’s concept, and “hybrid textual activity,” using James Clifford’s term, because *Notes* spoke to and drew upon multiple experiences of the diverse ethnic population and engaged with a variety of discourses, including: penal, legal, medical, colonial, cultural, and literary.

The question of the genre of *Notes* has long been debated. Viktor Shklovskii called it a “documentary novel” (*dokumental'nyi roman*).¹¹¹ Following Shklovskii, Georgii Fridlender pointed to the uniqueness of the *Notes*, calling it “an autobiographical sketch genre” (*avtobiograficheski-ocherkovyi zhanr*) that was distinct only because Dostoevsky’s later novels relied on fictional plots (*vymyshlennyi*) rather than the witnessed and lived experiences that he presented.¹¹² Shklovskii argued that Dostoevsky’s early work *Poor Folk* (1844-45) had the status of being “in-between”

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 210.

¹¹¹ Viktor Shklovskii, *Za i protiv* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1957), 123.

¹¹² Georgii Fridlender, “Put' Dostoevskogo ot 'Bednykh liudei' k romanam 60-kh godov,” in *Istoriia russkogo romana. V dvukh tomakh* (Moscow: Izadatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1962), 428.

(promezhutochnoe); as in between the genres of the long short story (povest') and the novel, and in a way that lays the foundation for his major novels.¹¹³ The relationship between "fictional" and "nonfictional" becomes an essential quality of the literary ethnographic texts that are examined in this dissertation. However, the classification of the genre of the *Notes* is contingent upon the reader's definition of its functions. In this chapter, I will describe the qualities that characterize the genre of *Notes* rather than attempt to define it. A similar hybrid genre with elements of sketch, narrative fragmentation, and the abrupt endings of the *Notes* was employed by Vladimir Bogoraz in his semi-fictional work on the Gomel' pogrom that also blended elements of investigative journalism with fiction.

In his pre-exile works, Dostoevsky represented marginal urban dwellers with distorted psychologies: Devushkin is a dreamer, a little man (malen'kii chelovek); Goliadkin represents the psychology of a loner type, of an underground man. As Fridlender put it, since Dostoevsky's first novella (povest') *Poor Folk*, he was constructing a "socio-psychological" character relying upon Gogolian influences of *Notes of a Madman* (1835) and *The Overcoat* (1842).¹¹⁴ This trend of bringing to the center of a literary work the little man, as Fridlender pointed out, constituted the "democratic tendencies" of Dostoevsky's early works, as well as the genre of the long-short story (povest') that these characters (Devushkin and Goliadkin) inhabit.¹¹⁵ Neither Devushkin nor Goliadkin could be the protagonists of the novel because of their epistemological limitations and their downtrodden nature and narrow-mindedness. Their engagement with

¹¹³ Ibid., 416-17. *Povest'* is also translated as short novel, though I would use the term novella to avoid confusion.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 418-19.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 420.

the outside world is confined by their societal status and their worldview. In *White Nights* (1848) and his unfinished novel *Netochka Nezvanova* (1849), Dostoevsky moved towards the “sentimental novel” (“sentimental’nyi roman”)¹¹⁶ by representing reflective characters actively participating in and intellectually engaged with the outside world and in such a way that Devushkin’s and Varen’ka’s limited capacities are highlighted.

Dostoevsky was not the only one during his time and earlier who experimented with genre. Rousseau’s *Confessions* (1769) was the foundational text of literary autobiography in Western and Russian literature. Alexandr Herzen’s *My Past and Thoughts* (*Byloe i dumy*, 1852-68) and Sergei Aksakov’s *Family Chronicle* (*Semeinaia khronika*, 1856) and *Childhood Years of Bagrov the Grandson* (*Detskie gody Bagrovavnuka*, 1856) could be classified as hybrid texts because they combined memoirs with philosophical, socio-political, and literary discourses. In Fridlender’s words, this implies the co-occurrence of “poetry” (*poezii*) and “truth” (*pravdy*).¹¹⁷ Thus, the emergence of hybrid genres was not attributed to the idiosyncratic nature of the literary work. Rather, it was conditioned by historical and social events and was a consistent feature (*zakonomernost’*) of the literature of the 1850s and ‘60s. Moreover, Fridlender argued that employment of “sketches” allowed Dostoevsky to position (*ustanovka*) his narrator in such a way as to make the reader perceive the characters as true (*deistvitel’nyimi*) rather than made up (*vymyshlennye*), hence his employment of a non-canonical genre.

Fridlender pointed out that due to Dostoevsky’s belief in *pochvennichestvo* in early 1860s,¹¹⁸ his representation of the psychology of the *narod* (people) was one-sided

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 420.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 426.

¹¹⁸ *Pochvennichestvo* (from the Russian *pochva*, soil and foundation) was a social and cultural non-violent movement that aimed to improve the conditions of the peasants and bring the educated Russian class closer

(*odnostoronne*). Nevertheless, this set the pattern for him including folk characters (*narod*) in his later works.¹¹⁹ Even though *narod* was the “soil” of the nation, Dostoevsky still treated it with a certain bias, presenting it as meek and humble, without any agency. Therefore, characters from the common people (*narod*) are presented as conventional (Lizaveta, Mikolka, and Sonia Marmeladova, who is from impoverished nobility; Mar’ia Timofeevna from *Demons* and Makar Dolgorukov from *The Raw Youth*).

The writer and lexicographer and the member of the Russian Geographical Society, Vladimir Dal, gave the following definitions of *narod* in his famous dictionary:

people born in the same territory; people, in general; tribe, language; citizens of the country that speak one language; inhabitants of the state, country that are governed by the same government; mob (*chern’*); common folk; the lower classes (*nizshie*), tax-paying estates (*podatnye sosloviia* – townspeople and peasants).¹²⁰

Dal’s definition of *narod* is broad; it includes people that share the same language and at the same time, people that are of different social classes. My employment of the *narod* signifies peasants, mostly rural people of a lower class standing socially and economically below the nobility.

The demand for national themes emerged in Russian literature during the embrace of Romanticism, the nature of which was very much influenced by German and English Romanticism.¹²¹ Russian and Jewish writer-ethnographers believed that the people –

to the common people, peasants, in order to create “a new Russian cultural synthesis,” a pan-human unity. Joseph Frank calls Dostoevsky’s journal *Time* and *Epoch* the “mouthpieces” of this movement. Joseph Frank, “A New Movement: Pochvennichestvo,” in *The Stir of Liberation: 1860-1865* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 34-35, 37.

¹¹⁹ Georgii Fridlender, “Put’ Dostoevskogo ot ‘Bednykh liudei’ k romanam 60-kh godov,” in *Istoriia russkogo romana. V dvukh tomakh* (Moscow: Izadetel’s tvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1962), 429.

¹²⁰ Vladimir Dal, *Tolkovy slovar’ zhivogo velikorusskogo iazyka*, vol. 2 (St. Petersburg: Izdanie T-va M. O. Vol’f, 1905), 1201.

¹²¹ For the discussion of the history of the concept *narod* and *narodnost’*, see Katya Hokanson, “Literary Imperialism, Narodnost’ and Pushkin’s Invention of the Caucasus,” *Russian Review*, 53 (1994): 336-352; Victor Terras, “Narodnost’,” in *Handbook of Russian Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 293. For an overview of Russian Romanticism, see Lauren Leighton, *Russian Romanticism: Two Essays* (Mouton: The Hague, 1975). For the connection between Russian populism and *narod*, see

narod in Russian and *folk* in Yiddish – embodied a group devoid of Western influences or cultural assimilation, and thus pursued the study of this identity through investigations of folkloric heritage. Scholars Alexander Etkind and Nathaniel Knight state that Russian Imperial ethnographic study looked at non-Russian peoples of the Russian Empire and Russian peasants as the Other.¹²² Etkind argues that “cultural and religious constructions” of difference in describing peasants as the Other were more significant than the differences based on ethnic and linguistic constructions.

Recent Dostoevsky scholars Linda Ivanits and Nancy Ruttenburg argue that Dostoevsky’s exposure to common rural people in his exile had a transformative effect on him.¹²³ In his diary he wrote that he learned the essence of the people, that he knew them better than anyone else and that he had learned everything he could about them. What exactly he learned would become clear through his fictional realization of *narod*. During his time in prison, Dostoevsky kept a notebook, the so-called, “Siberian Notebook” (“Sibirskaiia tetrad”), in which he jotted down 522 short entries (proverbs, expressions, scenes, songs, etc.), out of which 200 were used in his *Notes*.¹²⁴ This aspect of collecting prison folklore highlights the ethnographic nature of the text. Later in this

Alexander Etkind, “Whirling with the Other: Russian Populism and Religious Sects,” *The Russian Review* 62 (2003): 565-88. The term *narod* should not be confused with *narodnost’*. The term *narodnost’* refers to popular or national elements; it was first introduced by Petr Viazemsky and Orest Somov between 1819 and 1822. If for Viazemsky, *narodnost’* meant “national” and “popular” and denoted only Russianness, for the critic Orest Somov – in line with Herder’s idea – Russianness was defined by language, and thus the language could also describe the colonial subjects of the Empire.

¹²² Ibid., 566-67. Nathaniel Knight, “Science, Empire, and Nationality: Ethnography in the Russian Geographical Society, 1845-1855,” in *Imperial Russia: New Histories for the Empire*, eds. Jane Burbank and David L. Ransel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 108-41; Nathaniel Knight, “Constructing the Science of Nationality: Ethnography in Mid-Nineteenth Century Russia” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1995).

¹²³ Linda J. Ivanits, *Dostoevsky and the Russian People* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Nancy Ruttenburg, *Dostoevsky’s Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

¹²⁴ PSS 4: 275.

chapter, during the close readings of the characters' speeches from *Notes*, I will show the expressions and proverbs that came from the "Siberian Notebook."

Notes constructed an ethnographic notion of Russian empire by giving voices to its colonial subjects including Ukrainians, Poles, one Jew, Tatars from Dagestan, Chechens, and Lezgians. However, in his later novels and *Diary of the Writer the Russian*, "God-bearing" people, as Shatov declared in *Demons*, were given precedence over the *inorodtsy*. In his following works – the theme of ethnicity and intersection of varied imperial discourses is ever-present. Only in the *Notes* does he give the reader an ethnographic imperial tour of the different colonial parts of the empire;¹²⁵ these problematics of Empire vis-à-vis ethnicity lie at the center of narrative proceedings.

In addition to psychological classification, Gorianchikov divides the convicts into physical and occupational categories. He describes how types (*razriady*) of convicts were distinguished by the coats they were wearing and the ways in which their heads were shaved. Among the professions were "shoemakers, cobblers, tailors, woodworkers, locksmiths [...]." ¹²⁶ And among all of them the narrator singles out the Jew, Isai Fomich Bumshtein, a "pawnbroker and jeweler." ¹²⁷ All prisoners were earning a kopeck and working hard, because "money is a freedom earned through hard labour, and that is why for a man deprived absolutely of freedom, it is worth ten times more" "[d]en'gi est' chekannaia svoboda, a potomu dlia cheloveka, lishennogo sovershenno svobody, oni dorozhe vdesiat'ero." Not only money contributes to freedom, but work is also a remedy that saved convicts from committing further crimes.

¹²⁵ Right after prison, Dostoevsky wrote two novellas *Uncle's Dream* (Diadiushkin son, 1859) and *The Village of Stepanchikovo* (Selo Stepanchikovo i ego obitateli, 1859).

¹²⁶ Ibid., 17.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 17.

Next, I turn to the ethnographic aspects of the “Dead House” (“Mertvyi dom”), as Gorianchikov calls the prison (*ostrog*). Ethnographic elements are present in the details of everyday prison life, with its “own special world [...] of laws, clothing, morals and customs.”¹²⁸ “Tut byl svoi osobyi mir, ni na chto bollee ne pokhozhii, tut byli svoi osoby zakony, svoi kostiumy, svoi nrawy i obychai [...]”¹²⁹ Although one would think that prison would eliminate class hierarchy, social order is maintained and their individuality is preserved through religious practices, speech, and beliefs, among other things. Ethnography remains inseparable from the anthropological experiment, in Berdiaev’s definition, as Gorianchikov states the idea that “a man is a being who gets accustomed to everything,” “chelovek est' sushchestvo ko vsemu privykaiushchee.”¹³⁰ Prison, in Gorianchikov’s view as an anthropological experiment, underscored how the rules, laws, and class hierarchy that enabled convicts to survive despite the hellish (*ad*) nature of their confinement provided a social foundation for the “dead house.”

One of the ethnographic aspects is Gorianchikov’s realization of the multifaceted nature of the Russian common people (*narod*). The narrator demystifies the notion of the illiterate common people; on the contrary, half of the convicts are literate.

“We are literate people!” [...] this people was indeed literate and even not in the figurative, but in the literal sense. Probably, more than half of them could read and write. In what other place, where Russians get together in huge masses, would you pick out a group of two hundred fifty people, half of which are literate?

“My – narod gramotnyi!” [...] etot narod byl deistvitel'no gramotnyi i dazhe ne v perenosnom, a v bukval'nom smysle. Naverno, bolee poloviny iz nikh umelo chitat' i pisat'. V kakom drugom meste, gde russkii narod sobiraetsia v bol'shikh massakh, otelite vy ot nego kuchu v dvesti piat'desiat chelovek, iz kotorykh

¹²⁸ Ibid., 9.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 9.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 10. Almost a century later, the German writer Eric Kästner (1899-1974) in the novel *Fabian* (1931) would reiterate this observation as “der Mensch ist ein Gewohnheitstier.”

polovina byla by gramotnykh?¹³¹

The narrator views this level of literacy as a positive factor, admitting, in contrast to those who claimed that educating the serfs would destroy them, that it indeed benefited the people by giving them confidence (*samonadeiannost'*). Throughout the *Notes*, Dostoevsky foregrounds fragmentation through his brief encounters with the diverse ethnic population of the stockade. Moreover, he doesn't capture the characters' development over a long time period, something that the novel would do. Rather, he presents a sketch – or a slice of the characters' dramatic experiences – that describe their crimes, their punishments, and their everyday lives in the prison, without letting the reader know what would happen with these convicts after their release.

Throughout the text, Gorianchikov discharges a heteroglossic function by rearticulating voices of other characters, which are then filtered through his Russian colonial lens. These refracted stories often illustrate the multilingual environment in the stockade. To illustrate the function of *heteroglossia*, of multiple languages and idiolects in the *Notes*, I will present several voices of convicts: a Dagestan Tatar named Alei, a peasant Petrov and a Jewish convert Isai Bumshtein.

Educating Alei: Reading the Bible

The positive aspects of literacy are described when Gorianchikov teaches a Russian colonial subject, a Dagestan Tatar named Alei, to read and write. Alei is a Muslim, around twenty-two years old, whose plank-bed is next to Gorianchikov's. He had a “beautiful, open, smart and at the same time amiable and naïve face” that attracted Gorianchikov, who confessed that meeting him was “one of the best encounters in [his]

¹³¹ Ibid., 12.

life.”¹³² With his two older brothers, who had involved him in a robbery, he was condemned to four years of hard labor (*katorzhnye raboty*). Similar to the Jew Isai Fomich, the Muslim brothers are relieved from mandatory work during their religious holidays, though their depictions are extremely different from the comic depiction of the Jew. Gorianchikov teaches Alei to read and write using the New Testament, the only book allowed in the stockade. After three months he was able to understand the Old Church Slavonic of the Bible.¹³³ However Gary Rosenshield argues that Alei’s depiction is carried out in the hagiographic tradition and that “the religious practices of the Muslim brothers are more positively presented than those of Russian Orthodox,” and of Judaism.¹³⁴

There is a diagetic tension in Alei’s representation that makes that hagiographic reading of this text characteristic, both because Gorianchikov teaches the Old Church Slavonic language to him, and more importantly because of the way how he positions himself to Alei through instruction. The fact that Gorianchikov educates, Russifies, and civilizes Alei illustrates a colonial attempt in spreading knowledge in one direction, while refusing to learn about Muslim culture, except in the most basic way. There is also an element of diversion when Gorianchikov teaches Alei, as well as a transaction of power because he is training Alei in the subversion of colonial subjects. In fact, the reader does not learn as much about Muslim holidays as he does about the Jewish Sabbath, though Gorianchikov mentions briefly Nurra, a Muslim Lezgian, a pious man who prays and fasts before the holidays.

¹³² Ibid., 51-52.

¹³³ Ibid., 53.

¹³⁴ Gary Rosenshield, “Religious Portraiture in Dostoevsky’s ‘Notes from the House of the Dead’: Representing the Abrahamic Faiths,” *Slavic & East European Journal* 4 (Winter 2006): 582.

The text also exhibits contingency, fragmentation, and the disintegrating nature of the empire vis-à-vis its own Russian and multiethnic subjects. The Russian empire presides only on the level of power of language. Its existence and definition are contingent upon the characters' perspectives, class identities, levels of education, and varying legal treatment within the empire, as well as whether they are the representatives of the Russian noble class, such as Gorianchikov, or a Russian soldier, the cantonist Petrov, who comes with some schooling, or a Muslim boy named Alei, who neither speaks nor reads Russian. These multiple articulations of what constitutes the Russian empire point to the fragmented nature and the heterogenous status of the imperial project. Gorianchikov continues to further educate the convicts, as he does with another prisoner – Petrov.

Petrov and Antipodes

The prisoner Petrov is a “cantonist and literate” (*kantonist i gramotnyi*), “the most decisive of all the convicts” (*samyi reshitel'nyi chelovek*)¹³⁵ who serves Gorianchikov and at the same time steals his copy of the New Testament.

Scholars have famously identified the bathhouse as an internal hinge around which the *Notes* evolve. Before the bath scene, Petrov seeks Gorianchikov out and asks him four questions that at first seem to be unrelated, though close analysis of them proves otherwise. Petrov, who is described as a “literate” man, whose seemingly simple questions shift from one subject to another to reveal his intellectual limitations, appears to be satisfied with Gorianchikov's answers, though the reader never gets a sense of how

¹³⁵ PSS 4: 87. In Imperial Russia, *cantonists* were the male children of soldiers, who were educated in special schools and then drafted into the army.

these questions might or might not have changed his views. Petrov believes what he reads, although he needs someone like Gorianchikov to guide him and to confirm, or deny his views.

Petrov's first question is about Napoleon III, and whether he is connected to the Napoleon who fought in 1812.¹³⁶ Gorianchikov answers him, saying that they were indeed related, noticing that Petrov's questions required an immediate answer ("ne terpiashchemu ni maleishego otlagatel'stva").¹³⁷ The second and third questions are of a biological nature, underlining Petrov's curiosity about exotic and monstrous creatures that I examine more closely below. The last question that followed this exchange was again about French culture, specifically on *Countess Lavallière*,¹³⁸ a novel by Madame de Genlis (née Stéphanie Félicité, Comtesse de Genlis, 1746-1830), which was well known and widely read in Russia, although viewed as a popular romance. Petrov wanted to know whether the story about the *Countess Lavallière* was true, or fiction. This question also underscores his popular taste.

The following is an example of a question-answer exchange between Petrov and Gorianchikov where the former asks questions pertaining to biology.

¹³⁶ In 1852, Napoleon III declared himself emperor. The theme of Napoleon appears in *The Brothers Karamazov*, when Smerdiakov says that it would be good if one smart nation, such as that led by Napoleon, had conquered Russia.

[...] In [18]12 there was a great invasion of Russia by Napoleon, the French, the first [Emperor], the father of the present one, and it would have been good if the French had conquered us. A smart nation would have conquered a rather stupid one and annexed it to itself. We would have even had quite different customs.

[...] V dvenadtsatom godu bylo na Rossiuu velikoe nashestvie imperatora Napoleona frantsuzskogo pervogo, ottsa nyneshnemu, i khorosho kaby nas togda pokorili eti samye frantsuzy: umnaia natsiia pokorila by ves'ma glupuiu-s i prisoedinila k sebe. Sovsem dazhe byli by drugie poriadki-s.

PSS 14: 205. Petrov and Smerdiakov are characters who exhibit ahistorical patterns of thought. Petrov's question about *Countess Lavallière* is an indicator of popular taste, that is, the uninformed reader's inability to distinguish between "truth" and fiction, as well as his question about the antipodes.

¹³⁷ PSS 4: 83.

¹³⁸ Louise de La Vallière (1644-1710) was a lover of Louis XIV.

--- Hm. And here I wanted to ask you something, Aleksandr Petrovich: is it true, as one says, that there are apes whose hands reach their heels, and they are the height of a human being?

--Yes, there are such.

--- What kind are they?

I explained as much as I knew about this as well.

--- And where do they live?

--- In the warm countries. On the island of Sumatra.

--- It is in America, isn't it? As they say, as if people walk there with heads downwards?

--- Not head downwards. You are asking about antipodes.

I explained what America was, and as much as I could who were the antipodes. He listened very attentively, as if he arrived intentionally to ask about his antipodes.

--- Gm. A vot ia khotel vas, Aleksandr Petrovich, sprosit': pravda li, govoriat, est' takie obez'iany, u kotorykh ruki do piatok, a velichinoi s samogo vysokogo cheloveka?

--- Da, est' takie.

--- Kakie zhe eto?

Ia ob''iasnil, skol'ko znal, i eto.

--- A gde zhe oni zhivut?

--- V zharkikh zemliakh. Na ostrove Sumatre est'.

--- Eto v Amerike, chto li? Kak eto govoriat, budto tam liudi vniz golovoi khodiat?

---Ne vniz golovoi. Eto vy pro antipodov sprashivaete.

Ia ob''iasnil, chto takoe Amerika i, po vozmozhnosti, chto takoe antipody. On slushal tak zhe vnimatel'no, kak budto narochno pribezhal dlia svoikh antipodov.¹³⁹

There is an element of estrangement, absurdity, fairy-tale, exotic places (Sumatra), and representation of the "third" cultural kind of beings. In these two questions Petrov is preoccupied with one common theme – human and animal diversity. He heard about apes and "people walking upside-down," although he was overwhelmed by the idea that he wasn't certain whether to believe it or not. The fact that he asked about antipodes, as Gorianchikov correctly defines the people to which he is referring, indicates that he indeed believed in the existence of "monstrous" people, as they were called during the

¹³⁹ Ibid., 83-84.

medieval period.¹⁴⁰ The belief in antipodes—that in the southern hemisphere people walked upside down—on their heads—was prevalent in medieval Europe before the age of colonial geographic exploration. Petrov is one of the body that the narrator calls *narod* – the people. Gorianchikov’s interactions with the other prisoners show that a substantial proportion of the Russian people have received a minimal level of education, many of prisoners could at least read and write. This dialogue between Gorianchikov and Petrov presents the latter as the representative of this mindset, and of this discursive practice. Even his last name, which is so widespread, points out that he is of the Russian people, that he represents them. Therefore, Petrov reveals the national body. He is a type. There is nothing individual about his representation.

For Gorianchikov, Petrov exhibits what Bakhtin called “an outsider speech,” ‘chuzhaia rech’, because it is in contrast to the educated speech of Gorianchikov. He also exemplifies a folk curiosity, a man with limited knowledge, with a mythical sense of time. Their dialogue is saturated with irony as well as mutual othering and evokes a famous topos of recognition that Petrov seeks from Gorianchikov, the master-slave dialectic, which in turn Gorianchikov seeks from him. Although this is a binary opposition of the self and the other, both paradoxically desire recognition. For Petrov, these fabulous stories, which strike us as mythological and fanciful, are in fact straightforward accounts of unknown and barely visited regions of the world. Such stories have high narrative value in Dostoevsky’s works and enhance their readability. Petrov’s beliefs enable him to distinguish between Russian and non-Russian, as well as between social and ethnic groups that are familiar (i.e. don’t walk on their hands).

¹⁴⁰ John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2006).

Petrov's anti-Darwinian perception of the variety of species reveals the ways in which a Russian peasant perceived the ethnic varieties of the empire; he sees Russians at the center of human diversity. At the same time, Petrov is a personality whose cultural consciousness is formed by a mix of popular folk beliefs, religious superstitions and a comfortable and fundamental sense of the otherness of all non-Russian, non-Orthodox peoples and faiths. This also illustrates that folk treated these mythological stories as curiosities that both appealed to the desire to fill in the gaps of ignorance and to enrich storytelling, which was as vital for the community then as a spectrum of other media in our society now. Petrov's stories of the fabulous could be the equivalent of stories about alien visitations in 1940s. He relies upon his folk knowledge to distinguish between the social classes and ethnic groups he is aware of, which ultimately delimits who is and is not part of Russia. The question that arises is whether Gorianchikov and Petrov are themselves antipodes and belonging to different groups. Petrov is Gorianchikov's antipode in terms of class and culture since it is Gorianchikov's noble class that sets the two apart, Petrov would never accept Gorianchikov as a fellow Russian, as a generic Russian. "There is nothing more difficult than to gain trust (and particularly from such people) and earn their love." "Net nichego trudnee, kak voiti k narodu v doverennost' (i osobenno k takomu narodu) i zasluhit' ego liubov'."¹⁴¹ "I needed almost two years in prison in order to gain favor from some of the convicts. But the majority of them finally liked me and recognized me as a 'good' man." "Mne nado bylo pochni dva goda prozhit' v ostroge, chtob priobrest' paspolozhenie nekotorykh iz katorzhnykh. No bol'shaia chast' iz nikh nakonets menia poliubila i priznala za 'khoroshego' cheloveka."¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ PSS 4: 26.

¹⁴² Ibid., 26.

Goranchikov's struggle to "earn [...] love" and "to gain favor" from his fellow convicts and finally his recognition among them as a "good man" points to the instability and unreliability of these statements. He never explains how the convicts finally "liked" him and in what sense was he recognized as a "good man."

Despite the degree of acceptance that Goranchikov eventually earns from his fellow convicts, he maintains a separate status throughout his imprisonment. For example, in the bath scene, Petrov serves Goranchikov and calls his feet *nozhki* – using the diminutive form meaning "small feet." Petrov could not use just the word *nogi* – feet – because in his perception Goranchikov is a different human type and his physique reflects his leisurely lifestyle. Reference to the diminutive form of the feet evokes folkloric trope. This points out not only to the ethnic differentiation between Goranchikov and the rest of the fellow convicts, but also to Petrov's sociolect that brings to the heart of the text the dialogue across ethnic, intellectual and social boundaries. In Petrov's view, due to Goranchikov's noble origin, he could not have the feet of a common man, but as an opposite sort of human, has more delicate body parts.¹⁴³ About Petrov's spontaneous and unpredictable nature, Goranchikov states the following.

They are not the speakers and they can't be the initiators and the main leaders of the affair. However, they are the main executioners of it and they are the first to act. They start simply, without any outcries, but they are the first to overcome the hindrance, without any thoughts, without fear, walking at knives' points, and everyone rushes after them and follows them blindly, following till the last wall, where they habitually lay down their heads.

Oni ne liudi slova i ne mogut byt' zachinshchikami i glavnymi predvoditeliami dela; no oni glavnye ispol'niteli ego i pervye nachinaut. Nachinaut prosto, bez osobykh vozglasov, no zato pervye pereskakivaiut cherez glavnoe prepiatstvie, ne

¹⁴³ Petrov anticipates Dostoevsky's character Fedka the Convict (Fed'ka katorzhnyi), a former serf and criminal from *Demons*. Even his name suggests that he is taken from one of the convicts of the *Notes*, thus bringing two texts into textual proximity. Petrov is a cantonist and Fedka was sold as a soldier into the army, so that his owner could pay his debts.

zadymavshis', bez strakha, idia priamo na vse nozhi, - i vse brosaitsia za nimi i idut slepo, idut do samoi poslednei steny, gde obyknovenno i kladut svoi golovy.¹⁴⁴

Here Gorianchikov explores the psychology of the convicts and in particular the ways in which some people are instigators and some are the actors (*deiateli*).¹⁴⁵ This dialogue illustrates Petrov's idiolect - his somewhat naïve, direct and abrupt nature of asking questions. His speech shows that he received some schooling and therefore has some access to the same vocabulary and cultural references as Gorianchikov. Allowing Petrov to speak freely and spontaneously preserves his style, his linguistic and ideological perspective, thus giving the reader a sense of his voice without the narrator's interjections. This illustrates the emphasis on the oral aspects of the speech. It also demonstrates the heteroglossic nature of the sketches, permitting different voices and ideological views to coexist in one text, and diminishing the authority of the narrator. Petrov relies on Gorianchikov's expertise without engaging him in discussion.

Framing different voices and views through the lens of a noble Russian, who relies upon literary prototypes and colonial discourse that privileges Russians foremost over the subaltern – Ukrainians, Poles, Jews, Tatars from Dagestan, Chechens, and Lezgians, enhances the diagetic function of the literary ethnography. We see two identities, and two types of relationships, come together in an imperial project illustrating how nebulous and unstable the nature of empire is vis-à-vis its ethnic diversity. Gorianchikov looks at Petrov and sees him through the lens of a noble Russian, discerning the limited and unenlightened peasant. Petrov, in turn, sees Gorianchikov through a common folk perspective, he sees him as a master, superior and powerful. Both

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 87.

¹⁴⁵ *Notes* are saturated with characters and themes that will enter subsequent works of Dostoevsky. This division is also mentioned in the *Notes from the Underground*.

interlocutors have their own text that they reference: Gorianchikov cites well-known literary and cultural sources, whereas Petrov operates with the spontaneous, almost a child like, semi-literate understanding of cultures and folkloric references. Gorianchikov uses literary prototypes and colonial discourse to conceptualize the subaltern identities. One of the examples of Gorianchikov's reliance on literary stereotypes, on pre-existing literary treatments, rather than on direct experience with reality, is his representation of the only Jew, Isai Bumshtein, a convict who, like Gorianchikov, is said to have murdered his wife.

Isai Bumshtein

Similar to Petrov and Alei, Gorianchikov sees Isai as a walking talking literary quotation. Gorianchikov relies on an easy identifiable stereotype in depicting Isai, thus exercising his literary power of the text. Bumshtein is a recognizable prototype and an excess of readily authority, in Roland Barthes's words. In contrast to the somewhat positive depiction of Muslims, the very first time the narrator introduces the Jew, Isai Fomich, he compares him with the literary prototype of a Jew Iankel in Gogol's "Taras Bul'ba" (1842), who, when undressed, looked like a chicken.¹⁴⁶ Joseph Frank notes that Dostoevsky's unfinished play *The Jew Yankel* had a Jew as its main character.¹⁴⁷ Gorianchikov introduces him as a caricature that is informed by anti-Semitic folklore and his prejudices rather than by the facts, or reality. The description of Bumshtein is redolent

¹⁴⁶ PSS 4: 55. On representation of Jews in Russian literature, see Elena M. Katz, *Neither With Them, Nor Without Them: The Russian Writer and the Jew in the Age of Realism*, Judaic Traditions in Literature, Music, and Art (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008); Leonid Livak, *The Jewish Persona in the European Imagination: A Case of Russian Literature*, Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

¹⁴⁷ Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Seeds of Revolt: 1821-1849* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 119.

of classic anti-Semitic and folkloric stereotypes. In Gorianchikov's view he is "cunning" and "silly," thus, drawing a clichéd representation of the subaltern subject of the empire. First we learn that Isai Bumshtein is a jeweler and a pawnbroker, a recognizably Jewish profession that sets the stereotypes into full force from the very introduction.

Gorianchikov assigns Bumshtein with a readymade identity, his ethnic evaluation is found already in Gogol's texts, thus situating his character in a power discourse.

Similarly to Gorianchikov, he is also in prison for murder. He gives a physical, psychological, physiognomical, and religious description. He presents him as "a man of approximately fifty years old, of a little height and feeble, cunning, and at the same time absolutely silly. He was impudent and arrogant and at the same time terribly cowardly."¹⁴⁸ These descriptions are based on binary oppositions, which is a recognizable folkloric trope. Moreover, these parallel structures are rooted in folkloric tradition and made this text a cliché. They don't add anything new but rather intensify the effect of estrangement. Moreover, he was covered with "some sort of wrinkles and on his forehead and on his cheeks were brands, inflicted at the scaffold (*kleima, polozhennye emu na eshafote*)."¹⁴⁹ Aside from this physical depiction, Gorianchikov conveys his lisping through letting the reader hear his voice, what Bakhtin calls "the outsider speech" (*chuzhaia rech'*). "Otherwise I won't be able to marry up, [...] and I absolutely wanna marry." "Ne to nel'zia budet zenit'sia, [...] a ia nepremenno khotsy zenit'sia,"¹⁵⁰ says Bumshtein referring to his brands and the miraculous recipe that he obtained to heal them.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 55.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 55.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 55.

Goranchikov states that they were friends, thus employing his friendship as proof that he is giving a believable and truthful, “real” description of Isai Fomich. But again Goranchikov never explained what was exactly their friendship. He assures the reader that they were friends, but the text does not offer any examples of it. Whether Goranchikov wanted to show himself towards his fellow convicts and future readers as a tolerant and all-inclusive Russian noble prisoner, his statements that he was friends with the convicts are not textually supported, revealing his desire to be recognized as one of them and his failure to achieve that recognition. *Notes* presents a gallery of ethnic types, where convicts emerge as the representatives of the ethnic diversity that Goranchikov fails to discern as individuals with their unique idiosyncratic characters. The only Jew described, Isai Fomich appears in the chapter titled “Isai Fomich. Bathhouse. Baklushin’s Story” that, as the title indicated, incorporates a story of another murderer, Baklushin, who killed a German because of jealousy. The fact that Goranchikov includes Isai Fomich and Baklushin in one chapter again points out to the fragmentation of the stories and arbitrariness of placing characters together who would not otherwise have anything in common, other than that their convictions narrow the gap between their cultural differences.

The narrator employs two words to designate a Jew: a derogatory *zhid* -- kike and a neutral *evrei* – a Jew. Isai Fomich Bumshtein is called both a kike and a Jew. Dostoevsky describes Bumshtein’s Sabbath prayer with pseudo-ethnographic details and a sarcastic tone. This exaggerated description turns Bumshtein into a barbarian. Even though he presented as an observant Jew, he, in fact, was a convert (“meshchanin iz

evreev [...] pravoslavnogo veroispovedaniia”), as the archival material revealed.¹⁵¹ These changes of religious identity imply a pragmatic nature of the conversion, but more importantly it confirms contingency and instability of identities in imperial Russia. Due to censorship, Dostoevsky had to alter his “real” experience with the inmates and make their convictions more severe than they were, so that the tsarist penal system seems justified for punishing the prisoners. Dostoevsky didn’t change Bumshtein’s crime and the fact that his body had marks from sixty whips, however.

The ethnographic description of the Jew Isai Fomich Bumshtein has been thoroughly discussed by Dostoevsky scholars.¹⁵² Dostoevsky emphasized the uncivilized nature of Bumshtein’s prayer, as well as the marginal existence of the Jews. The language the narrator Gorianchikov employs to describe Isai Fomich’s religious paraphernalia, phylacteries and shawl, and his style of praying is saturated with mockery and revulsion. What is interesting, as Gorianchikov reminds the reader, is the effect of a sudden shift (*vdruk*) in Isai Fomich’s praying, particularly when he suddenly begins to cry out loud during the sermon because “it is prescribed to do so.” Here the narrator misleads the reader because there is no such prescription in Jewish prayer, although, according to Gorianchikov, Jews are required by the law to be reminded about the return to Jerusalem, thus having to cry or scream. In Isai Fomich’s way of praying there is an element of performance and theatricality that from the narrator’s point of view looked like an act of a savage, which is why this is a pseudo-ethnographic depiction.

Though mediated by Gorianchikov’s privileged position as a Russian nobleman, the presence of the pseudo-ethnographic description of a Jewish prayer provides a rare

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 283-84.

¹⁵² See “Introduction.”

glimpse into the Jewish celebration of the Sabbath. Here the Jew is not excluded but represented as having certain privileges. For example, Isai Fomich is allowed to pray while the officer inspects the prisoners' barracks. Here in the enclosed space, he was permitted to pray without being interrupted, hence becoming the center of attention not only of the inmates but also of the officer. Thus, the over-the-top description of the praying, which turns him into a grotesque religious fanatic, becomes ethnographically bogus. Despite this inclusion, the whole scene remains filtered through Gorianchikov's perception of the Jewish observance of the Sabbath as an uncivilized and alien act. Since Gorianchikov had probably never seen a Jew before, he interprets the emotional outcry of Isai Fomich as theatrically exaggerated and excessive. The detailed phony ethnographic description "educates" the Russian reader about the Jews, while simultaneously ridiculing and mocking Isai Fomich; thus, taking away the partial agency that the narrator just granted him earlier.

Here, I argue that Isai Fomich is a man who is privileged by the law; the law protects him and grants him a state of exception and freedom to observe his religion, thus reaffirming his self. The tsarist prison allowed inmates to practice Jewish, Muslim, and Christian religious holidays and customs. He is privileged to pray, whereas other prisoners have to submit to the officer's inspection and interrupt their activities. The same reversal of status happens with the Muslim convicts Alei and his brothers, who are free to observe their religious holidays, whereas other Christian prisoners have to comply with the rules of work.

An exchange between Luchka "who knew many kikes in his life" and Isai Fomich illustrates the prison folklore documented in Dostoevsky's "Siberian Notebook"

(*Sibirskaiia tetrad'*). Isai Fomich is a jester, an entertainer, and a pariah. Nancy Ruttenburg interprets him as a “holy fool” (*iurodivyi*), who in Russian Orthodox tradition deliberately embraces an ascetic life of suffering and humiliation, refusing material goods, intentionally breaking the social conventions, and exposing the hypocrisy and lies of society by uttering the visceral truth.¹⁵³ Here, Luchka was “teasing him often, and not out of spite, rather for amusement, as if in the same manner as one entertained oneself with a dog, parrot, [and] trained small animals and so on. Isai Fomich knew this very well, he didn’t take offence and skillfully turned everything into a joke.”¹⁵⁴ “[...] chasto draznil ego, i sovsem ne iz zloby, a tak, dlia zabavy, tochno tak zhe, kak zabavliaiutsia s sobachkoi, popugaem, uchenymi zver’kami i proch. Isai Fomich ochen’ khorosho eto znal, niskol’ko ne obizhalsia i prilovko otshuchivalsia.” The animalistic comparison not only reduces Isai Fomich to the object of entertainment, but paradoxically it is reversed through his verbal skills that turn Luchka’s antagonism into an intense comedy where laughter serves the cathartic function. Thus, Isai Fomich wins the convicts’ begrudging respect, “[h]e was indeed as if loved by everyone and no one offended him” (“Ego deistvitel’no vse kak budto liubili i nikto ne obizhal”).¹⁵⁵

- Hey, kike, I will pummel you!
- You hit me once, and I hit you ten times, — rowdily replies Isai Fomich.
- Cursed scabby kike!
- Let it be scabby.
- Scabby kike.
- Let it be so. Even if I am scabby, I am still rich; I got cash.
- You sold Christ.
- Let it be so.
- Nice, Isai Fomich, well done! Don’t touch him, he is the only one we got!—the convicts shout with laughter.
- Hey, kike, you will get whipped, you will go to Siberia.

¹⁵³ Nancy Ruttenburg, *Dostoevsky's Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 165.

¹⁵⁴ PSS 4: 94.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 94.

- I am already in Siberia.
- You will be sent even farther.
- Well, is the Lord there?
- Yes, he is.
- So, let it be. If God exists, and money, it will be good everywhere.¹⁵⁶

- Ei, zhid, prikolochnu!
- Ty menia odin raz udarish', a ia tebia desiat',—molodtsevato otvechaet Isai Fomich.¹⁵⁷
- Parkh prokhatyi!¹⁵⁸
- Nekhai bude parkh.
- Zhid parkhatyi!
- Nekhai bude takochki. Khot' parkhatyi, da bogaty; groshi ma.
- Khrista prodal.
- Nekhai bude takochki.
- Slavno, Isai Fomich, molodets! Ne tron'te ego, on u nas odin!—krichat s khokhotom arestanty.
- Ei, zhid, khvatish' knuta, v Sibir' poidesh'.¹⁵⁹
- Da ia i tak v Sibiri.
- Eshche dal'she ushliut.
- A chto tam pan bog est'?
- Da est'-to est'.
- Nu nekhai; byl by pan bog da groshi, tak vezde khorosho budet.¹⁶⁰

There is also a reversal of roles here, it is the Jew Isai Fomich who answers

Gorianchikov's questions and educates him. The reader is exposed to the perspective of the Jew, which would not otherwise be presented.

In Part II Gorianchikov admits that his attempt “to classify” (podvesti pod razriady) peoples of the prison is in and of itself an impossible epistemological attempt, because, as he states, the “[r]eality is endlessly diverse” (deistvitel'nost' beskonechno raznoobrazna) and foremost “aspires towards fragmentation,” and he questions the

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 94.

¹⁵⁷ This entry is from his “Siberian Notebook,” see entries 91, 92, and 202. *PSS* 4: 238, 241.

¹⁵⁸ This entry is from his “Siberian Notebook.” *PSS* 4: 238

¹⁵⁹ This entry is from his “Siberian Notebook.”

¹⁶⁰ *PSS* 4: 94.

possibility of making sense of it.¹⁶¹ One might say that Gorianchikov's propensity for classifying and categorizing is not just a reflection of an innate pedantic streak, but a psychologically believable attempt by this character to counteract his self-acknowledged tendency to fragment reality. It is also a defense mechanism by imposing order on (an alien) chaos, he strives to retain his own identity as a nobleman, educated person, and great Russian. Gorianchikov engages with the question of reality (*deistvitel'nosti*) already in Part I, when, describing the uneducated nobleman, Akim Akimych, he stated that "the impression from reality is always stronger than the impression from a simple story." ("[...] chto vpechatlenie deistvitel'nosti vseгда sil'nee, chem vpechatlenie ot prostogo rasskaza").¹⁶² Also in Part I he restates this idea stating, "reality makes quite a different impression, than knowing [about it] and rumors" ("No deistvitel'nost' proizvodit sovsem drugoe vpechatlenie, chem znanie i slukhi").¹⁶³ The emphasis in both statements is on the experience with the *deistvitel'nost'* – reality of the direct contact with his prison mates, rather than reading and hearing about it from the secondary sources. This element of experiencing "reality," of the direct exposure with the subjects he is describing, is an essential characteristic of the ethnographer, and therefore, this experience of "reality" adds to the ethnographic nature of the text.

Moving from the descriptions of individual convicts, Gorianchikov describes their characters in general; he is showing that to be among these people, the anthropological experiment, and their vain and awful characters, is a kind of hell. Despite being differentiated by dress and haircuts, these people shared common faults. The people were described as follows:

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 197.

¹⁶² Ibid., 28.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 65.

[...] they were gloomy, envious, terribly vain, boastful, oversensitive people and in the most degree formalist. [...] But the strange thing is that from all truly exiled people there were several who were excessively vain, almost as if it were a disease. In general vanity [and] the appearance were foremost. The majority was depraved and terribly dishonorable. Rumors and gossip were unremitting: it was hell, pitch darkness!

[...] byl narod ugriumyi, zavistlivyi, strashno tshcheslavnyi, khvastlivyi, obidchivyi i v vysshei stepeni formalist. [...] No strannoe delo: iz etikh nastoiashchikh sil'nykh liudei bylo neskol'ko tshcheslavnykh do poslednei krainosti, pochte do bolezni. Voobshche tshcheslavie, naruzhnost' byli na pervom plane. Bol'shinstvo bylo razvrashcheno i strashno ispodlilos'. Spletni i peresudy byli bespreryvnye: eto byl ad, t'ma kromeshnaia.¹⁶⁴

These negative traits of the prisoners and the hell in which they live evoke Dante's *Inferno* with its nine circles, which depicts his journey with Virgil in the first part of his epic poem *The Divine Comedy*. Though Dante's hell is followed by "Purgatory" and "Paradise," Gorianchikov's hell doesn't present any end, or relief from suffering. Similar to Dante, Gorianchikov also has a guide, even several, though not as educated and trustworthy as Dante's Virgil. The imagery of hell persists through the entire work. Gorianchikov compares prison, the House of the Dead, to hell three times, as in the famous bathhouse scene and in Chapter XI "Performance" on the staging of the play "Kedril-obzhora" ("Kedril-the-Glutton") in prison. The reference to Dante underlines the intertextuality that is one of the features of the hybrid genre of literary ethnography. In the following chapters I further show how this feature prevails in the works of Korolenko, Bogoraz, and An-sky. I argue that the literary ethnographic genre is in dialogue with the literary traditions of different cultures, periods, and times, and transcends ethnic borders by embracing culture in its plurality and hybridity.

This hellish experience is intensified by the fact that Gorianchikov was a nobleman, who had to endure the same conditions of living and the punishment by law as

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 12.

common people. “Na byvshikh dvorian v katorge voobshche smotriat mrachno i neblagosklonno.” (“In general, the former landlords in exile were regarded unfavorably and sinister.”)¹⁶⁵ This creates tension between the narrator’s role and his positionality as a nobleman, and ultimately an outsider, whose class position ironically turns him into the chief Other among the diverse ethnic and social classes of the prison, and who was not able to distance himself from his bias towards the subjects he describes, in other words legitimizing their oppression, as evident in the following quotation:

An educated man, who receives the same punishment as a common person, often loses incomparably more than he. He has to suppress all his needs, all habits, enter an environment that is inadequate for him; he has to learn how to breathe a different air [...] It is a fish pulled from the water onto the sand [...] And often similar for everyone punishment by the law turns for him ten times more excruciating.¹⁶⁶

He still places himself above the common people and is unable to perceive their suffering as comparable to his own. Despite receiving privileges due to his noble status, and despite his dedication to the common people, Gorianchikov refuses to acknowledge that the other convicts’ punishment may be just as excruciating for them as his own is to him. This may come partially from Gorianchikov’s lack of exposure to the common people. Like Dostoevsky’s real life experience, prison exile was the very first time when Gorianchikov came into direct contact with people about whom he only had heard or read, and enabled him to gain knowledge firsthand instead of relying on conjecture.

[...] this was the time of my first confrontation with the people. I myself suddenly became this common folk, the same convicts as they were. Their habits, ideas, opinions, customs became as if also mine, at least in a form, in law, even though I didn’t share them in essence. I was amazed and confused, as if I didn’t expect it before and hadn’t heard about it. Even though I knew and had heard about it. But the reality makes quite a different impression, than knowing and hearing about it.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 26.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 55.

[...] eto bylo vremia moego pervogo stolknoveniia s narodom. Ia sam vdrug sdelalsia takim zhe prstonarod'em, takim zhe katorzhnym, kak i oni. Ikh privychki, poniatie, mnenia, obyknoveniia stali kak budto tozhe moimi, po krainei mere po forme, po zakonu, khotia ia i ne razdelial ikh v sushchnosti. Ia byl udivlen i smushchen, tochno i ne podozreval prezhde nichego etogo i ne slykhal ni o chem. Khotia i znal i slyshal. No deistvitel'nost' proizvodit sovsem drugoe vpechatlenie, chem znanie i slukhi.¹⁶⁷

He admits that he became closer to the common people, though keeping his noble class status that prevented him from totally embracing them. People remain an anthropological experiment, rather than something real to which he can fully relate on the human level. Thus, the text exemplifies multiple tensions of Dostoevsky's anthropological experiments: on one hand, subverting the colonial representation of the imperial subjects, by giving them agency in the text, and, on the other hand, retaining the colonial privileged voice of the narrator-nobleman whose position undermines this newly granted agency. Dostoevsky's ethnographic experience and the theme of Russian folk can be traced to his subsequent major novels.

Dostoevsky's Love Towards People (*O liubvi k narodu*)

Fifteen years after he published *Notes*, Dostoevsky returned to his prison recollections in his *Diary of the Writer written in February* of 1876. In subchapter of it "The Peasant Marei" (Muzhik Marei) he recalls a Polish political prisoner, a nobleman Miretskii (in the text he is mentioned as M-tskii) whom he remembered for his French exclamation "Je hais ces brigands!"—"I detest those bandits"—referring to drunken

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 65.

Russian peasant prisoners.¹⁶⁸ In the chapter preceding “The Peasant Marei,” Dostoevsky writes “About Love Towards People. A Necessary Contract with the People” (O liubvi k narodu. Neobkhodimyi kontrak s narodom) and cites Konstantin Aksakov (1817-1860), a Slavophile and critic, who stated that Russian people are “already enlightened and ‘educated’.”¹⁶⁹ Dostoevsky agrees with Aksakov’s position towards people, though insists that visceral violence of people remains with them. This view of the violent nature of people is presented in Bogoraz’s sketches about the Gomel’ pogrom of 1903.

Later Dostoevsky would mention his prison experience of living with the people and the praying Jew in his famous essay “The Jewish Question” in *Writer’s Diary* (Dnevnik pisatel’ia) of 1877. He writes,

It even happened to me to live with people, among the crowds of people, in the barracks, to sleep on the plank-beds. There were several Jews there – and no one despised them, no one excluded them, no one drove them away. When they were praying (and Jews pray with screaming by putting on a special dress), no one found this particular strange, no one bothered them and no one laughed at them as it should have been expected from such crude people, as you might imagine, people like Russians; on the contrary, they were looking at them and saying, “This is their religion, they are praying like this,” and they were passing them by with peace and approval. And so, these Jews kept themselves aloof from Russians, they did not want to eat with them, they almost looked down upon them (and where was this? In the stockade), in general they felt creepiness and disgust towards Russians, toward the “indigenous” people.¹⁷⁰

Dostoevsky’s tone of contempt and disdain towards the Jews underlines that he remained occupied with the question of “indigenous” people - Russians and Jews throughout his career. The problem of Russians and Jews coexisting side by side is not in the Russian

¹⁶⁸ Dostoevsky’s fellow Polish prisoner, Szymon Tokarszewski (1821-1890), featured his encounters with Dostoevsky in his works *Seven Years of Imprisonment* (Sem’ let katorgi, 1907) and *Prisoners* (Katorzhane, 1912), PSS 22:47.

¹⁶⁹ PSS 22: 42.

¹⁷⁰ F.M. Dostoevsky, “Dnevnik pisatel’ia za 1877g.,” in *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii*, vol. 30 (Leningrad, 1983), 80.

people, as he argues, but in Jews. Dostoevsky's ethical position stood apart from that of his followers Korolenko, Bogoraz, and An-sky who by contrast used their status as writers and their literature and journalism to defend Jews against ethnic violence and false blood libel accusations. This is an important moral function that Dostoevsky failed to fulfill. A great writer whose texts had an immense impact on Russian readers continued to promulgate anti-Semitic ideas. Dostoevsky's *Notes* was a first visceral account of the Siberian prison life that Korolenko and Bogoraz would indirectly cite in their works. The "anthropological experiment" he was engaged in across his entire literary career was centered around "indigenous" people – Russians.

Dostoevsky in the Circle of the Ethnographers: Petr Semenov and Chokan Valikhanov

After his four years in the Omsk stockade, Dostoevsky met two prominent Russian ethnographers, Petr Petrovich Semenov (1827-1914) and Chokan Chingisovich Valikhanov (1835-1866). Both were members of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society. Dostoevsky might have met Semenov at the meetings of the Petrashevsky's circle in St. Petersburg. Semenov,¹⁷¹ a prominent geographer and a member of the Society (1849-1914), had previously studied at the Berlin University where he met Alexander von Humboldt.¹⁷² He was a supporter of the liberation of the serfs. At that time when he met Dostoevsky, Semenov was preparing for his second trip to Central

¹⁷¹ For his achievements in exploring the mountain range of Tien Shan (In Russian Tian'-Shan), he has been called since 1906 as Semenov-Tian-Shanskii.

¹⁷² Alexander von Humboldt was interested in existence of volcanoes in the part of Asia that Semenov was soon to explore.

Asia, to Tien Shan (in Russian Tian-Shan), the mountain ranges on the border of what is now Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and western China. Dostoevsky met him in Semipalatinsk in the summer of 1856 and again in January of 1857 in Barnaul where they read together his drafts of the *Notes*.¹⁷³ A few years later, Semenov wrote *The Geographical-Statistical Dictionary of the Russian Empire* (1862-85), which included Asian and American possessions (vladenia),¹⁷⁴ but excluded Polish and Finnish territories; he also collected the first census of the Russian population in 1897. His dictionary was an attempt to present systematic (sistematicheskoe)¹⁷⁵ knowledge about the geography and statistics of the Russian empire in a bibliographical reference that was unprecedented in its scope. The dictionary had two goals. First, it was meant to educate readers by giving them a “clear and truthful” understanding (iasnoe i pravil’noe poniatie)¹⁷⁶ of geography and statistics, and secondly, it aimed to provide experts with all the secondary literature available on the subject.

In his memoir Semenov wrote about his interactions with Dostoevsky. Dostoevsky spent two weeks with Semenov in January 1857 while preparing for his wedding with Maria Isaeva, spending several hours each day talking and reading chapters of the *Notes*.

It is understandable what kind of strong [and] incredible impression left upon me this reading and how I was vividly taken to the horrible conditions of life of the

¹⁷³ According to Semenov’s *Geographical-Statistical Dictionary of the Russian Empire*, in 1861, the population of Barnaul was 11,846; it had 5 churches; 1,946 houses; 91 small shops (lavok); 2 charitable houses (bogougodnykh) and 2 prisons (mest zakliuchenii). The city had a library; a monument to Demidov; a meteorological observation building; a mining college (gornoe uchilishche); and even a museum with zoological, mineralogical, and ethnographic collections (vol. 1, 215). In the creation of the dictionary participated V.Zverinskii, N. Filippov, and R. Maaka. *Geograficheskoe-statisticheskii slovar’ Rossiiskoi imperii, Imperatorskoe russkoe geograficheskoe obshchestvo* (St. Petersburg: Tip. Bezobrazova, 1862-1885).

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 1: IV.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 1: I-II.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 1: VIII.

sufferer, who had left [prison] with more than a clean soul and enlightened mind from the difficult fight with “heavy sword, breaking glass, forging steel.”¹⁷⁷

This observation, with its explicit theme of resurrection from the dead mirrors that of Gorianchikov in the end of the *Notes*. Here Semenov cites Pushkin’s line from the narrative poem “Poltava” (1828), which poetically conveys that Dostoevsky’s character was formed under severe prison conditions.

Of course, no writer of such scope has ever been placed into more advantageous circumstances for the observation and psychological analyses of the most diverse characters of people, with whom he had to share the same life. One could say that his time in the “Dead House” made the talented Dostoevsky a great writer-psychologist.¹⁷⁸

Semenov states that this life experience in the “Dead House” left Dostoevsky with epilepsy (*pripadki paduchei bolezni*). Last time he saw Dostoevsky was in September of 1857.

Chokan Valikhanov and Dostoevsky

After Dostoevsky’s prison time in Omsk and before he wrote his *Notes*, he met Chokan Chingisovich Valikhanov, a well-educated Kazakh who later acquired a reputation as an ethnographer.¹⁷⁹ Although Valikhanov was an ethnic Kazakh, Dostoevsky called him a Kirghiz, because during that imperial time all Kazakhs were thus termed Kirghiz. It is only when the first census was carried out in 1897 by the initiative of the ethnographer and the statistician Semenov Tian-Shanskii that official

¹⁷⁷ Petr Petrovich Tian-Shanskii, *Memoirs* (Memuary), vol. 2, ch. 3 (Moscow: OGIZ, 1946), accessed July 29, 2015, http://az.lib.ru/s/semenowtjanshanskij_p_p/text_0020.shtml

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ His name is also spelled as Chekan Vali-khan.

imperial sources began to distinguish between the Kirghiz and the Kazakh people, although even the first census sometimes combined two ethnicities into one.¹⁸⁰

In an 1856 letter to the nineteen-year-old Kazakh ethnographer Valikhanov who complained about his boredom in Omsk, Dostoevsky suggested writing something similar to *Notes* (Zapiski) about the Kirghiz Steppe (“o Stepi;” in fact, the Kazakh Steppe) since Valikhanov had already gathered a lot of materials on it. He suggested writing along the lines of (vrode) Pushkin’s essay “John Tanner,” a summary and partial translation of the American John Tanner’s (1780-1847) 1830 memoir published as *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner during Thirty Years Residence Among the Indians*. Pushkin, a contemporary of Tanner, read the French translation of his book and wrote about him and even translated some passages in his essay “John Tanner” published in his journal *Sovremennik* in 1836, which Dostoevsky read as well.

John Tanner (1780-1847) wrote about his three decades of captivity from 1789-1819 first by the Shawnee, then when sold to the Ottawa people, and later moved to live among the Ojibwe people in a work originally titled *Tanner’s Narrative*. In this work, Tanner wrote about his captives’ beliefs about the soul, dreams, burial customs, totems, songs, poetry, knowledge of astronomy, as well as descriptions of plants, animals, and minerals in the native languages of the Ojibwe and the Ottawa. In addition, Tanner included his translation of Genesis into the Ojibwe language.

Pushkin called Tanner’s work “the most complete and probably the last document of the everyday life of the people who will soon will be extinct. Chronicles about the uneducated tribes shed true light on what some philosophers call the natural state of the

¹⁸⁰ Anton Chekhov took part in the first census.

human being.”¹⁸¹ “Oni sami polnyi i, veroiatno, poslednii dokument bytiia naroda, koego skoro ne ostanetsia i sledov. Letopisi plemen bezgramotnykh, oni razlivaiut istinnyi svet na to, chto nekotorye filosofy nazyvaiut estestvennym sostoianiem cheloveka [...]” This quotation expresses a particular vision that is reminiscent of Bogoraz and An-sky’s future ethnographic work that was intended to rescue the voices of Russian peasants and Jews in the Pale of Settlement from disappearance almost fifty years later. The value of Tanner’s story about the indigenous peoples, in Pushkin’s view, was that he “preserved the appearance, character and prejudices of the savages who adopted him” (“sokhranil vid, kharakter i predrassudki dikarei, ego usynovikhshikh”).¹⁸² Similar to Pushkin’s view, Dostoevsky also believed that Vali-khan, as he called him in the same letter, would be the right candidate to “serve his motherland with his enlightened mediation between it and Russians.” However, Pushkin criticized *Tanner’s Narrative* for its “monotony, with some sleepy incongruity and lack of any thought that would give some sense of the life of the American savages” and its details about hunting, poverty, and quarrels as something “incomprehensible to the educated people” (“odnoobrazie, kakaia-to sonnaia bessviaznost’ i otsutstvie mysli, daiushchee nekotoroie poniatie o zhizni amerikanskikh dikarei. [...] neponiatnykh dlia chad obrazovannosti”).¹⁸³ Why Dostoevsky would advise the young scholar to write in the style of John Tanner is puzzling, since Pushkin characterizes his style as that of “sleepy incongruity” and not something to which the young writer should aspire. Even if Dostoevsky wanted Valikhanov to produce a study of the everyday life of the Kazakh people, he should do it

¹⁸¹ A. Pushkin, “Dzhon Tenner,” accessed July 30, 2015, <http://febweb.ru/feb/pushkin/texts/push17/vol12/y12-104-.htm>

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

without romanticizing it, as Gorianchikov sees prison life, rather critically questioning the role of the Russian empire in their lives. Tanner describes how the Indians are exploited and tricked by the Americans during the exchange of fur and skins for alcohol, and what, in Pushkin's words, "benefits they get in contact with civilization."

Dostoevsky believed that Valikhanov's work on the Steppe would attract attention in Omsk, which overlooks the Steppe, and be of interest to the Imperial Geographical Society in St. Petersburg, not to mention Valikhanov's worried relatives. A thirty-five-year-old Dostoevsky paternally instructed the nineteen year old Valikhanov to continue his education abroad in addition to writing about the Steppe. One can read this as Dostoevsky carrying out Gorianchikov's mission to enlighten colonial subjects. Valikhanov did take Dostoevsky's advice on writing about the Steppe, producing several valuable works.¹⁸⁴ Dostoevsky points out that after Valikhanov's training abroad, he would be "useful for his motherland" ("polezny svoei rodine").¹⁸⁵

Approximately in seven, eight years you could arrange your life in such a way that you would be remarkably helpful to your motherland. [...] isn't it a great goal, isn't it a holy undertaking to be the first among your own [people], who would explain in Russian what the Steppe is, its meaning and [who] your people are in regards to Russia, and at the same time serve your motherland in the enlightened mediation between it and the Russians. Remember, you are the first Kirghiz to have been completely educated in the European style.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Valikhanov wrote several volumes on his travels in Kazakhstan and China. Among his multiple works are the following essays: "Predaniia i legendy bol'shoi Kirgiz-Kaisatskoi ordy" (written during his first travels in Kazakhstan 1835-1855); "Tenkri (bog)" (composed after his travels in Central Kazakhstan, 1854-1855); "Obrazets prichitanii" (in Kirghiz and Kazakh languages); "O formakh kazakhskoi narodnoi poezii" (1855-1856); "Kirgizskoe rodoslovie" (1857); "Istoricheskie predaniia o batyrakh XVIII v." (1855-1856); "Dnevnik poezdki na Issyk-Kul" (1856); "Zapiski o kirgizakh"; "Zametki po istorii iuzhno-sibirskikh plemen" (1856-1857); "Ocherki Dzhungarii" (1860); "Zapiska o sudebnoi reforme" (1862); "Sledy shamanstva u kirgizov" (1862). Valikhanov, "General View of Dzungaria" and "Travels in Dzungaria," in *The Russians In Central Asia: Their Occupation of the Kirghiz Steppe And the Line of the Syr-Daria. Their Political Relations With Khiva, Bokhara, And Kokan. Also Descriptions of Chinese Turkestan And Dzungaria* by Capt. Valikhanof, M. Veniukof, et.al. (London: E. Stanford, 1865).

¹⁸⁵ PSS 28: 249.

¹⁸⁶ Dostoevsky's italics. Ibid., 249.

What excites and makes “utopian” dreams about Valikhanov’s future career so palpable for Dostoevsky is that he is the first from his Kirghiz people (plemia; in fact, Kazakh) who received a European education “[...] vy pervyi iz Vashego plemeni, dostigshii obrazovaniia evropeiskogo”¹⁸⁷ and who could serve the empire by educating its Russian subjects about Kazakh nature and culture. As a native Kazakh, Valikhanov could to provide more insight into the life of his people than an outsider. Could one argue that Gorianchikov’s failure to fully recognize and accept the multiethnic diversity of the empire occurs because he did not accept that there are different forms of education and culture? Does Dostoevsky’s advice imply that only the native could provide the adequate, or truthful representation of the people? May it also suggest that Dostoevsky’s account in the *Notes* is a warped representation of the colonial subjects of the empire? What is striking is that Dostoevsky’s vision of an “enlightened” outcome for Valikhanov’s motherland comes from Western education, rather than from his unique Kazakh origin, as if suggesting that being a native of the Steppe would not give him the depth of knowledge required, but a Western education would.

It is not accidental that Dostoevsky advises the young Kazakh to write about the Steppe. Three years after he gave this advice, he was going to write about the Steppe himself. The Steppe occupied Gorianchikov throughout his prison time. The locus of the steppe is present throughout the *Notes*. The city where Gorianchikov lives after his prison sentence and where the publisher of his *Notes* encounters him is located “in the far corners of Siberia, among steppes, mountains and impassable forests, [where one might] come across small towns [...]” (“V otdalennykh kraiax Sibiri, sredi stepei, gor ili

¹⁸⁷ PSS 28: 249.

neprokhodimyykh lesov, popadaiutsia izredka malen'kie gorodka [...]).¹⁸⁸ Moreover, the steppe was a symbol of free life, of what prison had taken away from Gorianchikov, and what he longed for when his gaze crossed over the Irtysh River.

This is also a highly folkloric image of looking across the river which signifies the entrance into the different world. Especially during the summer, the notion of freedom intensified among convicts. Gorianchikov gazed upon the open space of the Kazakh Steppe as if he were looking through a “window from [his] prison towards freedom,” “towards works of God.”¹⁸⁹

Ia, vprochem, liubil taskat' kirpichi ne za to tol'ko, chto ot etoi raboty ukrepiaetsia telo, a za to eshche, chto rabota proizvodilas' na beregu Irtysha. Ia potomu tak chasto govoriu ob etom berege, chto edinstvenno tol'ko s nego i byl viden mir bozhii, chistaia, iasnaia dal', nezaselennye, vol'nye stepi, proizvodivshie na menia strannoe vpechatlenie svoeiu pustynnost'iu.

I, by the way, liked to carry bricks not only because this work strengthened my body, but also because the work was carried out on the shore of the Irtysh [River]. I speak so often about this shore because only from it could one see the world of God's clean, clear distance, unpopulated, free steppes, that left upon me the strange impression of its desolate emptiness.¹⁹⁰

The dreaminess (*mechtatel'nost'*) aspect of the steppe is brought up by Gorianchikov when he explains what freedom meant for the convicts. This poetic digression creates a moment of suspense and takes the reader and the narrator Gorianchikov to this imagined space of freedom that again is supported by the romantic and also folkloric notion of uninhabited and wild space. The narrator continues further into the exploration of the imaginative space of the steppe.

[...] Na beregu zhe mozhno zabyt'sia: smotrish', byvalo, v etot neob'iatnyi, pustynnyi prostor, tochno zakliuchennyi iz okna svoei tiur'my na svobodu. Vse dlia menia bylo tut dorogo i milo: i iarkoe goriachee solntse na bezdonnom sinem

¹⁸⁸ PSS 4: 5

¹⁸⁹ PSS 4: 178.

¹⁹⁰ PSS 4: 178.

nebe, i dalekaia pesnia kirgiza, prinosivshaiasia s kirgizskogo berega.
Vsmatrivaesh'sia dolgo i razgliadish' nakonets kakuiu-nibud' bednuiu,
obkurennuiu iurtu, kakogo-nibud' baigusha; razgliadish' dymok u iurty, kirgizku,
kotoraiia khlopochet s svoimi dvumia baranami. Vse eto bedno i diko, no
svobodno.¹⁹¹

[...] On the very shore one could forget oneself: I used to look at this immense deserted expanse, like a prisoner who looks from the window of his prison towards freedom. Everything was very dear and pleasing: and bright burning sun on the bottomless sky, and the faraway song of the Kirghiz that was brought from the Kirghiz shore. One strains for a long time and discerns finally some poor sooty yurt of some poor Kirghiz (baigush); you discern smoke and yurt, a Kirghiz woman who is occupied with her two sheep. All this is poor and wild, but free.

This pastoral depiction of Kirghiz family life, this imagined geographical space, with its “poor, wild, but free” life excites Gorianchikov’s fantasy and evokes recognizable literary topoi.¹⁹² The picture brings to mind Pushkin’s opening of the St. Petersburg novella (povest') *Bronze Horseman* (1833) where Peter I looks upon the “uninhabited land” and proclaims the foundation of the future capital “Cherneli izby, zdes' i tam,/ Priiut ubogo chukhontsa;/ I les, nevedomyi lucham/ V tumane spriatannogo solntsa/Krugom shumel.” “Black huts were dotted there by chance –/ The miserable Finn’s abode; / The wood unknown to the rays /Of the dull sun, by clouds stowed.”¹⁹³ Although the spaces were inhabited by the Kirghiz and by the Finnish people, the authors of both texts perceived the expanse as empty because it had not yet been conquered by civilizing Russians.

As winter approaches and Gorianchikov waits for his freedom, he digresses again and brings up his gazing at the steppe’s grass turning yellow.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 178.

¹⁹² This passage also echoes Gogol’s description of the steppe in *Taras Bulba*, which encompasses the enigmatic and open free space, although occasionally populated by the Tatars.

¹⁹³ Alexandr Pushkin, *The Bronze Horseman: A Petersburg Story*, trans. Yevgeny Bonver, accessed June 10, 2014, http://www.poetryloverspage.com/poets/pushkin/bronze_horseman.html.

Postupil ia v ostrog zimoi i potomu zimoi zhe dolzhen byl vyiti na voliu, v to samoe chislo mesiatsa, v kotoroe pribyl. S kakim neterpeniem ia zhdal zimy, s kakim naslazhdeniem smotrel v kontse leta, kak vianet list na dereve i bleknet trava v stepi.¹⁹⁴

I entered the prison in the winter and that's why I had to leave for liberty on the same day of the same month, on which I arrived. With what kind of impatience I was waiting for the winter, with what pleasure I observed at the end of summer how leaves on the trees wither and how the grass in the steppe pales.

Although the steppe has the symbolic function of denoting unattainable freedom, Gorianchikov paradoxically observes that as less time was left before his release, the more patient he became: "chem bol'she istekalo vremia i chem blizhe podkhodil srok, tem terpelivee i terpelivee ia stanovilsia."¹⁹⁵ This change in his attitude is related to how freedom become defined in prison, where it meant more than just freedom, "that because of the dreaming and being unaccustomed to it, freedom was perceived in the prison as somehow more free than real freedom, it means, that exists truly, in reality;" "chto vsledstvie mechtatel'nosti i dolgoi otvyhki svoboda kazalas' u nas v ostroge kak-to svobodnee nastoiashchei svobody, to est' toi, kotoraiia est' v samom dele, v deistvitel'nosti."¹⁹⁶ During winter, however, the image of the steppe was conflicting. At times it evoked boredom (skuchno), and at other times it suggested freedom.

Chto-to tosklivoe, nadryvaiushchee serdtse bylo v etom dikom i pystynnom peizazhe. No chut' li eshche ne tiazhelei bylo, kogda na beskonechnoi beloii pelene snega iarko siialo solntse; tak by i uletel kuda-nibud' v etu step', kotoraiia nachinalas' na drugom beregy i rasstilalas' k iugu odnoi nepreryvnoi skatert'iu tysiachi na poltory verst."¹⁹⁷

There was something dreary, something heart breaking in this wild and deserted landscape. But even more painful was when the bright sun shone on the endless white canvas of the snow; [I] would have flown away somewhere in this steppe,

¹⁹⁴ PSS 4: 230.

¹⁹⁵ PSS 4: 230.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 230.

¹⁹⁷ PSS 4: 80.

that began on the other shore and spread to the south as one piece for approximately fifteen hundred versts.¹⁹⁸

In the same chapter, there is a passage that further illustrates the folkloric construction of the Russian geographic space where the character was a wanderer – *begun*, probably a sectarian Old Believer. The narrator claims that he has visited almost every corner of the empire. Gorianchikov introduces him employing the known marker “suddenly” (*vdrug*) that for Bakhtin was a key element in narrative change. Here Gorianchikov tells the story of a small peasant man (*muzhichok*), whose name is never mentioned, although we know that he once married and had children and a settled life, until suddenly he disappeared somewhere. This *muzhichok* did not commit any crime – he had merely gone on the run (*begal*) on repeated occasions,

[...] all his life he ran! He was on the southern border beyond the Danube, and in the Kirghiz Steppe, and in Eastern Siberia, and in the Caucasus – he was everywhere. Who knows, with his passion to travel maybe under different circumstances he would have been some type of Robinson Crusoe.

[...] *begal*, *vsiu zhizn' probegal*. *Byval on i na iuzhnoi russkoi granitse za Dunaem, i v kirgizskoi stepi, i v Vostochnoi Sibiri, i na Kavkaze – vezde pobyval. Kto znaet, mozhet byt', pri drugikh obstoiatel'stvakh iz nego by vyshel kakoi-nibud' Robinson Kruze s ego strast'iu puteshestvovat'*.¹⁹⁹

Just as this *muzhichok* has been to every part of the empire, as the narrator states, the convicts in the prison come from every part of the empire. His constant wandering underlines the folkloric nature of the narrative whose fragmentation points to the unresolved chaos and fracture of the empire in regards to its subjects. The peasant hadn't committed any crime, other than being a wanderer. Thus, this *muzhichok* neatly illustrates the “microcosm” of the empire, since he visited almost every part of it, and embodies the common folk (*narod*) because Gorianchikov describes him as a man of

¹⁹⁸ *Verst* is an old Russian measurement of length. It equals 1,067 km, or 0.666 miles.

¹⁹⁹ PSS 4: 174.

[...] fifty years old, extremely meek, with an extremely calm and even stupid face, so calm as to be idiotic. [...] Features of his face were somehow stiff; he ate a little bit, more bread; he had never bought a small white loaf, neither a small glass of wine; he hardly ever had any money, he hardly could count. He treated everything with the calmness.²⁰⁰

[...] let uzhe piatidesiati, chrezvychaino smirnyi, s chrezvychaino spokoinym i dazhe tupym litsom, spokoinym do idiotstva. [...] Cherty litsa ego byli kakie-to oderevenelye; el on malo, vse bol'she khlebushka; nikogda-to on ne kupil ni odnogo kalacha, ni shkalika vina; da vriad li u nego i byli kogda-nibud' den'gi, vriad li dazhe on umel i schitat'.

He does remind us of Petrov, with his unpredictable character. No one knew why he was in prison and expected that any moment he might decide to escape, which is probably why he was called the wanderer. Instead of expanding on the subject of *muzhichok*, the narrator moves to the theme of escape from the prison. Again, the fragmented appearance of the common peasant points out that Gorianchikov weaves diverse characters and stories, making a text that escapes any overarching theme, other than presenting heterogeneous voices that raise more questions than answers. The reader never finds out why this *muzhichok* was indeed in prison. This rhetorical question goes throughout the text that brings the ethical aspect of Dostoevsky's work. One might argue that he wanted not only to show the hell of the "microcosm" of the Russian empire, but also indirectly stir the discussion, or awareness that these people, like *muzhichok*, perish for nothing.

Gorianchikov's Misfortune: Neither With Narod, Nor Without Them

There is a certain irony in Gorianchikov's name which is derived from the noun *gore* – misfortune, who, in contrast, to other noble and peasant prisoners, was finally released, or as he stated, "resurrect[ed] from the dead" (*voskresen'e iz mertvykh*),²⁰¹ after

²⁰⁰ PSS 4: 174-75.

²⁰¹ PSS 4: 232.

which he taught French, wrote *Notes* and died uneventfully. The rhetorical question of “who is to blame?” for those who perished for nothing (“pogibli darom”),²⁰² which ends Akul’ka’s story (in the separate publication) and *Notes*, refers not only to *narod*, but to the author of *Notes*, Gorianchikov, whose life turned out to be a wasted one. Although the text underlines the class distance between his nobility and the peasants, one could argue that he is brought together to the *narod* through his fate. Though Gorianchikov knew that the prisoners were aware that he was a different human being (drugoi chelovek),²⁰³ who had connections in the city and would be accepted by the other noblemen (gospoda), still the narrator and publisher of *Notes*, stated that he was “terribly unsocial” (strashnyi neliudim)²⁰⁴ and didn’t talk much after imprisonment. *Notes* reveals his voice through his self-reflexive narrative, where he emerges very differently from how the narrator presented him in the beginning. Fridlender defines Gorianchikov as a loner, as a “psychological ‘underground man’” (psikhologicheskogo “podpolia” geroia-individualista).²⁰⁵

Conclusion

The examples of Alei, Petrov, the Jew Bumshtein, and the nameless muzhichok illustrate different speeches, heteroglossia, and shows that Gorianchikov’s relationship to these subjects is fragmented. He doesn’t fully develop a relationship with any of them; he is a listener, who absorbs their stories and lets them speak, though filtered through his particular noble lens. These different characters also show that the text has neither an

²⁰² PSS 4: 231.

²⁰³ PSS 4: 231.

²⁰⁴ PSS 4: 6.

²⁰⁵ Georgii Fridlender, “Put’ Dostoevskogo ot ‘Bednykh liudei’ k romanam 60-kh godov,” in *Istoriia russkogo romana. V dvukh tomakh* (Moscow: Izadatel’stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1962), 418.

overarching theme nor a unifying notion of what constitutes Russian national identity and Russian colonial subjects. Rather, there are different ethnic voices that could not be subsumed into one cohesive narrative since their voices were so unique and different from each other. Any attempt by Gorianchikov to make sense of this diversity only underscores the fragmentation of these characters. Although *Notes* gives voice to multiethnic subjects of the empire, it still privileges Gorianchikov's voice over the other convicts. And though Gorianchikov's dialogues with the convicts are abrupt, they remain an example of heteroglossic discourse. For Bakhtin, dialogue is successful when the interlocutor and the listener are equal, which implies that the listener and the interlocutor are both subjects.

Even though Gorianchikov called his release from prison a "resurrection from the dead," his life after prison is ascetic, without much social interaction; thus the only "life" shown was when he was with the peoples of the empire in the prison. This was the hardest time physically and psychologically, and yet it was also his most enlightening time, making him a "resurrected man" through his contact with the peoples. Gorianchikov's way of life as a recluse following his release suggests that the process of institutionalization he had undergone in the stockade had changed his personality, which is often the case with former prisoners. Once the contact with the prisoners was removed, his life became monotonous and reclusive, and he recreated his path to resurrection only through writing the *Notes*. Gorianchikov wants to comprehend the Russian people and bring them in his understanding to the purview of Russian consciousness. In the end, he developed a Russian colonial approach and way of dealing with the variety of peoples he saw in prison.

Since there was no one unifying view on the goals of Russian ethnography—whether ethnographers should be studying peoples of the empire (Völkerkunde), as was the position of Russian German scholar Karl von Baer, or should one pursue exploration of only Russian people (Volkskunde), the position of the ethnographer of Nikolai Nadezhdin—Gorianchikov’s constant effort to classify everyone he meets in prison according to their ethnic and religious identity recalls the position taken by Baer.²⁰⁶ Baer, who spoke Russian poorly, advocated for the study of Russian colonial subjects and relied upon the Western European notion of science that constructed a hierarchy of races and cultures by placing the French, Germans, and English on top. Thus, the purpose of his “imperial ethnography” was to educate the “uncivilized peoples,” enlighten them, and, surprisingly, document their vanishing cultures for future generations. This racially charged view is still reflected by the judge Kotliarevsky in Bogoraz’s sketches on the Gomel’ pogrom of 1903, who argued that Jews’ self-defense was motivated by their primitive nature, which was, of course, dismissed by Bogoraz and the court. I will discuss this further in Chapter Three. In her book *Homo Imperii*, Marina Mogilner points out the conservative nature and resistance to Darwinian theory within the Russian Geographical Society in St. Petersburg in the beginning of the 1860s, whereas Moscow scholars were fully embracing the new groundbreaking theory of evolution.²⁰⁷ She argues that the Moscow Imperial Society of the Lovers of the Natural Sciences, Anthropology and Ethnography (founded 1863; Imperatorskoe obshchestvo liubitelei estestvoznaniia, antropologii i etnografii) had not come to a consensus regarding the role of this new

²⁰⁶ See “Introduction” and Nathaniel Knight’s chapter on “Science, Empire, and Nationality: Ethnography in the Russian Geographical Society, 1845-1855,” in *Imperial Russia: New Histories for the Empire*, eds. Jane Burbank and David L. Ransel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 108.

²⁰⁷ Marina Mogilner, *Homo Imperii: A History of Physical Anthropology in Russia* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 28-29.

anthropological knowledge, and its role for the Russian empire or for national purposes.²⁰⁸ Baer's position mirrors that of Gorianchikov, who, on one hand, educates the Muslim Alei to read in Old Church Slavonic, and on the other hand, he learns from the only Jew Bumshtein about the Jewish prayers, although through a dismissive tone and Russian-centered lens. This also evokes the paternal advice Dostoevsky gave to Valikhanov: he advised him to seek a Western European education and after it write about his own Kirghiz people (in fact, Kazakh) and the Steppe in order to become a mediator between his culture and Russians. Through this fragmented representation of the peoples of the empire, Dostoevsky wanted to serve the colonial ethnography of Baer. Fragmentation becomes an essential characteristic of colonial power. Therefore, there is no one single dominating colonial ethnography. Rather, there are multiple heterogeneous and heteroglot narratives. Through his resurrection Gorianchikov became a proponent of Russian nationalist views. He is advocating the expansion of the empire and the bringing of order and civilization to the lives of these peoples to give them a recognized position and status, which is all in the purview of Russian religion and Russian objections. He is witnessing not the success of the empire, but the challenges the empire faces in consolidating itself. Essentially, the subtext is that he sends a *mission civilisatrice*; he presents the tensions and he makes clear that one has to come to grips with it, though it is not clear how. Gorianchikov needs the subaltern for his resurrection, which, on the one hand, reflects Bakhtin's position on the necessity of the other (in the sense of the interlocutor) for self-realization, although the Other does not gain anything from it. On the other hand, Gorianchikov actively engages with the subaltern subjects, as well as with the Old Believers, with the Russian peasants and even with Russian criminals from the

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 43.

lower classes. This helps him to understand his Russianness, his unique and distinct imperial mission. The imperial necessity of exploring the colonial other is expressed in Rudyard Kipling's famous line, "What do they know of England, who only England know?" ("The English Flag," 1891). This underscores that in order to understand the expanding borders of the empire, its institutions and acquired peoples, one had to engage with the subaltern and travel beyond one's own pale, thus gaining the awareness of the differences that formed through the building and maintenance of a much larger empire. In addition to this, Gorianchikov experiences "the white man's burden," as presented in another notoriously famous Kipling poem "The White Man's Burden" (1899), which supported cultural imperialism. Gorianchikov, in turn, realizes his limits for educating and civilizing the subjects of the empire, thus experiencing "the white man's burden," and undergoing resurrection from being dead and now assuming a new enlightened life. The fragmentation of different voices and the consequent representation of disconnected narrative perspectives point to and anticipate the structures of the Modernist novel. Dostoevsky's semi-fictional work *Notes* established a paradigm for prison and literary ethnographic writing that would be incorporated, cited, and reacted to by Vladimir Korolenko, Vladimir Bogoraz, and Semyon An-sky, who belonged to the subsequent generation of writer-ethnographers that my larger project explores.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁹ Although it is beyond the scope of this work, a genre of prison narratives that would be so prominent for a Polish writer Gustav Herling, who wrote about his Gulag experience before Varlam Shalamov, Evgeniia Ginzburg and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Dostoevsky's work prescripts these works on Gulag experience.

Chapter Two: Embracing Peoples of Empire in Vladimir Korolenko's Stories

This chapter argues that the genre of literary ethnography underwent an evolution in Vladimir Korolenko's Siberian stories, written during and after his exile. In the preceding chapter, I explored Dostoevsky's literary ethnographic representation of a diverse ethnic population in *Notes from the House of the Dead*, the notion of the fragmentation of the imperial experience, and his engagement with two imperial ethnographers, Chokan Valikhanov and Petr Semenov Tian-Shanskii. In this chapter, I show that there is thematic and stylistic continuity between Dostoevsky's and Korolenko's exilic writings, as well as differences, notably in the ways Korolenko incorporated ethnic voices. I argue that, in his stories, Korolenko revealed centrifugal forces by showing the cultural hybridity of Russian and Jewish culture in the Pale. Both employed heteroglossia, although its function differed in their respective texts. This chapter examines the similarities and differences between Dostoevsky's and Korolenko's literary ethnographic writing. It discusses the chronotope of Siberia and situates Korolenko within the context of imperial ethnographic works carried out during the time of his exile. To illustrate the evolution of the genre of literary ethnography, I examine Korolenko's stories "Makar's Dream" ("Son Makara," 1883), "Fedor the Homeless" (Fyodor Bepriiutnyi, 1885), the "Ukrainian tale" (subtitle) "The Day of Atonement. Yom Kippur" ("Sudnyi den'. Iom-Kippur. Malorusskaia skazka," 1890), "At Night" ("Noch'iu. Ocherk," 1888), and his memoir *The History of My Contemporary (Istoriia moego sovremennika, 1909-1920)*.

Korolenko differs from Dostoevsky in his creation of his own unique narrative mode and heteroglossic style of literary ethnographic narratives. He engaged with

Dostoevsky's *Notes* on three distinct levels. First, he engaged thematically with the ethnographic explorations of the Russians and the aliens of the empire. Secondly, he utilized a different narrative perspective, by presenting his ethnographic material by giving voice to the inorodtsy at the expense of his ethnic Ukrainian and Russian characters. Thirdly, Korolenko's conceptual relationship towards different ethnic groups differed from Dostoevsky's. Korolenko's stories displayed a move away from ethnocentrism and toward a more polycentric, heteroglossic poetics of representing aliens and Russians.

Born in Zhitomir, Ukraine, in the Volhynia area of the Pale of Settlement just north of Podolia and not far from An-sky's and Bogoraz's birthplaces, Vladimir Galaktionovich Korolenko (1853-1921) was exposed not only to his own Russian and Ukrainian cultures, but also to Jewish and Polish cultures from his early years.²¹⁰ The exposure to heterogeneous cultural experiences, and his awareness of different social classes and denominations, informed Korolenko's poetics as well as his position in relation to them. Similarly to Dostoevsky and Bogoraz, he was arrested and exiled to Siberia, although under different circumstances and at different points in time. Siberia becomes a site of a productive exile, in Edward Said's interpretation of exile, for Korolenko and Bogoraz or, in Dostoevsky's case, imprisonment.²¹¹

Korolenko was arrested for the first time in 1876 on a charge of participating in revolutionary activities. He was arrested again in 1881 because he refused to sign a

²¹⁰ Zhitomir (also Zhytomyr) is located in the Northern part of the Ukraine. By the time Korolenko was born in 1853, the Jewish population of Zhitomir counted more than 11,000 Jews. 90 percent of them were involved in trade in the 1860s. Benyamin Lukin, "Zhytomyr," in *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, accessed April, 18, 2015, <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Zhytomyr>.

²¹¹ Edward Said, "Reflections on Exile," in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 173-87.

statement of allegiance to the new tsar, Alexander III, and as a result, was sent to a Yakut village in Siberia from 1881-1884. Although he spent less time in exile than Dostoevsky or Bogoraz, like them, he turned his exile into a productive experience by exploring and writing about the lives of the common people that surrounded him— political prisoners, peasants, and indigenous peoples. He began his exile in Siberia after Dostoevsky had already died and before Bogoraz would spend ten years in the Yakutia area, in Kolymsk, in 1889-1899. Although Bogoraz and Korolenko were both exiled in Yakutia, their places of exile were more than fourteen hundred miles apart.

In many ways, Korolenko's life, his exile, his social and political views, and his participation in defending Votiaks (Udmurt people in the Multanskoe affair, 1892-1896)²¹² and Jews (Beilis trial, 1913) anticipated the future works of his contemporaries Bogoraz and An-sky.²¹³ His writings that came out of his exile experience with the diverse ethnic groups were in dialogue with Dostoevsky's works, in a Bakhtinian sense. Similarly to them, he spoke on behalf of different colonial subjects of the empire including Russian peasants, indigenous peoples (Yakuts), sectarians, Udmurt people and Jews. He shared with Dostoevsky, Bogoraz, and An-sky the social and political ideas of

²¹² The Udmurt (Votiaki) peasants from the village of Old Multan in Viatka province were falsely accused of human sacrifice to pagan gods. The lawyer Anatolii Koni defended them during their trial. In the end, they were acquitted. In the 19th c., the Udmurt people were called Votiaks. They belong to the Finno-Ugric linguistic group. They spoke both the Russian and the Udmurt languages, the latter of which belongs to the Uralic group of Finno-Ugric languages. P. Matveev in the *Brokgauz-Efron Encyclopedia* defined them as "aliens of the Finnish tribe" (inorodtsy finskogo plemeni). They lived in the southeastern part of the Russian empire. Their population at the end of the 19th c. was 380,000, out of which 10,000 were pagans. P. Matveev, "Votiaki," in *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, eds. F.A. Brokgauz and I.A. Efron, accessed February 10, 2015, http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/brokgauz_efron/24396/%D0%92%D0%BE%D1%82%D1%8F%D0%BA%D0%B8.

²¹³ On the Beilis trial, see Robert Weinberg, *Blood Libel in Late Imperial Russia: The Ritual Murder of Mendel Beilis*, Indiana-Michigan Series in Russian and East European Studies (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014); Harriet Murav, "The Beilis Ritual Murder Trial and the Culture of Apocalypse," *Cardozo Studies in Law and Literature* 12.2 (Autumn-Winter, 2000): 243-63.

populism (narodnichestvo).²¹⁴

I refer to Korolenko's writings from the time of his exile as Siberian stories, although he never titled them as such. Similarly to Dostoevsky, Bogoraz, and An-sky, Korolenko was not "an armchair ethnographer." Rather, he learned about the peasants and indigenous peoples of Siberia from direct contact with them in the Amga settlement, in Yakutia. In the works of these three writers, the chronotope of Siberia functions in different ways, in accordance with their ideological views and aesthetic style.

Like the other writers, Korolenko creates a text that uncovers the ideological position of the writer vis-à-vis the imperial imaginary. The intersection and interaction of these different players and semantic discourses generate a text that inevitably sets off and defines itself against the imperial imaginary, because the notion of empire is always central to these literary ethnographic narratives. Korolenko's story "Makar's Dream" evokes the imperial imaginary by showing a dream-like narrative as well as the process of assimilation, whereby a Russian loses his linguistic and ethnic markers, and acquires their Yakut²¹⁵ equivalents. Korolenko's text functions ethnographically by highlighting indigenous cultures and the hybrid nature of Russian peasants vis-à-vis those indigenous cultures, as we see in his "Siberian stories" and memoir. The text also functions as a polemic in defense of those falsely accused of ritual murders – Votiaks and Jews –

²¹⁴ For more on Dostoevsky and populism, see Joseph Frank's "Narodnichestvo: Russian Populism" in his book *Dostoevsky: A Writer in His Time* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 682-93.

²¹⁵ In 1904, a friend of Korolenko's, a traveler and statistician named Leonid Lichkov, defined the Yakut people in the *Brokgauz-Efron Encyclopedia* as a tribe belonging to the Turkic-Tatar group with a population of more than 210,000, who looked like Kirghiz people and whose territory was more than twice the size of France. The majority were Christians, however they also observed the shamanic tradition.

²¹⁵ The fact that the Yakuts were described as looking like Kirghiz reveals how some officials, like Lichkov, homogenized the imperial Other. The Kirghiz and Yakut people are physically very distinct from each other. For Lichkov, the geographical terrain in Asia is one homogeneous space inhabited by people who all look like Kirghiz. Nowadays, Yakutia is called the Republic of Sakha and belongs to the Russian Far East area, with a population of less than one million.

demonstrating a strong ethical position because of his personal dedication to justice. Finally, Korolenko's texts criticize imperial structures of power both directly and indirectly, and in particular the tsarist regime for its policies towards political prisoners. Since Dostoevsky, Korolenko, and Bogoraz had different ideological and aesthetic positions, they created different written responses to their exilic environment.

In his collection of documentary sketches *Land! Land! (Zemlia! Zemlia!)*, published posthumously in Paris in 1922, Korolenko defines narodnichestvo as the movement of the "enlightened society" (prosveshchennogo obshchestva) that represented the interests and the well-being of the simple people (*prostogo naroda*), of that "large gray, impersonal yet and dark majority" ("togo ogromnogo serogo, bezlichnogo poka i temnogo bol'shinstva").²¹⁶ This was an established image in the nineteenth-century liberal discourse of the Russian people as an undifferentiated and potentially threatening mass. Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, each in his own way, attempted to introduce differentiation and the linguistic, social, and ethnographic concretization of their peasant communities. Populist writers developed different ways of representing peasant characters in literary works. Following Nikolai Konstantinovich Mikhailovskii (1842-1904), the influential theorist of populism, Korolenko applied the term *narod* mostly to the peasant class (krest'ianstvo). As the title of his sketches suggest, he advocated the populist's idea of giving people (narod) the land as a matter of natural justice. Populist writers developed several different ways of representing peasant characters in their literary works. Korolenko mentions Nikolai Zlatovratskii (1845-1911), who tended to idealize the peasants. Gleb Uspensky (1843-1902), in turn, provided realistic depictions

²¹⁶ Vladimir Korolenko, *Land! Land!*, accessed February 10, 2015, http://az.lib.ru/k/korolenko_w_g/text_1921_zemli.shtml

of peasant life. For Korolenko, Uspensky possessed “an incredible hunch for truth, infiltrated with the true love for people, he bitterly mourned about the illiteracy of people, their ignorance, their narrow-mindedness, vices, about all that that he [...] sometimes called ‘peasant beastliness’.”²¹⁷ Therefore, Uspensky tried to give a balanced picture of the Russian peasantry that included an acknowledgement of its vices and socio-cultural flaws. At the same time, he declared that his mission was not to idealize the peasant (*muzhik*). Rather, he exposed the peasantry’s untamed nature and swinishness (*muzhitskoe svinstvo*). At the same time, he wrote about their plight, admitting that it was his mission to make the educated classes aware of their complicity in the peasantry’s miserable living conditions.

Gleb Uspensky was a major influence on Korolenko’s social views, as well as on his writing. Korolenko met him after his exile in Nizhnii Novgorod in 1887. In his memoirs, Korolenko gives an account of Uspensky’s fierce and skillful criticism of physical anthropology. During his meeting, a very concerned Uspensky asked Korolenko whether he had read a lecture on the median type of a prostitute (*srednego tipa prostitutki*) by a woman doctor, whose name was never mentioned in the text, ironically given for the benefit of the Women’s Higher Courses (*vysshie zhenskie kursy*). This female lecturer was a criminal anthropologist, Praskov’ia Nikolaevna Tarnovskaia (née Kozlova), who was interested in identifying female criminal types by examining Russian prostitutes and murderers.²¹⁸ As Marina Mogilner shows, Tarnovskaia was “obsessive[ly]

²¹⁷ Ibid. For a discussion of *narodnichestvo* in Gleb Uspensky and Valdimir Korolenko, see Henrietta Mondry’s *Pisateli-narodniki i evrei: G.I. Uspenskii i V.G. Korolenko (po sledam “Dvesti let vmeste”)* (St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 2005).

²¹⁸ Laura Engelstein showed that Tarnovskaia’s work on the female criminal type was influential on Cesare Lambroso. For more on Tarnovskaia’s views about criminal anthropology, see “Female Sexual Deviance,” in *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 133-64.

concern[ed] with the racial uniformity of her material.”²¹⁹ A proponent of Cesare Lambroso’s ideas about physical anthropology and the existence of a distinct physical criminal type, Tarnovskaia sought to prove the existence of a Russian racial criminal type. It was the time of the popularity of Lombroso’s (1836-1909) theories and of physical anthropology. Mogilner shows that for her study, Tarnovskaia chose only ethnic Russian females from Russia itself, rather than its borderlands, thus making her material homogenous “in terms of race.”²²⁰ Whereas her contemporaries had identified a racially mixed criminal type, Tarnovskaia wanted to show that “her Russian female murderers presented a racially homogenous Great Russian group” and, moreover, “embodied the Russian national degeneration and the Russian national norm, and thus stood for the idea of a modern, racially uniform Russian nation and society.”²²¹

Uspensky conveyed to Korolenko the main argument of the lecture. The lecturer argued that the median type of a prostitute was inferior to the average kind of woman. Korolenko points out that one detail particularly struck Uspensky. The lecturer stated that these prostitutes’ jaws were one and a half millimeter longer than that of a “good-natured woman.”²²² Uspensky was most offended by the fact that the lecturer’s argument employed statistical data taken from physical anthropology, because he knew very well that these prostitutes were “victims of social conditions and of social disorder”

²¹⁹ Marina Mogilner, *Homo Imperii: A History of Physical Anthropology in Russia* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 339.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 340.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 341.

²²² V. Korolenko, “O Glebe Ivanoviche Uspenskom. Cherty iz lichnykh vospominanii,” in *Otoshedshie: Ob Uspenskom, o Chernyshevskom, o Chekhove* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia pervoi trudovoi Spb. trudovoi arteli, 1910), 18-22. This essay was first published in the monthly literary journal *Russkoe bogatstvo*, whose editor was the author himself, in 1902. See *Russkoe bogatstvo*, vol. 5 (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia N.N. Klobukova, 1902): 137-66.

(obshchestvennykh uslovii i obshchestvennogo neustroistva).²²³ Like Uspensky, he decried the scientific notion of “the lowest type” of woman and the way in which anthropological measurements were interpreted as elements in natural predetermination (prirodnykh predopredelenii). These ideas reflect a belief in Lambroso’s criminal anthropology, which considered abnormalities in the size of skulls, jaws, and parts of bodies as a direct indicator of a delinquent nature. Korolenko surprisingly decided to “defend” (zastupit’sia) this position, provided that the “numbers” were correct and to explore whether these prostitutes might have been the “victims of organic predispositions” (zhertvy organicheskikh predraspolozhenii).²²⁴ In turn, Uspensky was appalled by Korolenko’s position that prostitution was not caused by a protruding jaw, rather than by a “woman’s virtues [and] callousness.”²²⁵

As Mogilner states, *narodnost’* was not the only notion that was prevalent in the nineteenth-century. Such concepts as race, *plemia* (tribe), and the notion of narod (people) not only existed alongside, but also often “competed for academic prominence.”²²⁶ Marina Mogilner argues against Nathaniel Knight’s position, which showed that *narodnost’* was an essential concept for defining the ethnicity in the

²²³ Ibid., 18.

²²⁴ Ibid., 19.

²²⁵ Ibid., 19. The discussion about the plight of the prostitutes occupied Korolenko after Uspensky’s death. In his very short essay titled “Random Notes. Sonia Marmeladova at the Lecture of Madame Lukhmanova” (Sluchainye zametki. Sonia Marmeladova na lektzii g-zhi Lukhmanovoi, 1904), he turned to the defense of women whose circumstances forced them to sell themselves, criticizing the position of the then-popular female writer Nadezhda Lukhmanova (1840-1907). Lukhmanova, who used her polarity to lecture about morality (nравstvennost’), stated that prostitution was a result of upbringing and environment, and called prostitutes “beasts.” Korolenko, in turn, attacked her assumption by literally giving voice to one of the “fallen women” who contested this view. This also illustrated that Korolenko was engaged in the polemics of everyday life. Whether it was a false accusation of ritual murder, or the defense of prostitutes, he was compelled to use his writing to challenge false assumptions. See Vladimir Korolenko, *Sobranie Sochinenii*, vol. 10 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1955), 672-77. This was an ethical position that his contemporaries Vladimir Bogoraz and Semyon An-sky would employ as well.

²²⁶ Ibid., 82.

beginning of the nineteenth-century. On the contrary, Mogilner challenges this view by revealing that the discourse of racial difference had, in fact, a tremendous impact “on ethnographic thinking and the politics of knowledge in the empire.” French writer Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau (1816-1882) developed ideas of the Aryan race in his work *An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Race* (1853) as well as Houston Chamberlain (1855-1927) in his work *The Foundation of the Nineteenth Century* (1899). While Knight privileges the concept of *narodnost*’ and dismisses the influence of racial discourse in the empire, I, however, intend to show that racial and biological language coexisted in the works of Korolenko with the concept of *narodnost*’.²²⁷

We can safely assume that Korolenko was familiar with Dostoevsky’s *Notes from the House of the Dead*. In his documentary sketch “O Glebe Ivanoviche Uspenskom” (“On Gleb Ivanovich Uspensky”), he recalls that during his first encounter with Uspensky, they talked about Dostoevsky. He also reveals that he reread (*perechityvaet*) *Crime and Punishment*. For his part, Uspensky confessed that he could not read Dostoevsky because of the psychological intensity of his works. He recounted a recurring experience that would happen to him on the train. Once in it, he would see an ordinary passenger sitting across from him, but suddenly (Bakhtin’s famously pointed out that in Dostoevsky’s text there is no smooth transitions, rather the events change abruptly), he would stretch his arm towards him and would try to strangle him, and he, Uspensky, would not be able to do anything about it. Uspensky’s reservations concerned the way in which a Dostoevsky novel would deal with intense human suffering, misery and villainy

²²⁷ Marina Mogilner, “Beyond, Against, and with Ethnography: Physical Anthropology as a Science of Russian Modernity,” in *An Empire of Others: Creating Ethnographic Knowledge in Imperial Russia and the USSR* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014), 81.

that would be enough for several novels.²²⁸

Siberia as a Chronotope

Siberia is a chronotope of Russian culture. The chronotope, an intertwined intersection of time and space that condenses the plot, as defined by Bakhtin, brings the centrifugal linguistic and ethnic forces into the center of the empire. Prior to the arrival of political exiles from the European part of Russia during the nineteenth-century, much of Siberia was a terra incognita without literary representations. The Decembrists' predecessor, Protopop Avvakum (1620-1682) was the first to write about Siberia. Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Korolenko, and Bogoraz began the textual colonization of Siberia. These writers' works show that Siberia began to lose its image as an unknown space and became textualized and conceptualized as related to the geographic, political, and ethnic space of the more familiar spaces of central Russia.

In Russian imperial ethnographic texts, Siberia serves as a locus of exile and imperial ostracism, and also provides material for writers' works. Harriet Murav points out the multiple functions of the depictions of Siberia in Dostoevsky's, Korolenko's, and Chekhov's works. She shows that Siberia could be represented either as a secular space, characterized by Romantic works, where the protagonist's plight is in contrast with the foreign landscape; and by the works of realist writers, whose characters distance

²²⁸ V. Korolenko, "O Glebe Ivanoviche Uspenskom. Cherty iz lichnykh vospominanii," in *Otoshedshie: Ob Uspenskom, o Chernyshevskom, o Chekhove* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia pervoi trudovoi Spb. trudovoi arteli, 1910), 10-13. Uspensky extensively criticized statistics that were circulating in the press and referred to "one and a half millimeter" in his sketches "'A Quarter' of a Horse" (*'Chetvert'' loshadi*, 1885) and "Receipt" (*Kvitantsiia*, 1888) published under the title *Living Numbers. From the Notes of the Village Philistine* (*Zhivye tsifry. Iz zapisok derevenskogo obyvatelya*).

themselves from the local people by asserting “an ethnographic/scientific stance.”²²⁹ Alternatively, Siberia is depicted through Christian theology as “hell, purgatory, or heaven.”²³⁰ The role of Siberia was not only limited to the depiction of its secular and sacred aspect, but also shows that the line between the two of them is often blurred. She begins her explorations of the Siberian topos with the Decembrist poetry of Kondratii Ryleev (1795-1826), who did not experience Siberian exile but was hanged in St. Petersburg along with four other Decembrists. Iurii Lotman believed that Ryleev’s poetry set up “a model for behavior” for Decembrists’ wives who followed their husbands into their Siberian exile.²³¹ My interpretation of the Siberian topos in Korolenko proposes an additional model for reading his Siberian stories as culturally hybrid texts - where Russian and Yakut cultures, customs, clothing, food, languages, and folk beliefs are intertwined, and where Russians adopt Yakut cultures and became “Yakutified” (ob”iakutisia). In my previous chapter on Dostoevsky, I argued that his *Notes* establish a template for succeeding generations of writers in Siberian exile. It is most likely that Korolenko would have read *Notes*. Certainly the stories he conceived and wrote in Siberian exile echo Dostoevsky’s tropes and topoi, although, of course, these works represent a major departure from Dostoevsky. The important difference lies in the ways in which Korolenko’s narrator, the storyteller, positions himself in relation to the Others he describes, whether they be Russian peasants, or members of ethnic indigenous peoples. While non-Russian characters are often othered in Korolenko’s stories, in terms of their dialogue and cultural presence, the centrality of their life experiences concerns

²²⁹ Harriet Murav, “‘Vo Glubine Sibirskikh Rud’: Siberia and the Myth of Exile,” in *Between Heaven and Hell: The Myth of Siberia in Russian Culture*, eds. Galya Diment and Yuri Slezkine (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993), 95.

²³⁰ Ibid., 95.

²³¹ Ibid., 96.

the relationships they had with Russian characters.

In *Notes*, the narrator is an important presence in the events described, whereas in Korolenko's stories, the narrator fulfills a strictly utilitarian function. It is through the words of the narrator that the common folk are at the center. The narrator lets them speak in their own words while including an idiosyncratic authorial voice that often frames the story, and covers the individual character voices and viewpoints that create a Bakhtinian heteroglossia. This is a procedure that recalls the one in Dostoevsky's *Notes*. While both writers rely on heteroglossia, the multivoicedness in Korolenko's stories functions differently because the overarching voice of the narrator is much more neutral in tone and depersonalized than that of Gorianchikov in *Notes*. Dostoevsky's Gorianchikov seems to want to Russify the young Muslim prisoner Alei whom he meets in Siberia. But Korolenko, by contrast, shows the opposite flow of culture: his literary hero "goes native," becoming more like a Yakut than a Russian. There are many topoi in Korolenko's memoir that are reminiscent of Dostoevsky's *Notes*, although he did not divide Russians and Yakut people into separate groups, but rather gave them textual equality. The narrative voice treats Russian and Yakuts equally, so that the text does not privilege one or another group.²³²

²³² Mark Azadovskii, philologist, folklorist and professor at Leningrad University whose student was Yuri Lotman, wrote that during Korolenko's exile in Amga settlement, in Yakutia, he did not romanticize and exoticize Siberia, but rather presented Yakut people and Russians as "equal." Azadovskii mostly focuses on the depiction of the Siberian landscape in Korolenko's work, which is relevant to the manner in which characters exhibit strong and emotionally vivid responses to the Siberian environment. As Azadovskii focuses on this aspect of Korolenko's work, he only briefly mentions the ethnographic aspect of his semi-fictional memoirs *History of My Contemporary* (*Istoriia moego sovremennika*, 1909-1920) and his short stories. Azadovskii was a collector of the folklore of the Lena river region and that is why he was interested in Korolenko's material on Yakut songs. Mark Azadovskii, "Iakutiia v tvorchestve Korolenko," in *Stat'i o literature i fol'klore* (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1960), 489-502.

Where Makar Didn't Herd His Calves

“Makar’s Dream” (“Son Makara,” 1883), was written in the Amga settlement, in Yakutia, during Korolenko’s exile. It was published two years later in the journal *Russian Thought* (*Russkaia mysl’*) in 1885. The prototype of the main character is based on a real peasant, Zakhar Tsykunov, in whose house Korolenko lived for some part of his exile. In the ten volume collected works of Korolenko, published in Moscow in 1953, one could even see a drawing of Zakhar.²³³

“Makar’s Dream” exemplifies a hybrid ethnographic genre that comprises Russian and Yakut folkloric elements and follows the convention of the Russian Christmas story.²³⁴ The story also expands it and redefines its genre through this unique combination of Russian and indigenous Yakut cultures. The narrative is underpinned by a matrix of folkloric topoi and tropes. On Christmas Eve, Makar from the Yakut taiga, a peasant who is also a hunter, leaves his house and gets drunk. Before returning home, he goes to the forest to check on his traps. There, he encounters his village rival, Aleshka, and fights with him for a red fox, which was caught in one of the traps but escapes. After losing the battle with Aleshka, he falls asleep and dies. Immediately following his death is a dreamlike sequence that Makar, or some dimension of him, experiences. Before seeing the dream, Makar fantasizes about finding the miraculous “mountain,” a place of salvation. In his dreamlike experience, Makar meets a priest named Ivan, who had died four years before. Ivan takes him to a divine judgment in front of the Great Toyon (starosta, an internal title for the head of the Yakut community). Makar is first punished

²³³ V.G. Korolenko, *Sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomoakh*, vol.1 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1953), 486.

²³⁴ Another examples of the Christmas story are Gogol's “Noch' pered rozhdestvom” (1831), Dostoevsky's “Mal'chik u Khrista na elke” (1876), Nikolai Leskov's “Na kraiu sveta. Rozhdestvenskii rasskaz” (1875), “Khristos v gostiakh u muzhika. Rozhdestvenskii rasskaz” (1881).

for his drunkenness and his deceitful behavior, and turned into a gelding (merin) for the church custodian. However, Toyon's son suddenly appears and interrupts this judgment by letting the poor man speak in his own defense. Makar speaks so eloquently while confessing his misfortunes that he reverses his fate; the side of the scale with his sins goes up, and the side with his virtues goes down.

The short story is subtitled a "Christmas story" (sviatochnyi rasskaz), which was a popular folkloric genre and a form of storytelling on Christmas Eve. People would commonly gather to share stories within the family or village circle on Christmas Eve; the plots would usually include the topos of Christ returning to this world to help the poor and needy. The stories often had a didactic function and frequently had three parts that consisted of hell, earth, and paradise. Makar's dream is also composed of three parts, although the correspondence of the three realms is ambiguous.

Yurii Lotman's semiotic approach offers a useful framework for analyzing the memoir and short stories by Korolenko. In his famous *Structure of Artistic Text* (*Struktura khudozhestvennogo teksta*), Lotman called literary texts "secondary modeling systems" (vtorichnye modeliruiushchii sistemy). They are secondary because the meaning one gets from the text, which may be "ideological, ethical, fictional, or some other type," is secondary; language, its linguistic capacity, is primary.²³⁵ One of the possible forms of meaning that it relies upon is "multiple exterior recodings (perekodirovka)."²³⁶ One could interpret Makar's toiling and his life prior to his death as hell on earth, and his fantastic experience of seeing a dream with the judgment as paradise. Makar's dream may be examined as a Christian apocryphal tale of a Yakutified

²³⁵ Iurii Lotman, *Struktura khudozhestvennogo teksta*, Brown University Slavic Reprint 9 (Providence: Brown University Press, 1971), 49.

²³⁶ Ibid., 50.

peasant who is rewarded for his earthly suffering, or one could read it as a hybrid folkloric production that balances Russian and Yakut plot elements, and the cultural and religious realities of Russian-Yakut culture. The imperial imaginary, depending on which of the two readings one adopts, acquires a specific presence in the text of the story. It is referenced on multiple levels of tropes and topoi. The literary ethnographic aspect of the dream sequence reveals that the genre of literary ethnography could be executed in any literary form, thus stressing its literary aspect. What makes it, in turn, ethnographic is the transcultural codes of a Russian-Yakut hybrid identity.

The short story begins with the restatement of the folkloric idiom of Makar, who herded his cattle to the “far, gloomy parts of the country, that same Makar on whose head, as is well known, every imaginable misfortune always rains” (“Makar, kotoryi zagnal svoikh teliat v dalekie, ugriumye strany, - tot samyi Makar, na kotorogo, kak izvesto, valiatsia vse shishki.”)²³⁷ This introductory sentence contains two superimposed idioms. The first idiom is about “kuda Makar teliat ne gonial,” referring to the very far places, although in Korolenko, this idiom is a realized topos. Makar indeed lives in the far places, the place that becomes geographically and physically concrete, the place that is materialized as Yakutia. It is also known that this idiom referred to the distant places of political exile. The name Makar denotes a collective name, signifying a poverty-stricken and unfortunate peasant on whose head every imaginable misfortune befalls (“na bednogo Makara vse shishki letiat”). This is the second idiom. Henceforth, from the very start of the story, the narrator situates it into recognizable idioms, so that a well-informed reader would know that nothing good will come out of Makar’s story.

²³⁷ Ibid., 103.

Makar is not really a Russian muzhik as such; instead, he is an ethno-cultural hybrid whose identity embraces both Russian and Yakut elements. In the area of Russian settlements, intersection occur on the level of marriage, language, clothing, and religious belief. “Zhenias’ na iakutkakh, oni perenimali iakutskii iazyk i iakutskie navy. Kharakteristicheskie cherty velikogo russkogo plemeni stiralis’ i ischezali.” “Having married Yakut women, they adopted the Yakut language and Yakut customs. The distinguishing features of the Great Russian tribe were becoming erased and disappeared.”²³⁸ The Russian *muzhik* is a fixture in Russian literature, introduced as a fully-fledged national type in Ivan Turgenev’s *Sketches from a Huntsman’s Album*. Subsequent writers, including Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, developed their own distinct images. In Korolenko’s story, however, the established figure of a Russian muzhik is destabilized. Makar’s identity is fluid, changeable and dynamic. He culturally assimilates to the values and practices of the indigenous Yakut culture. Such an example of such cross-ethnic transfer is also depicted in Tolstoy’s *Cossacks* (1852), in which the eponymous Cossacks are shown wearing Chechen clothing and adopting Chechen ways, even though they retain Russian Orthodox beliefs. We may conclude that such instances of cultural assimilation of Russian peasants living on the border or non-Russian areas were fairly common. This does not imply that all Russian peasants in Yakutia underwent the same process of cultural assimilation as Makar did.²³⁹

²³⁸ Ibid., 103.

²³⁹ Dina Jochelson-Brodsky in her short essay on the physical anthropology of the Yakut, Tungus, and Koriak women, mentioned cases when some of them learned the Russian language. “Zur Topographie des weiblichen Körpers nordostsibirischer Völker.” In *Archive für Anthropologie*, edited by Johannes Ranke and Georg Thilenius, 43. Braunschweig: Druck und Verlag Friedrich Vieweg und Sohn, 1906.

The narrative identifies the salient and defining traces of Russian and Yakut culture, and traces the process by which the former is absorbed by the latter. The narrator blurs the characteristics of the “Great Russian tribe” and Yakut cultures.

Kak by to ni bylo, vse zhe moi Makar tverdo pomnil, chto on korennoi chalganskii krest'ianin. On zdes' rodilsia, zdes' zhil, zdes' zhe predpolagal umeret'. On ochen' gordilsia svoim znaniem i inogda rugal drugikh “poganyimi iakutami,” khotia pravdu skazat', sam ne otlichalsia ot iakutov ni privychkami, ni obrazom zhizni.²⁴⁰

At all events my Makar adamantly remembered that he was a native peasant of Chalgan (the name of the village where he lives). He was born here, here he lived, here he anticipated dying. He was very proud of his knowledge and sometimes cursed others as “foul Yakuts,” although to tell the truth, he differed from Yakuts neither in his habits nor in his life style.

Makar's sense of his own identity demonstrates a number of discontinuities. He refers to Yakuts as “foul,” yet he himself is a Yakutified peasant. The “foul Yakuts” (poganye iakuty) that Makar paradoxically despises, as the narrator admits, were very similar to Makar because he was a Yakutified Russian peasant. The phrase “foul Yakuts” is reminiscent of a well-known fairy tale and epic tale (*byliny*) trope. For example, in the Russian epic poem *Zadonshchina* (*The Battle Beyond the Don*, 1390), Tatars are referred to as “foul Tatars” (poganye tatory). The word *poganyi* denoted the pagan, non-Russian Orthodox, and therefore viewed as unclean and foul in the folk imagination. The omniscient narrator tells us that Makar spoke only “a little bit of Russian and rather poorly, he was dressed in the animal skins, wore *torbasa* (boots made from deer skin, with the skin outside) [...]. [...] when he got ill he called for the shaman, who ragingly gnashing his teeth would jump upon him, trying to scare and cast away from Makar his maladies” (malo i plokho [...]. [...] v sluchae bolezni prizyval shamana, kotoryi

²⁴⁰ V.G. Korolenko, *Sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomakh*, vol.1 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1953), 103.

besnuias', so skrezhetom kidalsia na nego, staraia's' ispugat' i vygnat' iz Makara zasevshuiu khvor'." ²⁴¹ The exorcism of spirits, performed by the shaman, was depicted as relying upon a folktale trope and a recognizable archetype. The shaman brings to mind Koshchei the Immortal (Koshchei bessmertnyi), a villain, a sorcerer and a tsar of the underworld who holds enormous power. The dream contains elements from Russian folklore with signs of Yakut cultural realities such as the head of the *inorodtsy* Toyon, items of clothing and nomenclature, and dual faith (*dvoeverie*).

Makar's dream is multiethnic. In addition to himself, a Russian Yakut peasant, and the Yakuts with whom he interacts, there are also the Tatar settlers (poselentsy-tatary) who sell him a poor-quality vodka, made of tobacco infusion, that, one could argue, as the cause of his predicaments, bringing feebleness, illness and death upon him.

Once intoxicated, he goes to the forest to check on his animal traps. There, he fights for a red fox with his neighbor and enemy Aleshka. In Russian folktales, the fox symbolizes cunning and deceitful behavior. This fight for the fox serves as a recognizable plot catalyst; it anticipates Makar's death, since he loses the battle, along with his hat and gloves, then falls into the snow and dies ("I Makar umer.") ²⁴². Then he sees a dream that is sequentially structured. The transition from death to a post-mortal dream vision is a quasi-modernist device in its fragmented and elliptical meaning. Makar dies not only as a person, but as a man, because he is turned into a gelding. He is turned into a gelding because of his drunkenness, laziness, and swindling. Then the Toyon's son, who evokes Christ, interferes and asks his father to let Makar talk. After Makar's eloquent and moving speech in his defense, telling the sad and tragic story of his life, Toyon and his

²⁴¹ Ibid., 104.

²⁴² Ibid., 114.

angel-workers are so touched that they break down and cry. The content of Makar's speech in front of the Toyon is rendered through free indirect discourse.

The speech is a magical transformative experience. During his lifetime, Makar was a habitual taciturn personality, but now he has obtained "the gift of gab" (dar rechi).²⁴³

On zagovoril i sam izumilsia. Stalo kak by dva Makara: odin govoril, drugoi slushal i udivlialsia. On ne veril svoim usham. Rech' u nego lilas' plavno i strastno, slova gnalis' odin za drugim vperegongu i potom stanovilis' dlinnymi, stroinymi riadami.²⁴⁴

He started to talk and he himself was surprised. It appeared as if there were two Makars: one was talking, another was listening and was astonished. He did not believe his own ears. His speech was flowing smoothly and fervently. Words were chasing one after another as if surpassing and then formed long well-set-up rows.

Contrary to the proverbial Makar, Yakutified Makar is challenging the passive depiction of the poor fellow on whose head all misfortune falls. Here, Makar does not appear "so foolish, as he seemed to be in the beginning."²⁴⁵ Korolenko's story follows the established structure of a Christmas tale in that the suffering protagonist finds himself comforted and rewarded for his earthly pain.

The doubling he experiences literally illustrates the mirror effect of Lotman's conception of dream. Lotman defines "the dream as a semiotic mirror, and everyone sees in it a reflection of one's own language" ("son – eto semioticheskoe zerkalo, i kazhdyi vidit v nem otrazhenie svoego iazyka").²⁴⁶ As Lotman shows, Makar's dream has two functions in the text. One is as a framing device that actualizes the inclusion of a text within the text, and the second functions as the semiotic mirror. Moreover, for Lotman,

²⁴³ Ibid., 126.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 126.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 126.

²⁴⁶ Iurii Lotman, *Semiosfera* (St. Petersburg: Iskusstvo, 2004), 124.

the introduction of the dream is a device of including a “text within the text” (“teksta v tekst”).²⁴⁷

In the very beginning of the story, when Makar is drunk, before seeing his dream-like sequence, he contemplates ending his earthly suffering by finding a mysterious mountain where “he would have neither to plow, to sow, to fell and carry wood, nor even grind wheat [...]. He would find only salvation.”²⁴⁸ The magic mountain is a mytheme, a defining element of the myth, to use Claude Lévi-Strauss’s term, which is present in several mythological folkloric systems. This miraculous mountain has a proleptic function that anticipates the resolution of his destiny, achieved at the end of the story when the heavenly court of the Toyon takes pity upon him. By finding this miraculous mountain, Makar achieves, on the symbolic level, his validation and the realization of his vision. Therefore, his dream about the mountain is symbolically realized. The fact that in Makar’s imagination, the “mountain” exists, although it is so far away that not even the Toyon would find him there, is a source for folkloric topos. If the non-alcoholic portion of Makar’s existence is like hell (his “witchlike” wife scolds and makes his life unbearable) and his inebriated state of being is like living on earth (he accepts his earthly lot), then when he dies and subsequently has a dream, this is paradise.

The fictive world is one in which the boundary between life and death is less clear than in the actual world. The key passage that explains the structure of the life and death continuum is the four sentences at the beginning of Chapter Five.

Kak eto sluchilos’, on ne zametil. On znal, chto iz nego dolzhno chto-to vyiti, i zhdal, chto vot-vot ono vyidet... No nichego ne vykhodilo.

²⁴⁷ Iurii Lotman, “Tekst v tekste,” in *Stat’i po semiotike kul’tury i iskusstva*, intr. S. M. Danielia (Sankt-Peterburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 2002), 76.

²⁴⁸ V.G. Korolenko, *Sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomoakh*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1953), 104.

Mezhdu tem, on soznaval, chto uzhe umer, i potomu lezhal smirno, bez dvizheniia.²⁴⁹

How it happened, he did not notice. He knew that something had to get out of him, and thus he waited so that something would soon come out... But nothing was happening.

Meanwhile, he realized that he had already died, and that was why he was lying still without moving.

The second sentence points out that death is a form of life. It indicates that his soul has not left his body, even though the body is biologically dead.

The text encompasses a lot of folkloric devices, one of which is the trope of a dream.²⁵⁰ The dream that Makar sees is a very recognizable literary device that juxtaposes Russian and Yakut folkloric, and mythological tropes. This cultural hybridity finds expression in a textual symbiosis that combines Russian and Yakut folklore, and an ethnographic element to create a distinct cultural symbiosis predicated on a dialogue between the two cultures. Sometimes we see a cultural substitution (instead of a Russian Orthodox priest, Makar would see a shaman), or the creation of a new composite language (a mixture of Russian and Yakut), or a general mode of intercultural existence where Makar unselfconsciously moves between his Russian and his Yakut cultural environments, while his identity shifts from its Russian to its Yakut aspect. I detect a similar pattern of identity shift, although set in the Jewish traditional milieu in the Pale of Settlement, in An-sky's *The Dybbuk*.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 114.

²⁵⁰ There is intriguing thought-provoking commonality in general plot and specific topoi between Korolenko's "Makar's Dream" and Isaac Peretz's story "Bontshe Shvayg." Yitskhok Leybush Peretz (1852-1915) was a contemporary of Korolenko and shared with him revolutionary socialist views about the plight of Jews. Similar to Korolenko he had, although voluntary, ethnographic experience with the common Jews. Written in Yiddish a decade later, in 1893, Peretz's short story "Bontshe Shvayg," which literally means Bontshe the Silent. The question arises why these two contemporary writers chose the same literary strategy when depicting a poor exploited male character, ethnographically defined, who is rewarded for his earthly suffering in heaven.

The dream contains a number of words that come from Yakut culture; these words are italicized in the text. The narrator gives the Russian translation of the Yakut words in parentheses. The Yakut language belongs to the Turkic linguistic group, which includes an extensive range of languages: Turkish, Chuvash, Kirghiz, Uzbek, Tatar, Turkmen, and Bashkir, among others. The Yakut words denote items of clothing: skin boots – *torbasa*, fur coat – *sona*, fur hat – *berges*; and geographically specific terms like combe – *alas*. Makar's speech is also peppered with Yakut words from everyday communication, such as “do not touch” – *tytyma*, “leave it alone” – *kabys*, talk – *kapse*; a friend – *dogor*; workers – *komnochity*; a father – *agabyt*; a scribbler – *suruksut*; a poor fellow – *barachsan*.²⁵¹ On one hand, the presence of these words in the text confirms the ethnographic aspect of the story; on the other hand, it shows the way in which Makar's identity undergoes Yakutification. Importantly, Korolenko does not use this word in the story, although he does do so in the last volume of his memoir *The History of My Contemporary* (1918-1920). In his memoir, he mentions that after three years of living among the Yakut people, he has learned some Yakut expressions to communicate with the local people.

Significantly, Makar's journey-like dream takes place before the Christian holiday of Christmas, known as *sviatki*, which spans twelve days from the birth of Christ until the Baptism of Christ. This holiday also corresponds with the winter solstice, indicating that the Christian tradition was often reminiscent of pagan traditions, the most famous among which were fortune telling, folk performances and dressing up in costumes of different characters.

²⁵¹ V.G. Korolenko, *Sobranie sochinenii v desiaty tomoakh*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1953), 104-127.

In describing the local peasants as Yakutified (ob”iakutivshiesia krest’iane),²⁵² Korolenko states that Russian peasants were referring to themselves by the word “pagynai,” derived from the corrupt Russian word “pashennyi,” meaning the one who plows, and that they lost “features of Russian national character” (“cherty russkoi narodnosti”).²⁵³ In his memoir, he writes, “Men were still speaking Russian, although with the thick Yakut accent. Women spoke only the Yakut language, [...] as if ashamed to speak Russian.”²⁵⁴ Yakutified peasants did not differ from the indigenous people. Similar to the Yakut, they went to church. Yakuts were Russian Orthodox, although some still believed in shamans. They “perceived priests as Russian Orthodox shamans.”²⁵⁵

In *The History of My Contemporary*, Korolenko reveals that Zakhar Tsykunov, the prototype of Makar, asked the author to send him peasant clothing, “as it is worn in Russia. Before his death he intended to dress as a Russian, so that he could appear in the other world, as it is customary for those ‘tilling the earth;’” “kak nosiat v Rossii. Pered smert’iu on namerevalsia odet’sia po-russki, chtoby iavit’sia na tom svete, kak prilichno ‘pashennomu.’”²⁵⁶

The historian Willard Sunderland states that in the late imperial period, especially in the Eastern borderlands of the empire, there were multiple instances when Russians were losing their Russianness and assimilating to native cultures.

In the northern Caucasus, for example, whole Russian villages looked and lived like gortsy; in the Volga-Ural region, other Russian peasants performed “pagan” sacrifices like Voguls and Maris; on the Kazakh steppe, still others had converted to Islam; and on just about every frontier one came across supposedly “Russian”

²⁵² V.G. Korolenko, *Sobranie sochinenii v desiaty tomoakh*, vol. 7 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1953), 294.

²⁵³ Ibid., 7: 299

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 7: 299.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 7: 300.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 7: 299.

Cossacks who lived according to native ways and preferred to speak native languages.²⁵⁷

The process of Russians “going native,” embracing the Yakut (“Yakutization”) and Samoed (“Samoedized”) cultures, was interpreted by Russian imperial ethnographers, anthropologists, writers, and historians as examples of cultural and racial degeneration.²⁵⁸ Russians were not supposed to be “going native” because they were culturally and racially “superior” of the indigenous peoples of the North, who were viewed by the imperial officials as primitives and classified as aliens (*inorodtsy*). Sunderland points out that the phenomenon of Russians becoming like natives raises the question of what constitutes Russianness and exposes the instability of the constructed notion of Russian identity.²⁵⁹ He explains why Russian settlers were “going native” by stating that, demographically, the local population outnumbered Russians. Another factor explaining this phenomenon was that the Russians who came to Siberia were of a “low cultural level,” as Sunderland states, i.e. the settlers were of different social classes such as peasants, traders, Cossacks, tavern owners, and missionaries who exhibited violent behaviors, drunkenness, debauchery, and robbery.²⁶⁰

Although Sunderland might be helpful in understanding that in the late imperial period, there were cultural examples of Russians behaving like the natives of the Yakut and Samoyed peoples, this process did not fit into colonial imperial ambitions. Instead, it brought into question the (im)mutable nature of Russianness. Korolenko’s story exemplifies the process of a Russian settler “going native” into the Yakut culture that

²⁵⁷ Willard Sunderland, “Russians into Iakuts? ‘Going Native’ and Problems of Russian National Identity in the Siberian North, 1870s-1914,” *Slavic Review* 55.4 (1996): 806.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 814-25.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 807.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 822.

Sunderland explains, although it departs from viewing this cultural assimilation as a symptom of racial or cultural weakness. Korolenko's narrator never raises the question of who is more culturally or racially superior: Russian settlers or Yakuts. Rather, he points to the cultural borrowings that the two peoples undergo. Korolenko and his later friends Bogoraz and Shternberg, whom Sunderland mentions, offer a more nuanced picture of cultural assimilation.

Sunderland mentions the Polish writer Vatslav Seroshevskii (1858-1945), who like Korolenko spent time in Yakutiia as a political exile. In his description of the Yakut people Seroshevskii emphasized their dark skin. Seroshevskii was in Yakutia at the same time as Korolenko; he spent twelve years there, whereas Korolenko spent three years. What Sunderland does not mention is that Seroshevskii's views on Yakuts were more nuanced. In his ethnographic work *Yakuts. Essay on Ethnographic Research (Iakuty. Opyt etnograficheskogo issledovaniia, 1895)*, Seroshevskii wrote that the Yakuts exhibited features of indicating a mixture with many different peoples and races such as of Mongolian, Tungusic, and even "Aryans" (Russians) that contributed to their diverse physical appearances.²⁶¹ He explains that at first all Yakuts look alike, though after a while one starts to discern their idiosyncratic features. A similar reverse perspective existed for the Yakuts, to whom all Russians looked the same because they all had beards. In the Southern part of Yakutiia, the mixed types were prevalent, and were called "Russian origins" ("russkimi rodami"),²⁶² giving the name in the Yakut language. He also mentioned that there was a longstanding custom of Yakut men marrying women from different places. One of the reasons why Russians girls married wealthy native Yakuts

²⁶¹ V.L. Seroshevskii, "Fizicheskie osobennosti plemeni," in *Iakuty: opyt etnograficheskogo issledovaniia*, reprint (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1993), 228.

²⁶² Ibid., 228.

was economic. And it was not only the Russians who were becoming like the Yakuts. Seroshevskii cites the ethnographer Richard Maak (1825-1886), who observed that Tungusic people were becoming Yakutified (ob”iakutilis”).²⁶³

Fedor the Homeless

Korolenko’s story “Fedor the Homeless. From the Stories about the Vagabonds” (Fedor Bespriutnyi. Iz rasskazov o brodiagakh, 1885) narrates an episode from the lives of a group of prisoners (arestanty) crossing the endless space under the stewardship (“shla na slovo”) of an elderly man Fedor, nicknamed the Homeless (Bespriutnyi). It carries on a polemic with Dostoevsky, and shares a number of cross-references and topoi with his *Notes*. There is no dramatic conflict in the story; rather, it is a sketch, a fragment taken from the life of the prisoners. In particular it describes the relationship among the prisoners towards a prisoner nobleman, Semenov, and his relationship towards the main protagonist Fedor the Homeless, the latter’s unfortunate fate, and his status as a wondering man. The story, told in the third person, does not have the framing of Dostoevsky’s *Notes* and is much shorter. Although it was written in Nizhnii Novgorod after Korolenko’s return from exile, it was first published only after his death in 1927 because of censorship.²⁶⁴

The story contains a number of recognizable topoi and reminds us of the didactic elements of the *Notes*. One of them is the relationship between the prisoner nobleman (*barin*) vis-à-vis the people and his didactic function towards them. As a nobleman, Semenov has the privilege of wearing his own civilian clothing and of having a horse-cart

²⁶³Ibid., 231.

²⁶⁴V.G. Korolenko, *Sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomakh*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1953), 487-88.

that he does not use, but rather gives to prisoners for their needs, although he keeps his suitcases with his books on it. One of the books inside is George Henry Lewes's (1817-1878) *The Problems of Life and Mind* (*Voprosy o zhizni i dukhe*), which the Homeless reads in the story. The book consists of four volumes and is not an easy read. Lewes explores metaphysical and scientific methods to understand the psychological and biological aspects of human nature. This again subverts the traditional notion of an uneducated peasant and illustrates that not all peasants in the empire were illiterate. Korolenko's story evokes Dostoevsky's *Notes* not only on the level of the topoi, but also shares the same linguistic markers, the ways in which the prisoners, through the omnipresent narrator, decry the nobleman. In Korolenko's story, the prisoners perceive the nobleman Semenov as a "wee-one" (*mladenets*).²⁶⁵ As noted in Chapter One, in *Notes*, when Petrov washes Gorianchikov's feet in the bathhouse, he calls them "small feet" (*nozhen'ki*), using the diminutive form of feet. Even though Semenov, "the wee-one," differs from the prisoners in his civilian clothing, distinct gait, and noble class, he has a mixed status among them. Sometimes Semenov reminds us of when Gorianchikov was considered a holy fool (*iurodivyi*), and his presence confused and quailed the prisoners.

[...] smeias' za glaza nad barinom kak nad iurodivym, partiia nezametno meniala ton svoikh otnoshenii. Tsinizm i razgul stikhali poroi ne v silu soznaniia, no prosto potomu, chto oshchushchenie pristal'nogo analiziruiushchego vzgliada razlagalo neposredstvennye chuvstva gruboi tolpy i umerialo shirotu razmakha.²⁶⁶

[...] laughing at the nobleman behind his back, as if laughing at the holy fool, the group changed its manner of attitude towards him. The cynicism and the frivolity calmed down not because of its conscious realization, but simply because they felt the intensity of the gaze that was analyzing them, which disintegrated the spontaneous feelings of the coarse crowd and softened the range of its extent.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 178.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 179.

Semenov asks the prisoners questions about their everyday life, including their customs. He himself does not abide by these rules and speaks of them as “unjustified and unreasonable.”²⁶⁷ The narrator states that Semenov is with the people, but, at the same time, he was a loner, “this strange human being was following his own path with the people and at the same time he was a loner” (“etot strannyi chelovek sovershal svoi put’ s liud’mi i vmeste odinokii”).²⁶⁸ He is immersed in his inner work (“pogloshchen kakoi-to vnutrennei rabotoi”).²⁶⁹ Semenov has a questionable and pensive look that penetrates the prisoners and leaves them uncomfortable. “[...] this nobleman was in his essence a ‘wee-one,’ but at the same time they felt that among them was a person who was contemplating about their every dead, almost about their every word.” “[...] etot barin v sushchnosti ‘mladenets’, no vmeste s tem chuvstvovali takzhe, chto sredi nikh est’ chelovek, kotoryi obdumyvaet kazhdyi ikh postupok, chut’ ne kazhdoe slovo.”²⁷⁰

At first, the narrator describes the prisoners as a monotonous crowd, where everyone looks alike. Later, he discerns the “endless differences of alive physiognomies.” The “lively human landscape” consists of prisoners from central Russia (such as Iaroslavl’, Tver’), Eastern Russia, Perm’, and Viatka; all are distinct through physical features and sociolects.

Serye khalaty s tuzami i bukvami na plechakh – voobshche niveliruiut vsiu etu massy. V pervoe vremia svezhemu cheloveku vse eti liudi kazhutsia budto na odno litso, tochno beskonechnoe povtorenie odnogo i togo zhe tiuremnogo ekzempliara. No eto tol’ko pervoe vremia. Zatem vy nachinaete pod odnoobraznoi odezhdoi zamechat’ beskonechnye razlichii zhivyykh fizionomii. [...] Vy nachinaete razlichat’ pod odnoobraznoi obolochkoi i raznye kharaktery, i

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 178.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 179.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 179.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 178.

sosloviia, i professii – vse eto vystypaet, tochno ochertaniia zhivogo landshafta iz-pod serogo tumana.²⁷¹

Grey gowns with the signs of the aces and letters on the shoulders, which made the entire crowd look the same. At first a newcomer perceives this entire people as looking alike, as if the endless repetition of one and the same example of the prisoner. But this seems only at first. Later you start to notice that under the monotonous clothing there are endless differences of lively physiognomies. [...] You start to notice under the monotonous covers different characters, of different classes and professions, all this protrudes as the definite image of the human landscape under the gray fog.

Among the lively landscape, the figure of the Homeless one, with its symbolic meaning, captivates Semenov. The symbolism is in his fatalistic surrendering to the endless Siberian steppe. Semenov's inner thoughts express it as if "[t]he expression of this gait consists in that the person does it not because of his will, but rather because he has fully given himself with complete fatalism to the unknown space"; "vyrazhenie etoi pokhodki sostoit v tom, chto chelovek ne idet po svoei vole, a kak budto otdaetsia s polnym fatalizmom nevedomomy prostranstvy."²⁷² The sentence illustrates the metaphor; the main protagonist Homeless has literally "given himself to the unknown space."

The space that the Homeless leads prisoners to cross is a concrete locale, Barabinskaia steppe, located in the western part of Siberia between the Irtysh and Ob' Rivers, not far from Dostoevsky's place of exile.²⁷³ Semenov's tireless attempt to understand the Homeless raises an existential question about the fate of the prisoners, the same question that also prevails in Dostoevsky's *Notes*. Although there are recognizable similarities between these two texts, they are also very distinct in the way in which the nobleman interacts with the prisoners, particularly with the Fedor the Homeless, and the

²⁷¹ Ibid., 183.

²⁷² Ibid., 183.

²⁷³ On the Barabinskaia steppe (also Baraba), see the article in the *Brokgauz-Efron Encyclopedia*, accessed February 27, 2015, <http://gatchina3000.ru/brockhaus-and-efron-encyclopedia-dictionary/008/8315.htm>.

ways in which the narrator describes the diverse heteroglossic voices of the empire.

Despite the fact that both authors incorporate heteroglossia, its function is carried out in a discrete manner.

Even after his period of exile ended, Korolenko continued to address social issues. In 1893 he travelled as a journalist to New York and to Chicago World's Columbian Exposition²⁷⁴ and wrote down his observations of the lives of Russian, Russian Jewish immigrants and African-Americans in his stories "Without Language" ("Bez iazyka," 1895) and "Sofron Ivanovich" (1902). In Chicago he visited the Union Stock Yards and penned his recollections about it in the short story "Factory of Death" ("Fabrika smerti," 1895).

Two Myths in Korolenko's Short Stories: "The Day of Atonement. Yom Kippur" and "At Night"

In the analyses of the two works "At Night" ("Noch'iu. Ocherk," 1888), and the Ukrainian tale "The Day of Atonement. Yom Kippur" ("Sudnyi den'. Iom-Kippur. Malorusskaia skazka," 1890),²⁷⁵ I argue that the employment of the ethnographic folkloric material serves two functions. First, it examines the nature of certain folkloric myths. Second, it brings into dialogic contact the folkloric systems in Russian, Ukrainian, and Jewish cultures, and treats them with equal degrees of textual respect. At the same time, this juxtaposition identifies the religious and cultural phobias of Russian and Ukrainian Christians against Jews, and also shows the Jewish response to such attitudes.

²⁷⁴ American anthropologist Franz Boas was also at the exhibition working on the exhibits about the Native Americans.

²⁷⁵ In his drafts Korolenko titled the story as "The Kike, the Devil and the Miller" ("Zhid, chert i mel'nik") and "Yom Kippur or the Day of the Atonement" ("Iom-Kipur ili sudnyi den'").

These short stories illustrate literary ethnographic genre because they combine two different folkloric traditions, Russian and Jewish, that depart from the stereotypical depiction of Jews and their customs that could be found in Dostoevsky's *Notes*. Korolenko's representation of Jewish religious practices is in contrast to that of Dostoevsky. In these texts, Korolenko employs ethnographic material to set in proximity to one another juxtapose Russian, Ukrainian, and Jewish beliefs in a way that defines the Jews as both the local (Pale of Settlement) and the imperial Other. Just as there were no physical geographical borders that separated Russian, Ukrainian, and Jewish communities from one another, in the stories, topoi and characters from the three respective popular traditions exist side by side. These stories manifest a fusion of folkloric elements from different cultural traditions, including specific anti-Semitic tropes and topoi, and fictively interrogate these pre-existing popular narratives in order to show the falsehood of traditional anti-Jewish beliefs.

Jewish otherness was defined differently by imperial authorities and by local Christian communities. Officially, Jews belonged to the category of *inorodtsy*, the non-native born. Jews, however, had an additional set of restrictions placed upon them by the imperial state.²⁷⁶ The most important was the obligation to reside in certain areas of the empire, the area known as the Pale of Settlement. Since Jews were not allowed to possess land, their occupations were limited to certain trades such as selling alcohol and goods, craftsmanship, and money lending. The traditional Russian and Ukrainian beliefs about Jews provided another context of estrangement. There were several anti-Jewish narratives such as the myth of the blood sacrifice, exploitation of Christian labor, and money lending.

²⁷⁶ For a discussion of the legal status of Jews, see my "Introduction."

Ukrainians and Jews in the Pale

“The Day of Atonement. Yom Kippur” is a “Ukrainian fairy tale,” as the subtitle of it indicates, about the Jewish tavern-keeper Yankel who, on the day of the Day of Atonement (the Hebrew is Yom Kippur), is punished for behaviors that are traditionally associated in the minds of anti-Jewish Christians with the Jewish Other. The legend, as it is explained in the fairy tale, states that the kikish devil (*zhidovskii chort*) Khapun carries away into the next world and punishes one Jew on Yom Kippur. In the tale, Khapun, as described by a Russian former soldier, is similar in his appearance to a Christian devil in that it is “also black and also [has] horns, has wings like an enormous bat, although it has long *peisy* (side locks) and [wears] a *ermolka* (skullcap for men, kippah), and has power only over Jews.”²⁷⁷ The devil Khapun, whose name literally means a grabber (derived from the verb *khapn* in Yiddish and *khvatat'* in Russian), speaks and acts as a human being. Khapun punishes Yankel for money lending, for exploiting Christian labor, for selling alcohol, and for diluting it. After Khapun listed Yankel’s four sins, the latter, in turn, rebukes the devil, by stating that he does not know his business and by pointing out that the Christian miller Filipp does even worse by exploiting his Christian neighbors. The two make a bet that if Yankel is correct about the miller’s sins, the devil Khapun will release him after a year. Meanwhile, Yankel’s wife and children have to leave the village because of Yankel’s disappearance. No one from the village dares to offer any comfort to them because they are afraid that they would have to pay their loans back. With the disappearance of Yankel, Filipp takes over his tavern and even opens a second one. He dilutes vodka with water, lends villagers money, and plans a life of sexual license by

²⁷⁷ Definitions of *ermolka* and *peisy* are mine; they are not given in the text. Vladimir Korolenko, “Sudnyi den’ (Iom-Kippur),” in *Sobranie sochinenii v desiaty tomakh*, vol. 10 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1954), 275.

marrying one woman while also sleeping with another. He becomes even more avaricious than before. A year later, at night, Khapun descends together with Yankel on Filipp's mill with the intent to release Yankel from his punishment. Khapun meets several villagers who confirm Yankel's statements about Filipp's vices, confessing that he is even worse than the kike (*zhid*). Having heard this, Khapun carries away the miller, although only briefly, because Filipp's beloved Galia sees the devil and calls on him three times to drop Filipp, which is a magic spell that leads the devil to let him go. After that journey, Filipp stops selling vodka and lending money and is transformed into a meek man who never dares to rebuke a Jew ever again. In the text, there are two words used to refer to a Jew, *zhid* and *evrei*. When a Christian describes Yankel and the devil Khapun, he uses the word *zhid*, but when the Jew, Yankel, speaks to the devil Khapun, he refers to him as a *evreiskii chort* (Jewish devil). Even though the word *zhid* was commonly used to refer to a Jew in the nineteenth-century, it already had a derogatory connotation, whereas the word *evrei* was a neutral term. In the twentieth-century, the word *zhid* became an ethnic and religious slur.²⁷⁸

This short story illustrates the ethnographic aspect of Jewish and Ukrainian culture coexisting side by side. Through references to Jewish clothing, religious practices, and everyday life, the reader learns not only how the Ukrainian Jews lived, but which cultural myths they became a part of. The story shows the full range of ethnic accusations against Jews that were widespread among the Orthodox Christian Russian population. The ethnographic lens allows detecting and juxtaposing cultural differences that would be overlooked otherwise.

²⁷⁸ On the history of the word *zhid*, see John Klier's article "Zhid: The Biography of Russian Pejorative," *Slavic & East European Review* 60.1 (1982): 1-15.

Ten days after the Jewish New Year comes the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur in Hebrew), the most significant and holiest holiday in the Jewish calendar. During it, one usually attends a service at the synagogue, prays, fasts, atones for one's sins, asks people for forgiveness, and repents so that the person's life is sealed in the book of life, (i.e., that on this day, God decides how the year is going to be for a person). Thus, by setting the narrative during the Jewish holiday, Korolenko extends the notion of sealing one's fate to the non-Jewish residents. Its effect is that the Christian myth is mirrored back upon the Russians, consequently revealing the mythological anti-Semitism rooted in the nature of the myth itself. Since myths are cultural constructs that provide an explanation for the existence of various categories of peoples, animals, and plant life, as well as the world as a whole, they are effective in fixing collective ethnic, or religious identity in its dissemination and fostering animosity among ethnic groups. Myths are cultural units stories, that cover with meaning every aspect of human life and the world that human beings inhabit.

All these details indicate transcultural borrowing. In the Christian imagination, the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur brings justice to the corrupt Jewish characters, fusing textually appropriated Jewish beliefs with anti-Semitic prejudices. The abundant markers of Jewish culture in this text, formatted as a fairytale, exemplifies a unidirectional cross-cultural transfer of elements of the Jewish religious tradition into a Russian and Ukrainian cultural space, thus resulting in a hybrid literary production: "a Ukrainian fairy-tale" whose author is identified as Korolenko. Acknowledgement of authorship in this case is a device that gives the text an air of authority and reveals its contingent nature. The story is saturated with ethnographic details. The story records a transcultural

practice, the appropriation of one culture's traditional rituals, and the customs of another. The question that arises is if the cross-cultural mythological transfer shown in the Korolenko story is one that was ethnographically prerecorded by him, or if he made it up. For the purpose of this study, the answer is not important because we are interested in the dynamics of the poetics of the genre of literary ethnography, rather than the ways in which one specific work of literary ethnography records or fails to record the empirical cultural transfers that took place in this setting.

Though Jews were always the Other, both on the local level and on the imperial all-Russian level, their lives were always connected to those of their Russian neighbors. The two groups lived in close proximity to one another and knew each other well. Russians constructed several mythological narratives that emphasized the Jews' strangeness.²⁷⁹ Korolenko interweaves Jewish religious customs into his Russian-Ukrainian setting, and undermines the traditional anti-Jewish prejudice among Christians of that time period by enabling the Jews (i.e., the Other) in his stories to have a voice and to inhabit the text while being a part of the Russian cultural and literary discourse. The fact that Korolenko depicted with such ethnographic precision the holiest Jewish holiday, Yom Kippur, shows that growing up in the Pale introduced him to Jewish religious customs and the Yiddish language.

The introductory part of the story has the appearance of a Gogolian pastiche with the narrator using turns of phrase that immediately recall Gogol. It closely resembles

²⁷⁹ For a discussion of the representation of Jews as an ethnic "other" in the works of Gogol, Dostoevsky, and Turgenev, see Elena M. Katz, *Neither With Them, Nor Without Them: The Russian Writer and the Jew in the Age of Realism*, Judaic Traditions in Literature, Music, and Art (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008). Also, Henrietta Mondry, *Exemplary Bodies: Constructing the Jew in Russian Culture, Since the 1880s*, Borderlines: Russian and East European Jewish Studies (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2009).

Gogol's "The Night Before Christmas" (1832) from *Evenings at a Farm Near Dikan'ka*, in which the devil appears and steals the moon, hides it in his pocket, and creates chaos while pranking villagers. Like Gogol's devil, Khapun has an outgoing and talkative personality as, for instance, when he chats with the villagers asking them whether they believe that the miller has to be punished for his greed. In both stories, the devil has only one night to do his nasty deeds. In Gogol's tale, the Jewish presence is limited only to the stereotypical representation of a Jew, a woman selling alcohol. Korolenko offers a more developed treatment of a Jewish character, the tavern-keeper Yankel, who is a full-fledged participant in the proceedings, and is articulate, quick-witted, and sympathetic.

Korolenko's tale begins with the chatty narrator who, like Gogol's, uses colloquial expressions and likes to address the reader directly.

Vot chto: vyidi ty, cheloveche, v iasnuiu noch' iz svoei khaty, a eshche luchshe za selo, na prigorochek, i posmotri na nebo i na zemliu. [...] I skazhi ty mne posle etogo, chego tol'ko, kakikh chudes ne mozhets sluchit'sia von v etoi bozh'e khatke, chto liudi nazyvaiut bozh'im svetom?

Vse mozhets sluchit'sia. Vot s znakomym moim, novo-kamenskim mel'nikom, tozhe raz prikliuchilas' istoriia... Esli vam eshche nikto ne rasskazyval, tak ia, pozhalui, rasskazhy, tol'ko uzh vy ne trebuite, chtoby ia pobozhilsia, chto eto vse pravda.²⁸⁰

I tell you what: go outside, you man, into the bright night outside of your hut, but better even outside of your village, upon the small hill, and look at the sky and at the earth. [...] And tell me after that what more, what kind of miracles could not happen in this God's little hut that people call God's world?

Everything could happen. Well, something once happened to my acquaintance, a miller from Novo-Kamensk... If no one has told you the story, then I suppose I could tell you, but please do not ask me to swear to God that this is true.

As it happens in Gogol's tale, Korolenko's narrator directly addresses the reader using the informal pronoun *ty* (you), and engages with him by weaving him into the story, by

²⁸⁰ Vladimir Korolenko, "Sudnyi den' (Iom-Kippur)," in *Sobranie sochinenii v desiaty tomakh*, vol. 10 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1954), 269-70.

suggesting that they leave the village, by asking questions, and, lastly, by not holding him accountable for the truthfulness of the story. Once again this aspect of the text points to the contingent nature of any fictional textual production, which must rely on the reader's suspension of disbelief. The narrator often digresses from the story, focusing on details that are irrelevant to the plot. Most vital is that these two writers had different aesthetic styles and ethical intentions. Gogol relies on the tradition of the Ukrainian folkloric story, but Korolenko employs a different fictive procedure. Unlike Gogol, who writes in the Romantic fantastic tradition, Korolenko organizes the text around issues of a moral nature. The narrator reveres the traditional sequences of events of the legend, where first the Jew is punished and then the Russian. However, after the greedy miller Filipp takes over Yankel's tavern, he exploits his fellow Christian neighbors even more harshly than did his Jewish predecessor. As a result, the Jewish devil punishes him and takes him away into the other realm.

Gogol and Korolenko

These two writers illuminate the ways in which Jews and their status as Other were represented in the Russian and Ukrainian tales that took place in the same ethnic political area of the Pale of Settlement. Korolenko's tale challenges the ethical position of the reader, indirectly raising the question of whether it is Yankel who inflicts hardship upon the Christian villagers, or is the problem of anti-Semitism rooted in everyday interactions and behaviors, for example, the greedy jealousy of the miller Filipp, who wanted to take the place of the moneylender, Yankel.

Korolenko reverses the myth by projecting it onto the Christians. As with any myth, it tries to explain how things come into existence or why they exist. In this anti-Jewish legend, the Jewish devil, who looks like a traditional devil, although disguised with side-locks and the *kippah*, takes away Jewish and Russian men. As is customary in a fairy tale, justice prevails. In the end, the miller is transformed into a meek man who refrains from anti-Semitic statements. The narrator even playfully insists on reading this tale to anyone who, like Filipp, engages in anti-Semitism, exploitative labor and money lending, as a remedial service.

The tale contains comic effects that reinterpret Jewish customs on the eve of Yom Kippur as seen through the lens of Christian villagers. Since Christians did not understand the meaning of the customs that Jews had to follow on Yom Kippur, they interpreted them in the way that fit their worldview. Some Jewish practices were represented as alien and beast-like. One example of representing Jews as the Other is when the narrator describes Yankel's wife and children praying during Yom Kippur, their screaming and murmuring of prayers depicted as if they were possessed. This is an account of the villager Khar'ko, Yankel's *shabes goy*, (a non-Jew who does housework during Shabbat for the Jewish observant household) of the Yom Kippur celebration.

Zhidy zadolgo uzhe do togo dnia moliatsia, plachut, rvut na sebe odezhdu i dazhe golovy zachem-to obsypaiut zoloi iz pechi. Pered vecherom vse moiutsia v rechke ili na stavkakh, a kak zaidet solntse, idut bedniagi v svoiu shkolu, i uzh kakoi krik slyshitsia, tak i ne privedi bog: vse orut v golos, a glaza ot strakha zakryvaiut... [...]. Oni narochno zazhigaiut vse svechi, chtoby ne bylo tak zhutko, padaiut vse na pol i nachinaiut krichat', kak budto ikh kto rezhet. I kogda oni tak lezhat i nadryvaiutsia, Khapun, kak bol'shoi voron, vletaet v gornitsu [...].²⁸¹

Before that day, kikes are already praying, crying, tearing their clothing, and even, for some purpose, covering their heads with ashes from the stove. Before

²⁸¹ Ibid., 2: 275-76.

nightfall, everyone washes themselves in the rivers or in the ponds. When the sun sets, they all, poor, go to the synagogue, and what screams one could hear from it, God forbid. They all scream in one voice, and they close their eyes from fear ... [...]. On purpose, they light all the candles so that it is not as frightening; they all fall to the floor and start screaming, as if someone is about to knife them. And when they are lying around like this grubbing away, Khapun, as enormous as a raven, flies into the room...

This passage is a text in the literary ethnographic genre, which includes markers of Jewish culture within Russian and Ukrainian literary format. What makes this text ethnographic is the description of Jewish customs, some of which are products of Russian folklore that incorporate one of the many imperial Others, in this case Jews, into Russian cultural production. This passage illustrates: 1. The description of Jewish customs; 2. The description of the Russian interpretation of Jewish customs; 3. The depiction of interethnic relationships that are predicated on the Jews holding the position of the imperial Other. The framing of all these elements within the parameters of a literary text uncovers the essential elements that form the Russian Ukrainian fairytale.

There is no prescription that Jews have to cover their heads with ashes on Yom Kippur, although An-sky, in his ethnographic questionnaire *The Jewish Ethnographic Program*, asks whether there is a custom of throwing ashes on the groom's head during a wedding.²⁸² Here, the mention of Jews going to the river or pond²⁸³ to clean themselves on the eve of Yom Kippur is indeed prescribed by the Jewish law for self-purification, along with praying in the synagogue, sometimes closing the eyes and lighting candles. As is customary on all major holidays, Jews light candles before sunset on a given day, and not because they are afraid of the devil, as was believed by their Christian neighbors.

²⁸² Nathaniel Deutsch, "The Jewish Ethnographic Program," in *The Jewish Dark Continent: Life and Death in the Russian Pale of Settlement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 222.

²⁸³ Sometimes it could be a *mikvah*, a closed bath used for ritual purifications.

Another Jewish cultural custom that the tale mentions is the blowing of the shofar, an instrument made from a ram's horn. Shofar blowing was an ancient tradition that occurs annually on several occasions, particularly Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) and to mark the beginning of Yom Kippur. The villager Khar'ko, Yankel's *shabes goy*, interpreted this as a signal for a devil to come and take a Jew into the other world. The tale includes a great number of Yiddish and Ukrainian words, which function as linguistic ethnographic markers. These are the following Yiddish words that I have transcribed as they appear in the Russian text: *Yom-Kippur* - Hebrew Day of Atonement, *shkola* – a synagogue,²⁸⁴ *patynki* - shoes without heels worn by Jews in the Kingdom of Poland and in the western part of the Pale of Settlement, *balagula* – a coachman, *goy* - a non-Jew, *kagal* – an administrative body in the Jewish community, *bakhori* - unmarried men, *shabash* - Sabbath, *shinok* - Ukrainian and Yiddish for a tavern; *purits* - a wealthy landlord (Yiddish is *porits*); *bebekhes* - bag and baggage, *gevalt* - help; *sheigits* – a non-Jewish male, and *lapserdak* - a long frock-coat worn by Polish and Galician Jews. Ukrainian words are *parubok* - young man, *khata* – house, *stavok* – pond, *shuliak* – vulture, *doniu* – diminutive form for a daughter, “tsur tobi, pek tobi!” – incantation,²⁸⁵ *laidak* – idler, and *neborache* – a poor fellow. The coexistence of these three languages, Russian, Ukrainian and Yiddish, side by side in the story frames its literary ethnographic dimension. A similar linguistic and cultural coexistence of Russian and Yiddish is present in An-sky's play *The Dybbuk*, which I will discuss in the final chapter.

²⁸⁴ Korolenko pointed out in his text that the word *shkola* was meant to designate a synagogue in what is currently the southwestern part of Ukraine.

²⁸⁵ Vladimir Korolenko, “Sudnyi den’ (Iom-Kippur),” in *Sobranie sochinenii v desiaty tomakh*, vol. 10 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1954): 308.

This work is an indirect polemic in the context of Korolenko's literary and social activities. It represents an instant of this writer acting as an advocate of one of the empire's numerous ethnic Others. Of course, among these Others the Jews were suffering particularly heavy restrictions and prejudices both from the authorities and from their non-Jewish neighbors.²⁸⁶ Within the sequence of literary representations of the imperial Others this story is a particularly witty and subtle critique of Christian prejudice and Christian distortions of the reality of Jewish religious community and life. Whether he defended Votiaks (Udmurt people) or Jews against false blood libel accusations, he was ethically compelled to speak on behalf of those whose plight in the empire was deemed as a dangerous Other among the different peoples of the empire just because they had different religious customs, spoke different languages, had different dietary laws and wore distinct clothing.

“At Night”

The confluence of Jewish and Russian folk beliefs is illustrated further in his sketch “At Night” (“Noch’iu,” 1888). It underlines the presence of Jewish culture within Ukrainian and Russian literary texts. The folk belief about the Jewish devil Khapun fleetingly reappears in this sketch about children's understanding of childbirth. At night, two Russian brothers, Vasia and Mark, their sister, Masha, and a cousin, Shura, would gather at the candle standing in the basin and would engage in storytelling, when they would discuss the mystery of children's appearance. Mark mentions the widespread Russian folk belief that the children come from the burdock, as nanny once told him. Vasia, in turn, dismisses it, saying that the children come from the other world. One of

²⁸⁶ For a discussion of the status of Jews, see my “Introduction” and Chapter Three.

the stories that Vanya relates is something that he heard from the local Jew, Moshko. He once told Vasia that there are two angels: one is the angel who brings the soul (the angel of life) and another one who takes away the soul (the angel of death). God sends them to earth and decides whether the mother will live and her child as well, or whether one or both will die.

The children believe Vasia's story, only very shortly to discover that their mother has given birth to a girl. Later, they ask a male servant where children come from. Without delay, the servant replies that children come from women, although the soul comes from angels.

- A pravda, chto detei prinosiat angely?
- Ono ... togo... tak nado skazat', chto detei prinosiat baby... taki ne kto drugoi... A dushu angely prinosiat.²⁸⁷
- Is it true that the angels bring children?
- Well... so... one must say that women bring children... no one else... But angels give the soul.

The sketch illustrates that Jewish and Christian folk beliefs share the notion that the soul of a child comes from the angel, although the children learn about the angels from the Jewish neighbor Moshko. In this passage, the children's search for an understanding of childbirth comes full circle. Paradoxically, the Russian servant sows confusion when he states it is women who bring forth children. Neither their parents nor their nanny tell them the biological truth; it is a stranger, the servant, who utters it. Puzzled about what to make of the servant's answer, they go to sleep. This story implicitly questions whether children should be told about the birth from a physiological point of view, from a mythological point of view, or from teleological point of view. This story serves multiple

²⁸⁷ Vladimir Korolenko, "Noch'iu," in *Sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomakh*, vol. 10 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1954), 266.

didactic functions: it furthers Jewish-Christian interreligious dialogue, but it also aims to educate the story's adult readers about the importance of explaining to children of mystery of human reproduction. This is very much in keeping with the spirit of the times when both Western and Russian thinkers and writers began to explore the issues of sexuality in a cultural context: see for instance Vasily Rozanov's *The People of the Lunar Light* (1911). At the same time the emphasis on the theme of sexuality and childbirth is very much in keeping with the literary ethnographic program of investigating and textualizing all aspects of a given ethnic or religious group, social organization and family structure.

The figure of the Jewish devil Khapun is briefly mentioned as an illustration of Vasia's view. The boy is the character in the story who says that "anything could happen among the Jews"; (U evreev mnogoe byvaet).²⁸⁸ The statement confirms the mythologization of the Jews within the Christian culture. The sketch, "At Night," is very similar to the previous tale "The Day of Atonement. Yom Kippur." In "At Night" the Jewish devil takes away a Jewish seller of flour, Iudka, on Yom Kippur, although Iudka is saved from demonic captivity by a Russian miller. Here, the Christian miller saves the Jew, in implicit comment going on in above-mentioned tale.

In this sketch "At Night," Korolenko brings Jewish and Christian folkloric beliefs together by showing that children adopt the Jewish belief about two angels rather than believing in Christian folk beliefs that children come from, for example, the cabbage patch or are found in the burdock. The folkloric belief systems of Christians and Jews overlap when the Russian servant confirms that the child's soul comes from the angel,

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 251.

thereby generating the story's meta-explanation namely that human beings have a divine dimension.

Whereas in the story "At Night" the narrator does not question the myth about the Jewish devil Khapun, in "The Day of Atonement. Yom Kippur," he dismantles it by reversing the roles established in the myth. He places the Russian miller into the hands of the Jewish devil. By conflating elements of Jewish and Russian folklore, the narrator transcends the administrative and conceptual borders of the imperial discourse of inclusion and exclusion. Though the Jews do not speak much in these stories, their folktales are narrated, and thus they enter into dialogue with the Russian characters. "The Day of Atonement. Yom Kippur" and "At Night" question the nature of folk myths, challenge the anti-Jewish prejudices by subverting them, and reveal cross-cultural borrowings in Jewish and Russian folk beliefs.

Conclusion

Literary ethnography allows the inclusion of the imperial Others by weaving such ethnographic material as folklore, religious practices, clothing, and language into the center of the texts. By placing at the center the textually invisible peoples, the Others, of the empire, Korolenko's ethnographic stories challenge and destabilize the Russo-centric literary texts. In his stories different linguistic and social utterances are brought together side by side, creating the *heteroglossia* which in Bakhtin's formulation engenders "internal dialogization" and

where dialogue of voices arises directly out of social dialogue of 'languages,' [...] where the orientation of the word among alien utterances changes into an orientation of a word among socially alien languages within the boundaries of one

and the same national language.²⁸⁹

Korolenko's stories evoke the tropes and topoi of Gogol and Dostoevsky, although he departs from them by bringing to bear the centrifugal forces of the empire and by making the imperial Other the focus of his literary works. As with Dostoevsky, his exile experience in Siberia had two consequences. First, it transformed his worldview and enabled him to contextualize his own sense of self against other ethnic and religious identities. Secondly, it provided him with abundant material for his early literary works, which made him famous. Thus, his interest and fascination with Yakut culture ("Makar's Dream"), Jewish and Russian customs and folk beliefs ("The Day of Atonement. Yom Kippur" and "At Night"). In the same vein we have the example of the Russian peasant prisoner, Fedor the Homeless ("Fedor the Homeless"), who conducts the existential search for the meaning of exile. All these texts illustrate the multiethnic heteroglossic nature of the imperial Other and Russian peasants. The stories present three types of the Other and three types of cultural transfers between an Other and several national selves with reference the imperial context: 1. The Russian Yakutified peasant Makar, who assimilates himself to Yakut culture, and develops a hybrid cultural identity ("Makar's Dream"); 2. The Russian prisoner Fedor the Homeless, whose entire life is a sequence of judicial exiles to Siberia and the Far East ("Fedor the Homeless"); 3. The Jewish tavern keeper Yankel, whose supernatural punishment by a Jewish devil is a function of a Russian appropriation of Jewish folk beliefs. All these stories are set in the borderlands of the empire, in Yakutia and in the Pale of Settlement. Being on the periphery of the empire, Korolenko shows that cultural identity of the imperial subjects is contingent upon

²⁸⁹ M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 284-85.

where they are located. Although, only the Yakuts and the Jews belonged to the judicially defined category of the *inorodtsy*, the aliens. In all these texts the Russian peasant characters exemplify the different notion of “otherness,” in that they function in dialogue with whole Russian literary tradition of representing peasants as possessing a rooted nationally authentic identity that contrasted with Europeanized cosmopolitanism and often the imperial identity of the land-owning and educated class.

Korolenko’s ethnographic story “Makar’s Dream” employs Russian folkloric tropes and topoi but also incorporates Yakut cultural elements. Without diminishing Yakut or Russian cultures, Makar’s dream depends on both of them. The fact that the Russian proverbial character Makar is defined against the Yakut culture with which he intimately interacts decentralizes the Russian imperial imaginary which presents a hierarchy of cultures, ethnicities, and religions with the Russian imperial identity standing at the apex. This story on the contrary dismantles this cultural construct and shows the interethnic and interreligious relationships in the Russian empire produce complex hybrid inter-ethnic and interfaith relationships, which do not fit into the imperial Russo-centric discourse. Here, Bakhtin’s concept of dialogue is useful because it underlines that the character’s discourse (*slovo*) exists only with its relation to another character speech.

What Korolenko does in his exilic writings is unprecedented. He does not confine his characters within the parameters of the imperial imaginary. In his texts there are no others, rather fully-fledged ethnic or religious subjects with their own unique cultural heritage who interact with one another irrespective of their nominal status in the imperial project. Here the reality of the empire emerges as a spectrum of independent or mixed

identities such as a Yakutified Russian peasant, and Russians and Jews who borrow from each other's religious and folkloric references.

Korolenko was not alone in scripting the ethnographically non-Russian population of the empire. His contemporary Bogoraz, who was also in exile and participated in the expedition of the Russian Geographic Society sponsored by Innokentii Sibiriakov in 1894, and later in the Jesup's North Pacific Expedition in 1899-1901, wrote stories based on his observations of the Chukchi and Lamut cultures. Bogoraz wrote about these peoples, as well as on Russians adapting to these cultures, in his collection of stories entitled *Chukotskie rasskazy (Chukchi stories)*, published in 1900 in St. Petersburg, for which Korolenko wrote the preface.

Korolenko was a colleague of Bogoraz, with whom he shared the experience of exile to Siberia (what is now the Far East), writing ethnographic works on indigenous cultures, defending Udmurt people and Jews from racial prejudice,²⁹⁰ speaking out on social problems of the Russian peasants. These writers and cultural anthropologists shared a sense of ethical and social responsibility that inspired them to refute racially discriminatory narratives of the imperial Others. Korolenko and Bogoraz wrote to defend Jews in the Kishinev and Gomel' pogroms of 1903.

Korolenko's exposure to and friendship with Jewish people, and his knowledge of Jewish folklore, customs, and language, were crucial in his role during the Kishinev pogrom of 1903, his sketch about the pogrom "House 13" (Dom 13, 1903),²⁹¹ and the

²⁹⁰ It is not surprising that the prominent Russian Jewish historian and writer Iulii Gessen (1871-1939) dedicated his book on the Velizh blood libel of 1823-1835, *On the History of the Trials on the Ritual Murders: The Velizh Drama* (Iz istorii ritual'nykh protsessov. Velizhskaia drama, 1905), to Korolenko. In 1909, Korolenko wrote about the false blood libel accusations brought against Jews in his essay "On the Question of Ritual Murders" (K voprosy o ritual'nykh ubiistvakh, 1909).

²⁹¹ In June 1903, Korolenko wrote, in a fragmented style, about his impressions of visiting Kishinev right after the pogrom. In it, he describes his encounters with a priest, Russian anti-Semites, and beaten Jews in

Beilis trial.²⁹² Literary ethnography influenced the works of Russian writers who were not literary ethnographers per se, and who were not focused on the lives of the Other. He knew An-sky and asked him to write an essay “Ritual Accusations in the Jewish Folklore” (“Ritual’nye navety v evreiskom narodnom tvorchestve”) on the history of blood libel for his journal *Russian Wealth* (Russkoe Bogatstvo) in 1912.²⁹³

In 1904 Bogoraz travelled instead of Korolenko to Gomel', a city in the Pale located north of Kiev, to report on the trial of the accused perpetrators of the Gomel' pogrom. As a result of his visit Bogoraz wrote and published his series of sketches “Gomel' Silhouettes.” For his part, in 1905 Korolenko published an article, “Gomel' Trial Drama” (Gomel'skaia sudebnaia drama), that was based on the articles from the newspapers on the Gomel' pogrom in the journal *Russian Wealth*.

the hospital. Similar to Bogoraz's later observations of the Gomel' pogrom, he mentions how some testimonies of Jews were not included in the investigation. See *Dnevnik: 1898-1903*, vol. 4 (Poltava: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo Ukrainy, 1928), 317-26. The sketch “House 13” was not published in the journal *Russian Wealth* due to censorship. It appeared in the Russian abroad first, and then two years later, it was published in Russia.

²⁹² Vasily Rozanov wrote in favoring blood libel accusation. It is possible to argue, especially in the light of his explanation of sexuality, church and the Jews, that his primary motivation was the narrative: the blood libel had higher narrative than the dismissal of this myth. Rozanov privileges the literary rather than the ethnographic side, emphasizing the plot potential.

²⁹³ Gabriella Safran, “The Dybbuk and the Golem,” in *Wandering Soul: The Dybbuk's Creator, S. An-sky* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 206, 328.

Chapter Three: Anthropology Against Injustice: A Literary Investigation of Bogoraz's "Silhouettes from Gomel"

Пора создать еврейскую этнографию!
It is high time to create a Jewish ethnography!
Semyon An-sky, 1911²⁹⁴

In 1904, Vladimir Bogoraz went to Gomel', a city in the province of Mogilev, in the Pale, to document the trial concerning a bloody pogrom.²⁹⁵ The Gomel' pogrom occurred four months after the notorious Kishinev pogrom in 1903 between August 29 and September 1.²⁹⁶ During this atrocity, 400 Jewish houses were destroyed, 100 people were wounded and eight people murdered.²⁹⁷ According to a detailed report by the journalist B.A. Krever, thirty-six Jews and forty-four Christians were prosecuted and brought to trial.²⁹⁸ In response to the pogrom and the trial, Bogoraz wrote "Silhouettes from Gomel': Sketches" ("Gomel'skie siluety. Ocherki"). This chapter represents the first attempt to offer a scholarly analysis of Bogoraz's remarkable work. In this study, I employ two sources of analysis: a legal document - an official tsarist indictment and Bogoraz's journalistic literary ethnographic text "Silhouettes from Gomel'" that he wrote based on his first-hand experiences. By putting these two very different documents side-by-side, one can see that interpretations of the pogrom were contingent upon the texts that described it. According to the indictment, this was a pogrom against Russians,

²⁹⁴ Semyon An-sky, "Evreiskoe narodnoe tvorчество," *Perezhitoe*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1911): 276-314.

²⁹⁵ Now Gomel' belongs to Belorussia.

²⁹⁶ The dates are given according to the Old Style (OS). New Style was introduced in 1918. There is a 13-day difference between Old and New Style calendars.

²⁹⁷ See *Bericht ueber Gomel'* (St. Petersburg: 5/18, November, 1903; Berlin: Druck von H.S. Hermann, 1903). During the Kishinev pogrom, forty-nine people were murdered.

²⁹⁸ I could not find Krever's first name. B. A. Krever, *Gomel'skii protsess: Podrobnyi otchet po protokolam zashchitnikov i otchetam, pechatavshimsia v zhurnalakh "Pravo" i "Voskhod" i gazetakh "Kievskie otkliki," "Odesskie novosti," "Russkoe slovo," "Novosti" i "Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik,"* (St. Petersburg: Tipografii t-va "Obshchestvennaia pol'za," 1907), I, 4.

whereas Bogoraz's text pointed out that the majority of the victims were Jews rather than Russians, and therefore it was a pogrom against Jews.

The official government sources and indictment (*Obvinitel'nyi akt*) called Gomel' a "Russian pogrom," because, according to their interpretation of events, Jews had instigated the violence against Christians on August 29, 1903.²⁹⁹ In this version, the Russians attacked Jews on September 1 out of revenge.³⁰⁰ However, the official version of events may be questioned, since it was based upon the government's discriminatory policies towards *inorodtsy*.³⁰¹ I argue that Bogoraz's ethnographic sketches question the indictment and shed light on what happened in Gomel' in a systematic way by providing context and referencing the laws that pertained to the Jews, as well as by drawing attention to the racialized anthropological discourse used during the trial against them.³⁰² Bogoraz based his sketches on documented observations and attempted to use the scientific ethnographic methods of his time and to make his work conform to their norms.³⁰³ This chapter shows that Bogoraz's investigation of the pogrom presented a complex and conflicting picture of Russians and Jews living in the same border city of interethnic relations. In his Gomel' silhouettes, Bogoraz allowed both sides to speak in their unique voices, giving the narration a *skaz*-like quality. Although the concept of *skaz*

²⁹⁹ *Obvinitel'nyi akt*, YIVO Archive, RG 1401, Box 28, folder 307.2.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁰¹ I define the term *inorodtsy* in the "Introduction." The government prohibited the publication of any articles on the oppression of Jews, or any material on the Kishinev pogrom prior to the completion of the trial (V. P. Pichukov, "Evreiskii vopros v Belarusi v kontse xix – nachale xx vv," in *Evrei v Gomele: Istoriia i kul'tura. (Konets xix – nachalo xx vekov), Sbornik materialov nauchno-teoreticheskoi konferentsii: 21 sentiabria 2003 goda*, (Gomel': Belgut, 2004), 118.

³⁰² The "science" of ethnography, as defined by Bogoraz's colleague Lev Shternberg in 1904, implies that the data, which informed his work, were empirically correct, since they were based not on censorship or tsarist anti-Semitic policy, but on the first-hand testimonies of the participants.

³⁰³ Even though the modernist and postmodernist model suggest that all observation is biased, still these ethnographic observations are rigorously researched because they are based on the systematic observation and testing of the "official" indictment act. For a discussion of objectivity, see Richard J. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983); Lorraine J. Daston and Peter Galsion, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007).

was first articulated by Bogoraz's contemporary, formalist theorist Boris Eichenbaum (1886-1959), in 1918,³⁰⁴ Bogoraz came from a long line of writers including Gogol, Nikolay Leskov, and Korolenko, who anticipated the formalists' interest in sociolect. Bogoraz was able to register and distinguish among different forms of discourse (anthropological, judicial, intertextual, and historical). Bakhtin later advanced the concept of *skaz* by stressing the importance of a unique character's speech in its relationship towards other characters. For Bogoraz's characters (Gaiskii, Kats, and other teenagers) this relationship towards each other persists on several levels: personal, political, collective, and national. Class, gender, age, religious and social background are represented through the different registers of voice. He weaves these diverse voices into one broad narrative, giving each an opportunity to fully express oneself (*vyskazat'sia do kontsa*). While scholars have overlooked "Silhouettes from Gomel'," this chapter explores Bogoraz's remarkable work in the context of Jewish-Russian relations and the evolution of the genre of literary ethnography on the eve of the Russian revolution of 1905. Until now, there has been no mention of "Silhouettes from Gomel'" in either the author's memoirs, written from 1927-1930, or in any bibliographical material on his journalistic work in Gomel'.³⁰⁵

Published in the journal *Education (Obrazovanie)*³⁰⁶ in several installments approximately two years after the 1903 Gomel' pogrom, Bogoraz's sketches include a

³⁰⁴ Eichenbaum first applied the concept of *skaz* in his article "How Gogol's *Overcoat* was Made" ("Kak sdelana 'Shinel' Gogolia," 1918).

³⁰⁵ *Avtobiografiia V.G. Tana-Bogoraza.*, F. K-1, op. 1, d. 380-81, (St. Petersburg: Arkhiv instituta etnografii, Kunstkamera).

³⁰⁶ The monthly liberal journal was published in St. Petersburg between 1892 and 1909. It changed its profile from a strictly instructional teaching journal (titled earlier *Zhenskoe obrazovanie - Women's Education*) into a popular scientific publication with literary and political themes. Beginning in 1902, the journal endured harsh censorship and was not allowed to be distributed in free people's reading rooms (*chital'ni*) and libraries. One of the journal's goals was to spread knowledge about the cultural and

description of encounters, as well as informal interviews and testimonies of Russians and Jews. The testimonies follow the style of those produced through the participant-observation method used in ethnographic fieldwork.³⁰⁷ Though the term participant observation did not exist in the field of anthropology during Bogoraz's time, in retrospect, it is clear that his actions in Gomel' exemplify participant observation. Bogoraz's use of this method served to validate the accuracy of his fieldwork and the interviews that he conducted during his visit to Gomel' in accordance with the standards of his time. Clearly, Bogoraz was biased, but it was unavoidable and he was open about it, since he had direct personal engagement with the characters he wrote about. The only way to overcome this bias is to "learn more about others" and not "about [the lives of] ourselves as individuals."³⁰⁸ The sketches were written during the trial and based on the testimonies given by the accused, as well as confessions and interviews recorded by Bogoraz himself. The trial became famous because of the publicity surrounding Jewish self-defense efforts.³⁰⁹

scientific life of Russia and abroad among the mass public. It published works by V. Veresaev, S. Iushkevich, M. Artsybashev, A. Verbitskaia, A. Blok, K. Bal'mont, and many other prominent writers of the time. *Kratkaia literaturnaia entsyklopediia* 5: 369-70. The sketches were also published in Bogoraz's collected works. V.G. Tan, *Amerikanskii rasskazy, Ocherki i rasskazy, Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 5 (St. Petersburg: Prosveshchenie, 1911).

³⁰⁷ For a discussion of the participant-observation method, see "Introduction."

³⁰⁸ Kathleen M. Dewalt, Billie R. Dewalt, and Coral B. Wayland, "Participant Observation," in *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, ed. H. Russell Bernard (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 1998), 291.

³⁰⁹ On the discussion of the Jewish self-defense, see Vladimir Levin's "Preventing Pogroms: Patterns in Jewish Politics in Early Twentieth-Century Russia," in *Anti-Jewish Violence: Rethinking the Pogrom in East European History*, eds. Jonathan Dekel-Chen, David Gaunt, Nathan M. Meir, and Israel Bartal (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 95-111.

Gomel' in the Pogrom Paradigm

Similar to the Kishinev trial, the Gomel' trial took place in an open court, was well documented in the newspapers, and was attended by journalists and the general public.³¹⁰ By the time Bogoraz's work was published, a substantial literature on the Kishinev pogrom had been written.³¹¹ Bogoraz's ethnographic literary text is outstanding in the variety and breadth of the oral testimonies it employs to depict the violent event, or as Roskies calls it the "Jewish catastrophe."³¹² It is also sophisticated in its selection of different voices and perspectives, some of which belonged to victims and others to perpetrators. Bogoraz probably read Vladimir Korolenko's sketch "House 13" (1903) about the Kishinev pogrom of April 1903 and Hayim Bialik's poems "Upon the Slaughter" and "In the City of Slaughter" (originally written in Hebrew, "Beir ha-haregah," 1904).³¹³ When Bialik was commissioned by Simon Dubnow's (1860-1841)

³¹⁰ On the Kishinev trial, see Edward Judge, *Easter in Kishinev: Anatomy of a Pogrom* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 109-19; Sam Johnson, "Romania and Kishinev: Crises Intertwined, 1900-1906," in *Pogroms, Peasant, Jews: Britain and Eastern Europe's 'Jewish Question,' 1867-1925* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 67-95. See Louise McReynolds' work on the public nature of trials in late Imperial Russia: "Witnessing for the Defense: The Adversarial Court and Narratives of Criminal Behavior in Nineteenth-Century Russia," *Slavic Review* 69 (2010): 620-44; and her book *Murder Most Russian: True Crime and Punishment in Late Imperial Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012). Here are the names of the lawyers who defended Jewish victims. 1. Krol'; 2. Margolin; 3. Kal'manovich; 4. Zarudnyi; 5. Ganfman; 6. Mandel'shtam; 7. Krasil'shchikov; 8. Ratner; 9. Slizberg; 10. Kupernik; 11. Vinaver; 12. Sokolov, YIVO Archive, RG 1401, Box 28, Folder 307.

³¹¹ See David Roskies, "The Pogrom as Poem," in *Against the Apocalypse: Responses to Catastrophe in Modern Jewish Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 79-108.

³¹² Roskies uses the word "catastrophe" to refer to acts of Jewish collective devastation such as massacres, pogroms, and wars, arguing that Jewish writers relied upon ancient archetypes when writing about them. See *Against the Apocalypse: Responses to Catastrophe in Modern Jewish Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

³¹³ Bogoraz could read in Yiddish and Biblical Hebrew. He was a part of the Russian Jewish intelligentsia of his time, and therefore must have known of Korolenko's and Bialik's texts. Russian and Jewish writers, touched by the brutality of the pogrom, visited Kishinev and wrote about it, allowing a larger Russian and Jewish audience to read first-hand accounts of the event. In reaction to the Kishinev pogrom Leo Tolstoy signed a letter of protest addressed to the Kishinev mayor in May 1903 (Schefski, 6-8). He also wrote three tales "Assiriiskii tsar' Asarkhadon," "Tri voprosa," and "Trud, smert' i bolezni" for Sholem Aleichem's anthology dedicated to the pogrom victims. The stories appeared in Yiddish in *Khilf: a zamlbukh fur literatur un kunst* (Varsha: Volks-Bildung, 1903), and in Russian in some periodicals. See Harold K. Schefski, "Tolstoy and the Jews," *The Russian Review* 41 (1982): 1-10. Another contemporary of Tolstoy, Maxim Gorky, wrote letters of protest in the foreign press. See Shlomo Lambrosa, "The

Jewish Historical Committee to write about the Kishinev pogrom, he composed two poems. The first, “Upon the Slaughter,” was written before his trip to Kishinev. This poem expresses sympathy for the victims of the pogrom, with whom the poetic voice identifies. After spending five weeks in Kishinev, he wrote another poem, “In the City of Slaughter,” which proved to be controversial.³¹⁴ Dubnow required Bialik to conduct an extensive, rigorous, and factual inquiry into the pogrom. Bialik, like Bogoraz, carried out an ethnographic investigation. He interviewed victims of the pogrom at their homes in Yiddish, filling five notebooks with recollections, although he later ignored them when writing his famous poem on the subject. Where Bialik relied on poetic tropes, Bogoraz thoroughly incorporated his ethnographic research into “Silhouettes from Gomel’.” Dubnow called the Gomel’ pogrom a “second Kishinev,” though he emphasized that it had occurred “without the shame of passivity.”³¹⁵ After the Kishinev pogrom, Jewish groups, including the Bund of the Mogilev province (where Gomel’ was located) and the Poalei Tsion movement, prepared for self-defense.³¹⁶ The motivations for the Kishinev and Gomel’ pogroms were different. Still, both violent events coincided with Jewish holidays. While Kishinev started with false accusations based upon the blood libel before Passover, Gomel’ began with strife at the market on the eve of the Jewish New Year. The major differences between these pogroms were the formation of a self-defense group

Pogroms of 1903-1906,” in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, eds. John Klier and Shlomo Lambrosa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 207.

³¹⁴ Bialik’s poem was translated into Russian by the prominent Zionist Vladimir (Zeev) Zhabotinsky. M. Geiser, “Poet pechali, gneva i liubvi,” *Lekhaim*, April 2000, accessed July 5, 2011, <http://www.lechaim.ru/ARHIV/96/geyzer.htm>.

³¹⁵ S. M. Dubnow, *Kniga zhizni. Vospominaniia i razmyshleniia. Materialy dlia razmyshleniia moego vremeni* (St. Petersburg: PV, 1998), 253.

³¹⁶ Bund, the Jewish social democratic party (Yiddish, Der algemeyner yidisher arbeter bund in rusland un poyln), was founded in 1897. Poalei Tsiyon (lit. workers of Zion) was a socialist Zionist party, founded at the turn of the century in Russia. Some members immigrated to Palestine and organized the self-defense group that defended Jews, and later it became a constituent part of the Israeli army. See Boris Tarnopolsky, “The Gomel’ Pogrom of 1903: A Case Study in Russian-Jewish Relations in the Pale of Settlement,” (MA thesis, University of Haifa, 2007).

during the Gomel' pogrom and the active role of the local authorities who tamed the violence in Gomel'. During the Kishinev pogrom, neither self-defense nor protection by the local police were present.³¹⁷

Ethnographic Examination of the Pogrom

The sketch functions at the intersection of several cultural fields. It combines documentary, topical elements with certain formal literary elements. Bogoraz depicts only a fragment of his characters' lives at a given point in time, using a number of narrative strategies to convey to the reader a sense of each character's identity. Among the textual practices he uses is that of *heteroglossia*. This plethora of Russian and Jewish voices constitutes a true heteroglossia, or multivocality, covering different ethnic, social, religious, gender, and generational identities. Bogoraz's work is exceptional because it combines highly developed literary tropes with rigorous documentary reportage as well as an impassioned polemical voice.

Bogoraz used the ethnographic approach he had already developed while working with the Chukchi to inform his work on the Gomel' pogrom, which was reflected through an ethnographic lens. He employs an interdisciplinary methodology and a unique discursive approach for literary purposes that exemplify the hybrid genre of literary ethnography. While scholars have ignored this work, I argue that it makes an important contribution to the genre of literary ethnography.

Bogoraz's text is exceptional because it makes a transition from ethnographic observations to literary interpretation. Besides using the ethnographic method, this text

³¹⁷ For more on the difference between the Kishinev and the Gomel' pogrom, see Shlomo Lambrosa, "The Pogroms of 1903-1906," in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, eds. John Klier and Shlomo Lambrosa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 209-11.

exemplifies literary ethnography because it utilizes details from characters' backgrounds, employs discourses on anthropology, and pays attention to characters' descriptions that also bring the sketches closer to a physiological sketch. I apply the term more broadly, since Bogoraz reported on ethnic groups and religious minorities while pursuing multiple objectives – not only the imperial and the colonial, but also ethnic cultural sustainability, such as cultural preservation, while employing these works for the purpose of social criticism.

From the “People’s Will” to Siberian Exile and Back

Vladimir Germanovich Bogoraz (1865-1936), né Natan Mendeleevich Bogoraz, was born into a Jewish family in a small town of Ovruch, in Volhynia province, not far from Gomel', although he grew up in Taganrog.³¹⁸ After completing his secondary education (gymnasium), he moved to St. Petersburg, where he became an active member of the “People’s Will.” In 1881, at the age of sixteen, he was arrested because of his political activities and was exiled, ironically, to his hometown of Taganrog.³¹⁹ In order to stay active in the revolutionary movement, Bogoraz converted to Russian Orthodoxy in 1885 for “revolutionary purposes.”³²⁰ Although he converted to Christianity, he never ceased to consider himself a Jew, an aspect of his background that gave him additional insight into the Gomel' pogrom. Bogoraz's draft of the sketches also revealed that he used

³¹⁸ *Avtobiografiia V.G. Tana-Bogoraza*, 1927, F. K-1, op. 1, d. 32, l.1, (St. Petersburg: Arkhiv instituta etnografii, Kunstkamera).

³¹⁹ *Avtobiografiia V.G. Tana-Bogoraza*, 1926-1927, F. K-1, op. 1, d. 32, l.1, (St. Petersburg: Arkhiv instituta etnografii, Kunstkamera), 24.

³²⁰ *Avtobiografiia V.G. Tana-Bogoraza*, 1930, F. K-1, op. 1, d. 32, l.1, (St. Petersburg: Arkhiv instituta etnografii, Kunstkamera), 13. Of Bogoraz's eight siblings, seven converted, and each of them assumed a different patronymic. See his *Avtobiografiia*. The question of Russian-Jewish acculturation and “the identity theft” is examined in Harriet Murav's book *Identity Theft: The Jew in Imperial Russia and the Case of Avraam Uri Kovner* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

more Yiddish words than in his final published work. This suggests that his Jewish subjects of Gomel' spoke Yiddish and that they incorporated some expressions from it into Russian.³²¹

Self-identifying as both a Russian and a Jew, his identity was fluid and dynamic. Even though his father was versed in Biblical Hebrew and Yiddish (*drevne-evreiskii i novo-evreiskii*),³²² Bogoraz stated that he did not believe in God, he was an “atheist” (*bezbozhnik*). Thus, his conversion to Christianity had no religious value³²³ but served to secure Bogoraz’s legal status outside of the Pale of Settlement.³²⁴ He studied natural sciences at St. Petersburg University, including chemistry, and later switched to law. In 1889, four years after his conversion, he was arrested again and sent into exile for ten years in Kolymsk (Iakutia district). During this period, Bogoraz embarked upon a productive ethnographic study of the indigenous peoples of the North (Chukchi, Siberian Eskimos, Evens) and of shamanic culture. His ethnographic interest was further fostered during his Kolymsk exile. Around this period, several other Jewish political prisoners, such as Lev Shternberg and Vladimir Iokhelson, also turned to the ethnographic study of indigenous peoples.³²⁵ This so-called “ethno-troika” (Shternberg, Iokhelson, and

³²¹ F. 250, op.2, d. 120. (Archive of the Russian Academy of Science in St. Petersburg, RAN).

³²² *Ibid.*, 3.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 13.

³²⁴ *Avtobiografiia V.G. Tana-Bogoraza*, 1926-1927, F. K-1, op. 1, d. 32, l.1, (St. Petersburg: Arkhiv instituta etnografii, Kunstkamera), 55. For the legal status of Jews and their mobility in the Pale of Settlement, see Eugene M. Avrutin, *Jews and the Imperial State: Identification Politics in Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010).

³²⁵ Vladimir Iokhel'son (also Valdemar, né Ven'iamin Iokhel'son 1855-1937) was born in Vilna and went to *kheder* (elementary Jewish school) and rabbinical academy before becoming an active member of the “People’s Will.” He was exiled to Yakutiia, where he studied Yakut culture. Lev Shternberg followed a similar path, which ultimately led him to do ethnographic fieldwork on Sakhalin Island at the same time as Bogoraz and Iokhel'son.

Bogoraz)³²⁶ helped foster the practice of ethnography in Russia, and all three later taught at Petrograd/Leningrad University.

In 1899, a year after he returned from his exile to St. Petersburg, he and Vladimir Iokhelson joined Franz Boas in the Jesup Expedition, which explored the connections between indigenous peoples on both sides of the Bering Strait. He traveled to America and remained in New York until 1904 where at the American Museum of Natural History, he spent time classifying the material he had collected with the Jesup Expedition.³²⁷ Even though he later acknowledged the phenomena of Russian Jewish *marranos* (secret Jews who were maintaining their Jewishness at home and publicly behaving as Christians), he revealed his dedication to his Jewish heritage by writing on Russian Jews in America, and later writing about the Gomel' pogrom. His engagement with the Gomel' trial was his first major act as a scholar and a writer after his return to Russia from New York, which he conducted, in his own words, as a “literary investigation” (*literaturnoe sledstvie na meste*).³²⁸ The word “investigation” implies systematic and careful examination. This gave his work unique standing within the anthropological discussion because it may be read as a valuable factological and interpretive source on Russian-Jewish relations. Bogoraz was uniquely well positioned to

³²⁶ V. Bogoraz, *Chukchi. Chast' I: Sotsial'naia organizatsiia (The Chukchi. Part I: Social Structure)* (Leningrad: Institut narodov Severa, 1934), xiii.

³²⁷ The Jesup North Pacific Expedition was headed by Franz Boas (1897-1902) with the purpose of examining the indigenous cultures on both sides of the Bering Strait. It was financed by Morris K. Jesup (1830-1908), who was also the director of the American Museum of Natural History. The expedition included the Russian ethnographers Bogoraz and his wife, Iokhel'son and his wife Dina Iokhel'son-Brodsky (also spelled as Jochelson-Brodsky) and the Americans Livingston Farrand, George Hunt, Berthold Laufer, John Swanton, and others. For the Jesup Expedition, see Laurel Kendall and Igor Krupnik, eds., *Constructing Cultures Then and Now: Celebrating Franz Boas and the Jesup Pacific Expedition* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2003).

³²⁸ RAN, f. 250, op. 2, d. 120.

comment on the pogrom due to both his background and his scholarly activity prior to his visit to Gomel'.

Bogoraz's turn to Jewish themes is a form of the "paradigm of return" which was also manifested by Semyon An-sky (1863-1920) and Lev Shternberg (1861-1927). According to David Roskies, this was a form of resistance against traditional upbringing, since there can be "no return [to Jewish roots] without rebellion."³²⁹ Bogoraz's embrace of Jewish ethnography in 1904 was by no means sudden. One can argue that Bogoraz's sense of identity was awakened by being abroad during 1901-1904, in a New World, which had the effect of causing him to turn to Jewish themes during his stay in America.³³⁰ He began addressing Jewish themes in the short stories produced during his American period, "American Short Stories," which included several stories that dealt in part with Russian and Russian-Jewish-American emigrants.³³¹ For example, in his short story "Black Student" (Chernyi student, 1899) he brought to light the question of Jewish identity in the context of discriminatory laws against African-Americans. While on a train, the famous Russian chronotope, traveling to San Francisco, the narrator converses with a Russian-Jewish-American boy, a newspaper seller, who openly deprecates Jews, referring derogatorily to their land as Kyke-land (Zhidoviia), and refuses to sit with a black student. The narrator refers to a Russian-Jewish boy, who ironically has a very explicit Jewish last name,

³²⁹ On An-sky's paradigm of return see: David Roskies, "S. Ansky and the Paradigm of Return," in *The Uses of Tradition: Jewish Continuity in the Modern Era*, ed. J. Wertheimer (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992), 246; Sylvie Anne Goldberg, "Paradigmatic Times: An-sky's Two Worlds," in *The Worlds of S. An-sky: A Russian Jewish intellectual at the Turn of the Century*, eds. Gabriella Safran and Steven J. Zipperstein (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 44-52; Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern challenges Roskies' "paradigm of return" in his article "'We Are Too Late': Shloyme An-sky and his Paradigm of No Return," in *The Worlds of S. An-sky: A Russian-Jewish Intellectual at the Turn of the Century*, eds. Gabriella Safran and Steven J. Zipperstein (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 83-102.

³³⁰ In New York, he worked at the Museum of Natural History, where he sorted out the material he acquired during the Jesup Expedition that was led by Franz Boas. While there, he also wrote fiction, some of it about American Jewish immigrants.

³³¹ V.G. Tan, *Amerikanskie rasskazy. Ocherki i rasskazy*, vol. 5 (St. Petersburg: Prosveshchenie, 1911).

Geyman, as a wandering Jew, a “descendant of Ahasuerus” (“potomok Agasfera”).³³² The first-person narrator was astounded to see how fast this newspaper boy absorbed anti-black hatred, in addition to anti-Semitic expressions. In the same story, the narrator converses with an educated black medical student -- hence the title of the story -- whose questions about Russian slaves and women’s rights make the narrator contemplate the miserable state of the Jews. The narrator’s indirect voice draws a parallel between the misery of black Americans and Russian Jews. He continued to address Jewish subjects in other stories.

In “Ahasuerus: Fantasy” (Agasfer: Fantaziia, 1903, New York) Bogoraz employs the medieval Christian folkloric story of a wandering Jew, Ahasuerus. In a short story “In the Theater” (V teatre, 1903, New York), he writes about Jewish theater and its founder Jacob Gordin (1853-1909), the so-called “Jewish Shakespeare.”³³³ In another short story, “Masquerade in the Ghetto,” he describes a masquerade organized by the Yiddish socialist newspaper “The Forward.” In these fragmented stories, Bogoraz strongly identified and sympathized not only with Russian Jews, but also with non-educated Russian people in general.³³⁴ One can argue that his stay in New York made him more aware of his own Jewish roots, as well as the relationships among Russians, African-Americans, and Jews.³³⁵

After a stay in New York, Bogoraz travelled to St. Petersburg in 1904 and, in the same year, he went to Gomel' to report on the trial there, taking the place of his friend, a celebrated writer, Vladimir Korolenko, who was unable to come. The collection of sketches

³³² Ibid., 5: 41.

³³³ Ibid., 5: 245.

³³⁴ See, for example, the short story “In the Russian Church in New York” (New York, 1903).

³³⁵ Prior to his American period, Bogoraz published *Chukchi Stories* (Chukotskie rasskazy, 1899), *Eight Tribes* (Vosem' plemen, 1902), *Youth Union* (Soiuz molodykh, 1928), *Resurrected Tribe* (Voskresshee plemia, 1935), etc. In the early Soviet period, he produced further works on Jewish ethnography. See his *Jewish Shtetl in the Revolution* (Evreiskoe mestechko v revoliutsii, 1926).

“Silhouettes from Gornel’,” which Bogoraz published under the pseudonym Tan, gives voice to a diverse gallery of those who participated in the pogrom or witnessed it. In these texts, one encounters a multitude of different voices and identities. In their unique way, Bogoraz’s sketches contain a gallery of conflicting views: “Russians and Jews, defendants and members of the court, self-defenders and perpetrators (*gromily*), anti-Semites, hobos, [and] policemen (*gorodovye*).”³³⁶ In the case of “Silhouettes from Gornel’,” one can speak of a nexus of a quasi-literary, literary, and non-literary works in different genres by different authors exposing different perspectives.

The sketches exhibit a binary structure with the Jews and Russians never entering into direct dialogue with each other; still characters’ employment of multiple types of speeches (*raznorechie*), in Bakhtin’s own words, “results not [...] in a single language but a dialogue of languages.”³³⁷ Instead, the dialogue is a mediated one via shifting diegetic perspectives. It assumes a model reader who is reasonable, commonsensical and fair minded. The sketches exhibit a binary structure with the Jews and Russians never entering into direct dialogue with each other, but into an indirect one.³³⁸ Through many voices, Bogoraz adumbrates the salient aspects of Russian and Jewish cultures. This balanced yet dynamic approach stems from his identification with both Russian and Jewish cultures, where neither Russians nor Jews are presented in the text as the Other.

³³⁶ “[...] russkie i evrei, podsudimye i chleny suda, samooboronschiki i gromily, antisemity, bosiaki, gorodovye,” *Obrazovanie* no.2, 209. While the indictment did not use the word *gromily* (perpetrators), Bogoraz employed the words *pogromshchik* (pogromist) and *gromily*; both words share the same root – *gromit’* – to destroy.

³³⁷ M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 294.

³³⁸ This division is present in the title in his collected works, but not in his first publication of the sketches in the journal *Obrazovanie*. The difference is only in the titles of the chapters; the text in the collected edition also has a shorter introduction. He probably edited the sketches later. V.G. Tan, *Amerikanskie rasskazy, Ocherki i rasskazy, Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 5 (St. Petersburg: Prosveshchenie, 1911).

I didn't interrupt anyone, but listened, asked questions, diligently wrote down everything I heard in my notebook, because a long time ago, I came to the conclusion that if you want to know [something], even from a liar, you should let him speak his piece.³³⁹

During the two weeks that Bogoraz spent in Gomel', he spoke in Russian and in Yiddish, as his notebooks showed, to “different people of all possible ‘tribes (*plemen*), dialects and classes.”³⁴⁰ The method of listening, asking questions, and writing down the responses in the notebook is essential to the participant observation method that Bogoraz applies to the Gomel' subjects.

Moreover, Bogoraz characterizes Gomel' as a “microcosm of Russian life” that anticipated the bloody events of the Revolution of 1905.³⁴¹ He may have referred to it in this way since Jews were denied certain legal, property and religious rights. Bogoraz referred to this systematic discrimination as “rightlessness of Jews” (*bespravie evreev*),³⁴² lacking rights that other groups in the empire possessed. In this context Gomel' becomes for the period of this trial a micro-legal model of the treatment of Jews, where officials legitimized the pogrom without defending the Jews. To that extent the indictment and the legal proceedings were problematic not only from the perspective of our time but also within the framework of Russian legal, administrative, and judicial practices of Bogoraz's time. The narrator captures the transformation of Jewish subjects of injustice into the

³³⁹ *Obrazovanie* no.2, 209.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 209. He mentions the word tribe in the short story “Avdot'ia i Rivka” (*Amerikanskii rasskazy*, 101). But the word “intertribal hostility” (*mezhduplemennaiia vrazhda*) is used in the indictment (*Obvinitel'nyi akt*, 2). Though he analyzes only two groups of people -- Russian and Jews -- he uses the word tribe, which is antiquated and not truly applicable to either of them.

In 1899, a leading anthropologist, Dmitrii Anuchin, defined races as “human breeds” (*porody chelovechestva*) or a division of people “based on physical differences that were recognized by more or less all peoples” (“[sushchestvovanie] mezhdou liud'mi fizicheskikh razlichii ili razdelenie chelovechestva na otdel'nye porody soznaetsia bolee ili menee vseimi narodami.” “Rasy,” in *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, eds. F.A. Brokgauz and I.A. Efron, vol. 26 (St.Petersburg: Tipografiia Akts. Obshch. “Izdat. Delo, byvshee Brokgauz-Efron,” 1899), 356-60.

³⁴¹ *Obrazovanie* no. 1, 210.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 211.

individuals who possess agency as “living forces” (*zhivye sily*). By saying that the town was a “microcosm of Russian life,” he implicitly emphasizes their self-defense as a harbinger of a new Jewish resistance to the pogroms and a new model of behavior.

Bogoraz writes,

[...] of interest in the Gomel' epic is not only the usual deprivation of the Jews of their rights, [...] but mainly the living forces which attempted to dam the torrent of the pogrom, and which to some degree succeeded, despite the salvos and bayonets.³⁴³

Bogoraz describes his “silhouettes” against the “crimson background of internecine war.”³⁴⁴ This “internecine war,” according to the narrator, “[is] sui generis, it develops step-by-step in almost all Russian cities, [...] spread[s] over from one side to another, as if lit by fuse.”³⁴⁵ On one side are “the people’s forces,” the Jews; on the other side, Tambov’s Black Hundred, a notorious anti-Semitic organization. Bogoraz’s conceptualizing technique and practices are particularly original; he draws on the empirical evidence he collected and the literary texts he read prior to his investigation. He not only investigates ethnic, legal and police injustice, but he also traces the development of a new ethnic consciousness and sense of self. That is why the work is valuable. Sometimes he employs literary referents to frame the events he investigates, thus situating his work within the Russian literary tradition. When describing the violence inflicted on the Gomel' Jews during the pogrom, he explicitly references Leonid Andreev’s defamiliarizing depiction of a wounded soldier in “Red Laughter” (“Krasnyi smekh,” 1905). This story depicts the horrors of the Russo-Japanese war from the

³⁴³ Ibid., 211.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 210.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 210. In Russian, it reads, “[...] eto osobaia mezhdusobnaia voina, sui generis, ta, kotoraiia razvivaetsia malo-pomalu chut' ne vo vsekh russkikh gorodakh, perekidyvaias' iz kraia v kraj, kak po porokhovym nitiam.”

perspective of a soldier who becomes frenzied after witnessing people dying. He later descends into complete delirium after confronting the unending shedding of blood.³⁴⁶ A well-read reader would probably recognize this inter-textual reference to the story by Andreev and would thus have acquired a more vivid understanding into the Gomel' pogrom. Andreev was a popular writer, famous for his horrifying stories with strong connections to current events. Bogoraz's book carries a pragmatic function to show two sets of injustices. The first is the violence and scale of pogrom itself, and the second is the legal injustice inflicted upon the Jewish survivors of the pogrom by the authorities.

In Bogoraz's narratives, these moments of interviewing people are compared to the taking of photographs (a characteristic trope of the period), because they are "unexpected and involuntary."³⁴⁷ This parallel seems to be convincing because Bogoraz allows the reader to experience characters in their natural environment, since he recorded the words of victims of the pogrom without expressing his own opinion. Of course, it is part of the nature of the literary process to be selective. The author is selective with regards to whom he talks and in the voices and characters he privileges. The same is true of photographers (except voices), who selectively let the images speak for themselves, just as characters speak for the writer. The characters speak, sometimes in the form of testimonies, sometimes in an effort to exculpate themselves, and occasionally through evidence given at the trial.³⁴⁸ To illustrate the heteroglossic nature and "unexpected and

³⁴⁶ The review of Andreev's story "Red Laughter" is in the same issue of the journal *Obrazovanie* as Bogoraz's third part of "Silhouettes from Gomel'" (*Obrazovanie* no.14, 122-32). Andreev did not participate in the war but knew about it from periodicals. When the "red laughter" is mentioned for the first time, the first-person narrator takes the bloody horrifying face of the dead soldier with the frozen "red laughing face" as a metaphor for dead humans who now, in the narrator's opinion, inhabit his world.

³⁴⁷ *Obrazovanie* no.2, 209.

³⁴⁸ During the Jesup Expedition, Bogoraz took pictures of members of the indigenous Chukchi and Siberian Eskimos. The characteristically anthropological procedures of taking photographs took up much of the Jesup Expedition's time. In total members of the expeditions took more than three thousand photographs.

involuntary” manner of characters, I offer close readings of testimonies of three teenagers: Jewish thief Gaiskii (the narrator never mentioned his first name), Khana Kats, and Peisakh Neikin, as well as the anthropological discussion between the Russian chairman of the chamber of appeals Kotliarevskii, and the Jewish state rabbi Frumson.

Testimony of Jewish Youth: From Thievery to the Brotherhood of People

The testimony given by Jewish youth receives particular prominence. These individuals repeatedly refer to a transition from political activism to active armed self-defense, from criminal activity to political engagement. The pattern of transformation from non-participant into activist striving for change resembles that of Bogoraz’s own turn to Jewish activism. Furthermore, the testimony refers to the resistance by Jewish youths to beatings from tsarist soldiers and civilian perpetrators who attacked them. Moreover, people’s accounts also reveal the text’s ability to refute and challenge the government’s version of events. From these testimonies, we can infer that the army did nothing to stop the perpetrators. Comparing the firsthand accounts of the pogrom with the text of the official indictment, the reader notices textual and factual discrepancies.

Perhaps the most fascinating personality depicted in the sketches is that of Gaiskii, a former thief who has transformed himself, in Bogoraz’s words, into a nationally minded “fanatic.”³⁴⁹ Surprisingly, he meets with the author in order to confess.

Documenting the culture by taking photographs, making sound recordings, and collecting artifacts were important practices for the Jesup Expedition and later for An-sky’s ethnographic expeditions. On the photography of the Jesup expedition, see Laurel Kendall, et al., *Drawing Shadows to Stone: The Photography of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, 1897-1902* (New York: American Museum of Natural History; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 19. On the photography from An-sky’s expedition, see Eugene M. Avrutin, Valerii Dymshits, Alexander Lvov, Harriet Murav, and Alla Sokolova, eds., *Photographing the Jewish Nation: Pictures from S. An-sky’s Ethnographic Expedition* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2009).

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 80.

He is described as a young man with a “dry swarthy face and well-built figure that indicated his outstanding dexterity and strength. [...] His face was overshadowed, as if he was sick or aggrieved by a recent sorrow.”³⁵⁰ According to the narrator, he needs someone who can first of all listen to him and let him speak his mind (*vyskazat'sia*).³⁵¹ While some of the arrested youths were defending themselves against the perpetrators, Gaiskii took advantage of the pogrom to steal. A thief, or *marvikher*, as he calls himself in Yiddish, he comes from a poor rural family that sent him to a *kheder* (Jewish elementary school) that he despised.³⁵² He rebels and runs away, and then returns back to his own people. Once he steals sixty-five rubles from a Jew who, when he finds out about the loss, contemplates throwing himself under the train. At that moment he realizes that he was not “honest and that all his life is base,” and he decides to return the money (“Chto ia nechestnyi i zhizn' moia podlaia”).³⁵³ The turning point occurs during Gaiskii's first prison term. He says, “If I hadn't been imprisoned in that house of detention, I would have not known all the procedures and thoughts about prison, and maybe my life would have taken a different path.”³⁵⁴ Gaiskii's testimony and his personality depicted by Bogoraz have high narrative value and helped his empirical readers relate to the story. Those readers will have included assimilated, educated, middle-class Jews, as well as liberal-minded Russian readers, judging by the readership of the journal *Obrazovanie*.

³⁵⁰ *Obrazovanie*, no. 3, 80.

³⁵¹ This setting is also reminiscent of Bergelson's short story “Among Refugees” (1923), where a young Jewish terrorist comes to a writer in Berlin to confess that he lives in the same boarding house as the notorious pogromist (*pogromshchik*).

³⁵² Different social classes such as criminals, thieves, and simple idlers were also involved in the Kishinev pogrom in April 1903. Shlomo Lambrosa, “The Pogroms of 1903-1906,” in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, eds. John Klier and Shlomo Lambrosa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 204. Bogoraz's draft of the sketches also revealed that he used more Yiddish words than in his final published work. This suggests that his Jewish subjects were bilingual; they spoke Yiddish and Russian, RAN, f. 250, op.2, d. 120.

³⁵³ *Obrazovanie* no.3, 82.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

The investigator who is the textual representation of the author is a personality with his own identifying qualities and markers. He is an educated, informed investigator of the Gomel' pogrom, who has strong sympathy for Jewish identity, which he is inclined to interpret in literary and interpretive norms. He has thorough knowledge of Jewish religion, customs and the Yiddish language. The author does not believe that as a former thief, and now a Bund member,³⁵⁵ Gaiskii is suitable for rescuing Gomel's children from thievery. He does believe, however, that Gaiskii will be an industrious member of the Bund.

The manner in which Bogoraz frames Gaiskii's statements and weaves his idiolect into the multivocality of the narrative subtly prompts the reader to treat this informant's statements regarding stereotypes of Russian and Jewish behavior with caution, yet to respond positively to his picturesque and intriguing personality. During the Gomel' pogrom, Gaiskii was arrested and again incarcerated. But according to his unreliable narrative of events, he was merely loitering on the streets. Perhaps he did not know what was happening, or maybe he just was looking for a victim to rob. He is, on one level, an unreliable narrator and witness, but only in the sense of his own unstable and shifting identity. He was outside, he insists, "purely out of curiosity" (*na ulitse [...] iz liubopytstva*).³⁵⁶ For thieves, he explains, there is no difference between Russians or Jews: "Thieves are internationalists (*internatsional'niki*). Of course, [Gaiskii continues] pickpockets are mostly Jews, and looters and murderers are Russians."³⁵⁷ He appropriates elements of the liberation discourse of Marxism or anarchism, where the oppressed as well as fighters do not have freedom. Here Bogoraz reproduces Gaiskii's idiolect. This

³⁵⁵ See footnote above that gives a definition of the Bund.

³⁵⁶ *Obrazovanie* no.3, 82.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 82.

statement reflects Gaiskii's stereotypes of Jewish and Russian behavior. Thus, on the level of Gaiskii's "professional reasons" for being outside on the street, we can further question the account of events and the reliability of his narrative. Even though Gaiskii supposedly remains uninvolved in the Gomel' events, further evidence emerges during his arrest, and because of it, he is kept in prison. He tells the narrator that in prison he underwent a transformation – a "profound change" (*dushevnye perevoroty*).³⁵⁸ Turning to his friend in the prison, he asks, "Why am I held here? What did we fight for out there, that I have to be here? Would honest people have stood up for me? They would have beaten me up; all these people would have beaten me up."³⁵⁹ This is a classic topos of rehabilitation through penal suffering. Bogoraz leaves the question of whether Gaiskii's transformation is genuine or not unanswered, open, but as far as Gaiskii's testimonies are concerned, he makes a claim that he has a change of heart, as illustrated through the intertextuality of his confession.

Gaiskii, as represented by Bogoraz, uses a discourse containing recognizable features from Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, as in: "And when I left prison, I had a feeling that I wanted to ask the whole world for forgiveness, but [I] did not know how."³⁶⁰ This confession evokes Alesha Karamazov's dream in the chapter "Cana of Galilee," in which he sees Jesus' first miracle of turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana. Among the guests there is Zosima, who instructs Alesha to do good deeds.³⁶¹ After the dream, Alesha

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 82. Dostoevsky and Bogoraz pointed out the transformational power of the prison experience in their own lives. See Dostoevsky's *The Notes from the House of the Dead* and Bogoraz's *Autobiography*.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 83.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 84.

³⁶¹ In the preceding chapter, "Lukovka" ("An Onion," book 7, ch.3), Alesha gave Grushen'ka an onion, a chance to redeem herself that she took. Zosima in Alesha's dream says that he "[...] segodnia lukovku sumel podat' alchushchei [Grushen'ka]," "[...] today I managed to offer an onion to the greedy one [to Grushen'ka]." At the same time, Grushen'ka also handed Alesha an onion, "ia khot' i zlaia, a vse-taki, ia lukovku podala," "even though I am a wicked one, none the less I offered an onion," which refers to her

suddenly leaves Zosima's dead body and, full of revelation, embraces the earth and asks for forgiveness.

He wanted to forgive everyone for everything, and ask for forgiveness; oh! not for himself but for everyone and for everything, [...] As if some idea was about set to reign in his mind – and now for his entire life and forever and ever.³⁶²

Clearly, Gaiskii bases his model of behavior on literary prototypes, admitting that he has read *Crime and Punishment*, Tolstoy's *Resurrection*, and some unspecified works of Chekhov. He does not read Yiddish, but he does read Russian, which reveals that he has very little connection to Jewish religious culture. He models his discourse after Dostoevsky and serves as a precursor to Isaac Babel. "My understanding [of things] has been expanded. For example, regarding the Torah, I confess that the Torah is completely useless. And I began to think that we want the brotherhood of peoples like France and Germany . . ."³⁶³ This idea of the relationship between the Jewish Bible and socialism is later echoed in Babel's story, "The Rebbe's Son" ("Syn rabbi") where portraits of Lenin and Maimonides lie side by side in the scattered belongings of the protagonist, Il'ia Bratslavskii. In Gaiskii's confession, the Torah is replaced by the Marxist idea of the international, brotherhood of workers, whereas Babel's protagonist allows both texts to coexist. The character of Gaiskii reads like Dostoevsky and anticipates Babel. His idiolect features recognizable elements of the radical, left wing political speech of the age.

Gaiskii shares with Alesha Karamazov this strange yearning to repair the world by asking for forgiveness. Similar to Alesha and Ivan Karamazov, Gaiskii is inclined to

desire to test Alesha's modesty that he withstand. PSS 14: 327; 318. See Kate Holland, "Novelizing Religious Experience: The Generic Landscape of 'The Brothers Karamazov,'" *Slavic Review* 66.1 (2007): 63-81.

³⁶² PSS 14: 328.

³⁶³ *Obrazovanie* no.3, 86.

verbal self-flagellation (*samobichevaniiu dushi*),³⁶⁴ exposing his vices and torturing himself with repentance. Moreover and very revealingly, he believes in the transformative power of literature, particularly as contrasted with the trauma of his imprisonment. As reflected in the following quotation, it was literature that changed him for the better while prison only drove him further into crime. “And it is even better to write such [didactic] books and convince [thieves] with the help of virtuous words, so that readers will understand the nature of these crimes. Especially, as they are done by children.”³⁶⁵ His desire to save small children echoes Ivan and Alesha Karamazovs’ ideas about the suffering of children. In the epilogue, Alesha gathers a group of boys after Iliusha’s funeral where he provides them with moral instruction. “Well, I am speaking because of the fear that we could become wicked, [...] but what for would we become wicked, wouldn’t we, gentlemen? Let us foremost and primarily be kind, then honest, and then let us never forget about each other.”³⁶⁶ Gaiskii, in turn, directly echoes Alesha. He states,

[...] I would like to gather [...], not only grown-ups, but children, abandoned, who are running on the streets and stealing, the ones that one calls “lost,” that no-one has pity for. Because I feel pity: I was running like this myself. [...] I will tell them that they should live for the good and not for the evil. And I will help to get boys from the prison and I will tell them, “Leave thievery, don’t offend other people so that they will not offend you.”³⁶⁷

The echoes of Dostoevsky are clear and obvious, which is not surprising because Gaiskii is an avid reader of Dostoevsky. While reading Gaiskii’s confession, the reader wonders why Bogoraz dedicated so much time to this informant, and how it fits into the author’s

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 87.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 86.

³⁶⁶ PSS 15: 196.

³⁶⁷ *Obrazovanie* no.3, 89.

interpretation of events.³⁶⁸ In the end, the extent of his self-identification with Dostoevsky's characters does not matter. Gaiskii's evidence has a factological value in and of itself. But Bogoraz's skill at depicting this unusual, eccentric, liminal character also enhances the pure literary quality of the text. Bogoraz's depiction of Gaiskii emphasizes the Dostoevskian features in Gaiskii's voice. He is imbued with recognizable quotations that point to the intertextuality of the literary ethnographic genre. As I have shown in my analyses of Dostoevsky's *Notes* and Korolenko's stories, literary ethnography encompasses both canonical and non-canonical texts, thus creating an indirect dialogue between writers across historical eras and cultural spaces.

Bogoraz explores Gaiskii's dynamic contradictions and conflicted identities, situating them at the intersection of Jewish political life, the imperial legal system, ethnic and ethnographic discussions, and literary works. After Gaiskii became an active member of a workers' circle (*kruzhok*), he began to question his legal rights as a Jew, particularly the lack of access to equal education, limitations on freedom of movement and work permits.³⁶⁹ Because Gaiskii was introduced to the meetings of the workers (most likely the Bund), he believes in the international brotherhood of people. The political engagement with either Bund or Poalei Tsion, and even the influence of a Jewish character Tsvaiger,³⁷⁰ made Gaiskii a self-aware Jew, whose past as a thief and experience of imprisonment challenged his Jewish identity and transformed him into an active Jew.

³⁶⁸ For a discussion of confession and legal cases in literature, see Peter Brooks' work *Troubling Confessions: Speaking Guilt in Law and Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). Also, Harriet Murav's book *Russia's Legal Fictions* explores the connection between the writers and their experience with the law, how the evolution of Russian literary trials evolved.

³⁶⁹ *Obrazovanie* no.3, 87.

³⁷⁰ A former wealthy Jewish merchant, and now a modest servant and external student, Tsvaiger, who lost his son in the pogrom, comes to Gaiskii in prison to support him in his new transformation, to change his life, and help him live an honest life.

The narrator finishes Gaiskii's story on a doubtful note. He does not believe that as a former thief, and now a Bund member, Gaiskii will be suitable for rescuing Gomel's children. He does believe, however, that he will be an industrious member of the Bund. The reader does not learn what happens to Gaiskii, whether he fulfilled his dream of creating his "international brotherhood" or not, whether he was acquitted, or went back to prison. Since his name is not mentioned in the indictment, his story contains an element of mystery, which again shows the literary quality of the text, and might also shed light on the selectiveness of the official narrative contained in the indictment. Gaiskii exemplifies a new turn in Jewish behavior, a classical transformation from a criminal into a politically conscious Jew, who typifies Raskol'nikov's type of behavior - "redemption through sin." These transformations refer as well to the resistance of Jewish youths to beatings from tsarist army soldiers and thugs.³⁷¹

Gaiskii's testimony is a partial view, which should be complemented with Russian voices. Gaiskii is a fascinating silhouette in the work. Bogoraz succeeds in presenting a character who is liminal, marginalized in his native Jewish community and culture and in Russian imperial rural culture, his language, his identity, his worldview such as it was, and his interpretation of the events of the pogrom. These factors privilege him as a source and witness who can shed perhaps definitive light on the facts and dynamics of the pogrom. In effect, Bogoraz defamiliarizes the chain of events, which to others would have been familiar: brutal police violence against Jews, accusations that it was a "Russian pogrom," visceral violence and corruption of the police, imperial desire to keep the events secret.

³⁷¹ An indictment act did not apply the word *gromily* (thugs), but Bogoraz used the word *pogromshchik* (pogromist) and *gromily*; both words share the same root – *gromit'* – to destroy.

The confessions of the Jewish teenagers Gaiskii (the narrator never mentioned his first name) and Khana Kats stand out in the sketches through the determination of the characters to defend their legal rights. The Jewish youth, Gaiskii, Khana Kats, and Neikin, were all in Gomel' during the pogrom, and all are teenagers. Gaiskii is probably nineteen and Khana is seventeen. Kats and Neikin were falsely accused of “criminal activities” in the pogrom, and she has political and personal reasons for turning to self-defense. In contrast to her is the thief Gaiskii, who was taking advantage of the turmoil and wanted to profit from it. Even though the confessions are fragmented and reveal only a small part of each character’s transformation, the resistance to submission to the tsarist forces during the pogrom makes these young characters outstanding subverters. Now I will turn to the testimony of Khana Kats.

A Jewish Jeanne d’Arc: Khana Kats

A seventeen-year-old seamstress Khana Kats, also called Jeanne d’Arc by the narrator, is one of thirty-six Jews accused of an “armed attack on the troops” (“vooruzhennom napadenii na voiska”).³⁷² This semiliterate Jewish girl with some reading skills in Russian was accused of resisting the Russian soldiers’ violence. As David Roskies has shown, the previous Hebrew and Yiddish writers (Hayim Bialik, Shimen Frug, Moyshe Halpern, Halper Leivick, Aaron Leyeles, Perets Markish and many others) grounded their poetic works on the Jewish catastrophe in the traditional liturgical tropes of Jewish biblical and historical events representing collective suffering. Bogoraz, in contrast, turned to Western European imagery. By comparing Kats to Jeanne d’Arc, who was only two years older than Kats at the time of her martyrdom, Bogoraz probably

³⁷² *Obrazovanie* no. 4, 144.

wanted to appeal to a larger audience in the Russian Empire that would more readily identify with a relatively recent, European historical figure.

Reading the indictment along with Krever's journalist work reveals that some characters in the sketches are real people.³⁷³ The story of Khana Kats, for example, is described in the indictment. The difference between the indictment's depiction of what happened and Bogoraz's depiction of the events is mainly in the voice and the context. To illustrate this, I compare the indictment to Bogoraz's sketches below.

The indictment gives the following interpretation of Khana's participation in the pogrom:

Kats managed to throw several sticks and stones at the soldiers. Then, she threw an axe and finally hit the private soldier Petrenko with a piece of iron. [...] [N]on-commissioned officer Dziakovich rushed to Khana Kats with the intention to arrest her, but Kats shot at Dziakovich with a pistol, but missed. Having caught Khana Kats in the apartment of the petty bourgeois Mendel' Rivkin, Dziakovich hit her on the head with a rifle butt [...] and slightly injured her.³⁷⁴

Bogoraz provides the following account as written from Khana's testimony given in court:

Since I was very agitated, [I] was beside myself, [I] really was taking stones and throwing [them,] or [anything] that was in front of me, sticks, pieces of furniture. An axe came my way, so I threw an axe. With that axe, maybe, then [I] was hit in the head. I shouted [to Russian soldiers]: "Blood suckers, [you] want to suck the blood out of us," [I] called [to the Jews]: "Jews, you should fight to the bitter end, you should not run away." Then soldiers approached [us], ours [Jews] were running and I was running away with them. [I] got into the apartment, but the soldiers jumped through the windows, [they] broke the windows and furniture. The owner [of the apartment] was hit with a rifle butt. Others scattered. I was hit

³⁷³ B. A. Krever, *Gomel'skii protest: Podrobnyi otchet po protokolam zashchitnikov i otchetam pechatavshimsia v zhurnalakh "Pravo" i "Voskhod" i gazetakh "Kievskie otkliki," "Odesskie novosti," "Russkoe slovo," "Novosti" i "Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik"* (St. Petersburg: Tipografii t-va "Obshchestvennaia pol'za," 1907).

³⁷⁴ *Obvinitel'nyi akt po delu o meshchanakh Shmae Borukhove Gorelik, Meer Faivelev Bernshtein, krest'ianin Panteleimon Ignat'ev Bogdanov i drugikh, obviniaemykh v prestyplenii, predusmotrennom 269 st. Ulozh. O Nak.* Kopia (Kiev: Tipografiia I. Kryzhanovskago i V. Avdiushenko, 1904), YIVO, RG 1401, Box 28, Folder 307. 9.

by a soldier with an axe. [...] [A]nother soldier hit me with a rifle butt. Then, I do not remember more.³⁷⁵

These two slightly differing perspectives on the same event raise the question of the validity of the accusation against Khana. It is clear from the indictment and her testimony that she used everything she could as a weapon to defend herself, and both excerpts above begin after the violence has already started, without directly stating who was to blame. The charges related to Khana's self-defense imply that she should have surrendered to the violence of the soldiers. She was protecting herself, and her cries demanding that Jews defend themselves were, according to tsarist law, a crime. According to the indictment, the non-commissioned officer Dziakovich only slightly hurt her, which is incongruous with Kats's statement, because she lost consciousness. Here, Bogoraz gives a critical reading of the written statement by constructing narratives that display certain characteristics of told stories. Bogoraz allows Kats to speak and be heard; her testimony is oriented towards high narrative value. It contains elements of a person's idelect, stream of consciousness, literary allusions, and realistic depiction. Even though Bogoraz did not witness the pogrom directly and the scientific method of his time required that he observe the scene as it happened, his sketches were still based on the empirical gathering of information, and on verifiable observations and not assumptions. Bogoraz was in the courtroom and was writing down Khana's own spoken words; his account was based on his direct personal engagement, on evidence from a witness, and not on paraphrasing. The officials who compiled the indictment were relying only on Russian soldiers as witnesses and not on the victims of the pogrom, providing a one-sided account. Bogoraz was not the only journalist who documented the pogrom's trial. A

³⁷⁵ *Obrazovanie* no. 4, 144-45.

journalist called G. Khavkin described the following curious faux pas during the trial.³⁷⁶ When one soldier-witness was called to testify against a Jew called Shlezinger who “shot at Russians,” the soldier denied his earlier testimonies given prior to the trial. The soldier explained this change by saying that he was actually ordered by his captain to testify against the Jews (“whatever they [the officials] tell us to say, we are saying,” “nam chego pokazhut, to my i pokazyvaem”).³⁷⁷ But, during the trial, he gave true testimony, since he was under oath. Khavkin, in jubilation, stated that this moment of revealing the truth defused the courtroom’s tense atmosphere. This illustrates how it was difficult for witnesses to express what they wanted to say due to official pressure.³⁷⁸ These testimonies carry ethical elements; their cultural utility is to disrupt the official monological narrative.

The discrepancy between the two stories also sheds light on what the Other, the Jew, of the Pale of Settlement had to endure and what legal rights, if any, he or she had. Khana’s actions also constituted a new type of behavior for a Jewish woman. Khana’s case is unique in the sketches because it is the only story of a Jewish woman, who not only exhorted the Jews to rebel against the violence, but was also an active participant in it. By her own account, she was fearlessly defending herself while the Russian official narrative presented her as the aggressor. Moreover, Bogoraz showed a *heteroglossic* record of the pogrom’s events. Thus, his narrative challenged the official documents. By including the Other of the Empire, he presented a different side of the story which had previously gone unheard. This testimony also revealed that Bogoraz had ideological orientation: he wanted to show his Russian audience a more nuanced and morally

³⁷⁶ No first name is given.

³⁷⁷ RAN, f. 250, op. 5, d. 121, l. 5.

³⁷⁸ RAN, f. 250, op. 5, d. 121.

justifiable account of the events. The reader sympathizes with Kats because she had the courage to break a law that deprived her of the right to self-defense. Her courage and leadership evoke the story of Jeanne d'Arc, though set in a Jewish national context. In the end, because of the public nature of the trial, on April 25, 1905 Kats received a very short sentence—only two weeks of imprisonment.³⁷⁹ Now I will turn to Neikin, whose testimony is another example of self-defense against pogromists.

Peisakh Neikin: From Self-Defense to Conscription for the Russo-Japanese War

As in Gaiskii's confession, Neikin's testimony was given partially in court and probably partly in conversation with the narrator. In contrast to Gaiskii, Neikin does not suffer from self-flagellation. His model of behavior is not that of Dostoevsky's characters but, as the scholar Shlomo Lambrosa stated, that of the Kishinev pogrom which provided Jewish youth with a "model of behavior."³⁸⁰ A nineteen year-old future conscript in the war with Japan, Neikin decided to defend himself with a bludgeon (*kisten*). His service in the war illustrates that he is a part of the empire and defends it, although his legal status as an alien (*inorodets*) excludes him from being treated as an equal in it. Neikin was physically the antithesis of Gaiskii; his figure was as fragile as that of a young girl (*figura ego byla khrupkaia kak u devochki*).³⁸¹ Moreover, he was heavily beaten, "he seemed to be weak, exhausted, broken-hearted."³⁸² He was charged by the law for the fact that "he had a weapon in his hand," and as a consequence of this, he spent

³⁷⁹ GARF, f. 124, op. 65, d. 57, l. 230 ob.

³⁸⁰ Shlomo Lambrosa, "The Pogroms of 1903-1906," in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, eds. John Klier and Shlomo Lambrosa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 210.

³⁸¹ *Obrazovanie* ch. 4, 89.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, 90.

sixteen months in prison along with other “serious” criminals. The narrator’s voice is ironic. He uses the word “serious criminal” (tiazhelyi prestupnik) to describe Neikin, even though the narrator knows that he did not harm anyone but, on the contrary, was defending himself. The same ironic narrative voice is employed in the following paragraph:

The system of defense for the majority of the accused consisted of the fact that they had to prove their alibi and their disassociation from self-defense. Almost all of them were arrested at random, and the majority of them, indeed, did not have anything to do with the impudent attempt of the Gomel' youth to defend the Jewish houses from the pogrom.³⁸³

The irony is that the meaning of the “impudent attempt” (“derzkoi popytke”) of the young Jewish Gomel' youth is the opposite of what the narrator intends to convey. Of course, the attempt of the armed youth to defend themselves is praised and admired. But the narrator creates a double-reading of the disputed charges against the youth. If the reader of the journal *Education*, where the sketches were published, is a dire anti-Semite, he will believe that the author is on the side of the tsarist regime. But an experienced reader, who understands the irony, will see that the narrator was giving an opposite meaning to the “impudent attempt.” Supporting Dubnow’s observations on active participation of Jews in the Gomel' pogrom, Neikin decided to arm himself after he learned about the Kishinev pogrom and defended himself (“[I] wouldn't let them knife me ignominiously and defenselessly so that’s why I armed myself.” “ne dam zarezat' sebia tak pozorno i bezzashchitno i potomu ia vooruzhilsia”).³⁸⁴ One of the main observations in Neikin's story and in the story of Khana Kats is that these teenagers are accused of defending themselves against the thugs. The narrator gives empirical evidence based on

³⁸³ *Obrazovanie* ch. 4, 90. Italics are mine.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 90. Having heard about the Kishinev pogrom that preceded Gomel' s only five months earlier, Jews were actively creating self-defense groups.

direct observations and the first-hand eyewitness accounts of Neikin that these charges are false. First of all, his weapon, the bludgeon, looked more like a child's toy, good only for killing flies.³⁸⁵ But in court, of course, the opinion as to the capacity of this weapon was different. Secondly, Neikin did not participate in any armed activities. On the contrary, he was arrested by the soldiers because he had a "weapon" and was heavily beaten by them. Thirdly, he stated that soldiers did not defend Jews when thugs were attacking them, which was in opposition to the indictment act's statements. Neikin gives the following illustration of the pogrom,

Brüder a her!³⁸⁶ ... Around one-hundred-fifty people came up. And the thugs [came] from there. From behind the soldiers, [they] started throwing stones at us. The soldiers were facing the thugs, but they did not do anything.³⁸⁷

The narrator asked one question - why there was such animosity between Russian and Jews? Neikin disagreed that there was any animosity between those two groups, saying that they were raised together. This point echoes Gaiskii's view for the brotherhood of all peoples. Moreover, he stated that pogromists (he sometimes used the word *pogromshchik*) were vagrants and members of the underclass, but good people (*chestnye liudi*) were defending them and helping to hide them in their houses.³⁸⁸ His sentence was conscription, and he was sent to the Russo-Japanese front even though he was not physically fit to fight. Kats's and Neikin's testimonies challenged the veracity of the indictment. Their voices revealed the complicated and torturous plight they had to endure defending themselves during the pogrom and the trial. The heroic behavior and audacity of Kats, Gaiskii, and Neikin also subverted Bialik's description of Jews as "plucked

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 91.

³⁸⁶ It is written in Latin characters in the original Russian text.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 92.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 95.

grass,” as passive victims of the pogrom. By giving voice to Kats, Gaiskii, and Neikin, Bogoraz produced consistent evidence of the weak legal status of Russian Jews in the Pale. Even though his sketches reached only a small portion of the educated readers of the empire, they were trailblazing in recording the trauma of the pogrom.

Bogoraz’s sketches is an example of a hybrid genre, which includes elements of journalism, fieldwork reporting, literary and ethnographic descriptions and interpretation, fictionalization of actual events and persons, and a study of nationhood and identity, which extends to the figure of the author himself. The heteroglossia of the text does not generate a definitive answer as to what constitutes nationhood. Bogoraz’s silhouettes are the sum of all the voices which dynamically interact and coexist in the text, leaving the reader with the possibility of engaging this question dialogically and coming to his or her own conclusion. Bogoraz judiciously chooses which interviews to quote and which passages to include. He displays his skill as a writer, weaving strongly violent and vivid statements into the heteroglossia of the work. The author presents the reader with a spectrum of voices: a Jewish thief Gaiskii, a Jewish Jeanne D’Arc, Khana Kats, and a future conscript Peysakh Neikin, whom I already discussed, and two types that are going to be analyzed below: the Russian chairman of the chamber of appeals Kotliarevskii, and the Jewish State Rabbi Frumson. Bogoraz’s work “Silhouettes from Gomel” is an effective polemical response to and refutation of an official accusation which stated that Jews had committed an outrage against Russians.

Jewish Identity in the Light of Anthropological Discourse

The silhouettes contain an anthropological dimension, which is supported by heteroglossic technique. During the court proceedings, the Chairman of the Chamber of appeals Kotliarevskii and State Rabbi Frumson engaged in a discussion of Jewish behavior, using the same anthropological discourse, but for different purposes.³⁸⁹ Rabbi Frumson expresses a Eurocentric view, according to which humans progress from savagery to civilization.

According to Spencer, development goes from homogenous to heterogeneous. Anthropology shows the same [type of development]. For example, all wild tribes have the same way of life - they live slovenly, they do not wash and [they] do not have any households. They are simply savages. In Europe, from the same savages emerged as Germans, French, and English men.³⁹⁰

Frumson's "scientific" view was based on the notion of unilinear evolution, or classical social evolutionary theory, which was popular in the second half of the nineteenth-century. This view of human nature as a biological organism was propounded by the Victorian sociologist Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) in his book *The Social Organism* (1860). As the title suggests, he viewed society as a living organism, similar to a biological organism that gradually developed from a simple, homogeneous life form into a more complex, heterogeneous one.

Frumson believes that the Jews' militant behavior during the pogrom is only one of the stages in their development. He is convinced that Jews will be transformed into more civilized beings similar to Germans, French, and Britons. The text subjects another voice in attendance at the trial, Kotliarevskii, to similar testing for factual accuracy and competence. Kotliarevskii argues, however, that: "Anthropology teaches us that [...] the

³⁸⁹ No first names are given.

³⁹⁰ *Obrazovanie* no. 5, 126.

Jewish type remained unchanged during the last four thousand years; henceforth, one can't talk about the adjustment of Jews to the environment."³⁹¹ By grounding his racist prejudice in "pseudo-scientific racial" theories, Kotliarevskii seeks scientific legitimization for discriminating against Jews. Kotliarevskii's view of Jews is biased, since Russians are viewed as the ultimate achievers of human progress. He expresses the view of meteorological climate theory, developed by Montesquieu in his work *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748), in which the latter viewed the effect of the climate on the essential characteristics of human nature. The narrator, though, undermines the Spencerian interpretation of both Frumson and Kotliarevskii by framing it in a way that calls into question its factual basis.

As the narrator correctly observes, anthropology had already moved away from the Spencerian theory of evolution that emphasized progress in human development, not only with regard to the capacity to adjust to circumstances, but also with regard to the idea of moral progress, a teleological end in itself.³⁹² Kotliarevskii's discussion of the environmental theory of human development is employed to undermine the Jews and make them look primitive. The "scientific" anthropological arguments of Kotliarevskii did not influence the outcome of the trial. In the end, all the accused were acquitted or

³⁹¹ "Antropologiiia uchit [...] chto evreiskii tip ostalsia neizmennym za poslednie chetyre tysiachi let. Stalo byt', ni o kakoi prispособliaemosti evreev k okruzhaiushchei srede ne mozhet byt' i rechi." Ibid., 126. Kotliarevskii is mentioned in Krevier's work on the Gmel' trial and he is also the court official in the indictment. Similar to Kotliarevskii's employment of racial thinking was the tactic of I. Sikorskii, Kiev psychiatrist, who during the Beilis trial of 1913, "scientifically" proved that Jews used blood for ritual purposes (Marina Mogilner, "Evreiskaia antropologiiia v Rossii v kontekste evropeiskikh rasovykh issledovaniy (XIX-XX vv.)," in *Istoriia i kul'tura rossiiskogo i vostochnoevropeiskogo evreistva: Novye istochniki, novye podkhody*. Ed. Oleg Budnitskii. (Moskva: Dom evreiskoi knigi, 2004), 116-137.

³⁹² For more on the Spencerian influence on Russian intellectuals, see Michał Bohun, "Nikolai Mikhailovskii and Konstantin Leont'ev. On the Political Implication of Herbert Spencer's Sociology," *Studies in East European Thought* 54 (2002): 71-86. For a discussion of the employment of racial discourse, see Eugene M. Avrutin, "Racial categories and the Politics of (Jewish) Difference in Late Imperial Russia," *Kritika: Exploration in Russian and Eurasian History* 8.1 (2007): 13-40; Eli Weinerman, "Racism, Racial Prejudice and Jews in Late Imperial Russia," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 17.13 (1994): 442-95.

received very short prison sentences. This was broadly seen as a triumph of justice and a defeat of anti-Semitism, similar to the achievements of the Dreyfus affair, as the narrator observes. Still, the discussion reveals the racially biased anti-Semitic trend in the Russian Empire.

At that time, there was no agreement among scholars on the impact of racial theories within the Russian Empire. Prominent Jewish historians Simon Dubnow, Iulii Gessen, Jakob Lestschinsky, and Mark Vishniak argued that “racial prejudice” against Jews in Russia was not significant. On the contrary, discrimination against Jews was based on religious, economic, and cultural differences.³⁹³ However, recent scholarship on anti-Jewish discrimination in the Russian Empire shows that racial thinking played a role in imperial anti-Semitism.³⁹⁴ Eugene Avrutin pointed out that the tsarist regime “did promote racial consciousness (the awareness of ethno-cultural differences based on religion, customs, and ancestry) and racist attitudes (institutional and popular discrimination based on essential and ultimately unbridgeable differences).”³⁹⁵

Colonialist racial thinking and racial discourses were prevalent in Western countries, directed primarily toward colonial subjects. By contrast, Russian colonial subjects were residents within the same metropole. The fact that Kotliarevskii “promote[s] racial consciousness” in the sketches by employing pseudo-scientific racist theories to illustrate

³⁹³ Weinerman, 444-45.

³⁹⁴ Marina Mogilner, “Evreiskaia antropologiiia v Rossii v kontekste evropeiskikh rasovykh issledovaniĭ (XIX-XX vv.),” in *Istoriia i kul'tura rossiiskogo i vostochnoevropeiskogo evreistva: Novye istochniki, novye podkhody*, ed. Oleg Budnitskii (Moskva: Dom evreiskoi knigi, 2004); Eugene M. Avrutin, “Racial Categories and the Politics of (Jewish) Difference in Late Imperial Russia,” *Kritika: Exploration in Russian and Eurasian History* 8.1 (2007): 13-40.

Though some scholars argue that racial attitudes were key elements in anti-Semitism in Germany, but not in Russia. For more on this controversial discussion, see the detailed work by Eli Weinerman and John D. Klier, “German Anti-Semitism and Russian Judeophobia in the 1880s,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 37 (1989): 539-40.

³⁹⁵ Eugene M. Avrutin, “Racial Categories and the Politics of (Jewish) Difference in Late Imperial Russia,” *Kritika: Exploration in Russian and Eurasian History* 8.1 (2007): 16.

that Jews are savages shows that scientific discourse on race was a powerful tool in “othering” the Jews in the Russian Empire. As a government official and as a member of the court, Kotliarevskii possessed considerable power. But, as the outcome of the trial showed, his pseudo-anthropological theories did not make any impact on the verdict regarding the Jewish “accused” victims of self-defense during the pogrom. Kotliarevskii is not the only one who cites outdated Spencerian theory. Rabbi Frumson uses the same intellectual platform to argue that Jewish “savage” behavior had scientific validity. One of the goals of the scientific method is to dismiss false assumptions. Frumson’s belief that societal evolutionary progress is pre-ordained and inexorable was false. It revealed the persistence of outdated views, because, already by the turn of the century, more anthropologists were criticizing the amateur Spencer for arguing that societies were morally and materially always improving, that this was inevitable, and that primitive cultures were unsophisticated, while Western cultures were diverse.³⁹⁶ The discourse on race was transformed into a question of what constituted the essence of Jewishness.

For the state rabbi Frumson, Jewish nationality is religion, encompassed in the Jewish Bible.

But, what then is the Jewish nation? Our language is dead, we have no land. The Jewish nation is religion: one old book, one Jewish God. He sits on a golden throne, with a crown upon his head. The land is the footrest of his feet. [...] I do not need external customs. I, perhaps, may be an atheist. But the people believe, understand. They have not yet ripened. They need a written charter, a piece of parchment with holy words [pointing to the mezuzah].³⁹⁷

³⁹⁶ Bogoraz’s work on the indigenous cultures of the peoples of the North challenged the established stereotype that indigenous peoples were primitive. In his works on indigenous folklore, Bogoraz, on the contrary, demonstrated their cultural diversity. *Tales of Yukaghir, Lamut, and Russanized Natives of Eastern Siberia*. Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History. vol. 20, pt.1. (New York: The Trustees, 1918); *Materialy po izucheniiu chukotskogo iazyka i fol’klora*, chast’ 1 (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, 1900), et al.

³⁹⁷ *Obrazovanie* no. 9, 127.

State Rabbi Frumson does not believe in rituals. He even says that he might be an atheist, which is quite an odd statement for a state rabbi (*kazennyi ravin*).³⁹⁸ “But the people (*narod*) believes... . It (the people) did not ripen yet. It needs rituals. It needs a written charter, a piece of parchment with holy words.”³⁹⁹ As proof of his words, he touches a mezuzah that contains parchment from the Bible. This view is opposed by the audience and the teacher Drynkin. Though a teacher, Drynkin is not a *melamed* (someone who teaches Jewish religious subjects). In his own words, he is a unique instructor of the Hebrew language. He is different from a traditional melamed because he uses “the scientific method” for teaching the Hebrew language.⁴⁰⁰ What was scientific in his methodology was probably understood in a broader sense, something about language which was not abstract, but concrete and based on evidence. He states that the Jewish God is not a piece of old leather; he is not the Persian king Ahasuerus. The people do not need a crown, since God lives in people’s hearts: “The Jewish God is a living God; he lives in the living hearts, in the hearts of the Jewish people, which you do not know of, Mr. Rabbi of Shmyrsk.”⁴⁰¹ Drynkin continues by saying:

You drove off the prophets; he continued even louder, - [you are the] replacements of the Levites... They nourished themselves on the sacrificial calves, but you live from tax collections, [you are] state guardians of the Jewish nation. The Jewish nation gave the world God, love, and freedom. This is what the Jewish nation is, and not your dead words. God gave it [the Jewish nation] suffering, struggle, and the desire for the ideal. The Ideal of it [of the Jewish nation] is brotherhood and love. While you were composing treatises about a drop of milk falling on a piece of meat, the best people were carrying away the Ideal to

³⁹⁸ The State Rabbi (or Crown Rabbi) was a record keeper of the Jewish population in the Jewish communities in the Russian Empire; they differed from the religious rabbis because they were often the secularly educated, knew Russian, and lacked a traditional Jewish education. Among famous state rabbis were Yiddish writer Sholem Aleichem (né Shalom Rabinovitz) and the Zionist leader Yakov Maze. For more, see Tamar Kaplan Appel, “Crown Rabbi,” in *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, accessed November 8, 2011, http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Crown_Rabbi.

³⁹⁹ *Obrazovanie* no. 9, 127.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 128. Shmyrsk is a made up ironic name.

the goyim [non-Jews], to the strangers, and our brothers remained in the dark. Spinoza, Heine, Bern,⁴⁰² Marx, Lassalle: these are true Jews. You excluded them, took them away from the Jews and gave them to the different nations. But now the heart of the simple people is awakened in Judaism; Jewish prophets do not need to roost in a different nest. They will teach their own brothers, and in their own national house they will be prophets. Then the Jewish nation will be reborn again into life...⁴⁰³

The lawyer from the city of Samara, Breigel (no first name is given), who was defending Jews during the trial, was skeptical of Drynkin's view since, for him, the Jewish nation without the language, religious laws, and the land of Palestine, was not a nation. But Drynkin was proposing freedom for the Jewish people, for the world, and advocating the brotherhood of all people.⁴⁰⁴ Thus, he sees the Jewish nation through the prism of the international brotherhood of nations; his Marxist view triggered a discussion about democratic views on nationalism (*demokratami natsional'nyimi*) and internationalists (*internatsional'nyimi*).⁴⁰⁵

Bogoraz's discussion about race turns into an attempt to define Jewish identity. In other words, anthropology is used as a tool to define the constituent elements of Jewish identity. The question remained disputed as to what constituted Jewish identity – whether, according to Frumson's vision, Jewish people were like a herd needing a written parchment or whether Jews were keeping God in their hearts by striving for the solidarity and brotherhood of all Jews, as Drynkin and the Bundists advocated.

The narrator compares the teacher Drynkin to Don Quixote because of his physical resemblance due to his tall and lanky build, but also because he shares with the Spanish character gutsy audacity and a capacity to challenge orthodoxy. Like many other

⁴⁰² Karl Ludwig Börne (real name Juda Löb Baruch, 1786-1837), converted to Lutheranism for professional purposes and was the founder of the feuilleton genre.

⁴⁰³ *Obrazovanie* no.9, 128.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 129.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., 129.

accused Jews, according to the indictment, Drynkin is falsely charged with “the resistance to the armed forces” and even guiding the “Jewish gang against the ruffians.”⁴⁰⁶ But the narrator successfully disproves this fallacy by giving scientific evidence from a witness, Doctor Bystronogov. By pointing to the narrow-chested Drynkin, the doctor states that Drynkin was not physically capable of fighting or even directing the gang, hence the allusion to Don Quixote's heroic deeds:

By his back, indeed, it was becoming clear that there was not even a sign of resistance on Drynkin's part. In fact, Drynkin's “resistance” consisted of actively using his legs with the aforementioned crowd, when the anticipation of the rifle's butt was becoming a reality.⁴⁰⁷

Drynkin's resistance lay in the fact that he was running away from armed troops, which, according to the tsarist “official” military witnesses, was a “crime.” Drynkin was one of thirty-six accused Jews who were successfully acquitted or received a minor sentence. As in Khana Kats' and in Neikin's cases, the tsarist accusations were grounded not on “what really happened,” but on false assumptions.

Besides Jews, Bogoraz also interviewed Russians, among whom were Old Believers. Their views echoed those of Gaiskii and Neikin, who propounded the idea of international brotherhood.

Russian Silhouettes

Bogoraz presents the reader with multiple Russian voices from the “middle-petit-bourgeois standpoint”- “srednei meshchanskoi tochki zreniia,” who [the petit bourgeois] had “rather solid” positions and thus did not participate in the pogrom. Instead, they were

⁴⁰⁶ *Obrazovanie* no.5, 120.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 120.

observers who protected their property from both sides.⁴⁰⁸ In the chapter “Old and Young” (“Starye i molodye”), Bogoraz’s narrator takes the reader to the house of the old-believer Soimonov, who rescued several Jewish families during the pogrom. He has a “neutral” position towards the “national” question: “V natsional’nom voprose, on zanimal neitral’noe polozenie.”⁴⁰⁹ This neutrality is expressed by his claim that Jews and Russian belong to the same race.⁴¹⁰ The narrator also meets Soimonov’s younger son, who during the trial gave testimony, which drew outrage from the public prosecutor. Only later does the reader learn that he is a philo-Semite who defends Jews by stating that they are also people (*liudi*). As the title suggests, there are two different generations that talk about the pogrom. Each has conflicting stories, which, in the narrator’s own words, show how the pogrom polarized this society as much as the Dreyfus Affair polarized French society.⁴¹¹ Just as the Dreyfus affair contributed to the liberalization of Jews in France, this infamous parallel suggests the extent to which the Gomel’ trial contributed to the political mobilization of Russian Jews. The majority of the accused of the Gomel’ trial were, in the end, either acquitted or received a very short sentence.

As with the Dreyfus Affair, the Gomel’ trial permeates every roof and makes even the most humble and neutral inhabitant form an opinion [about the Gomel’ pogrom] and defend it against all others.⁴¹²

The circle of people gathered at Soimonov’s house includes an anti-Semitic conductor whose position is challenged by Soimonov’s younger son, who argues that Jews are also people.⁴¹³ One of the questions that the narrator asks is what is a democrat. He provides

⁴⁰⁸ *Obrazovanie* VII, Issue 4: 130.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 130.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, 140.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 132.

the answers of three different individuals. One is of a Russian, Brynkin, for whom democrats are “Jewish rebels.”⁴¹⁴ Another is a Jewish shopkeeper, whom the narrator met earlier. He is not a part of Soimonov’s society, and defines democrats as the “Jewish proletariat,” a group whose “shoes [are filled] with holes and pockets [filled] with books.”⁴¹⁵ The third answer is from Soimonov’s brother-in-law, who contrasts Russian craftsmen with their apprentices, whom they [the craftsmen] drive hard and do not pay. The Jewish apprentices dare to object to this treatment, fearlessly defend their rights, and demand payment for their work. Thus, Jews are democrats.⁴¹⁶ One of the locksmiths says that the “Jewish race is far from demanding their rights. What Jews are looking for – self-government, their rights [...] No Russian will ever be a friend with a Jew. [...] But Jews will never control Gomel', because control comes through the sword”.⁴¹⁷ An opposing position is expressed by another locksmith who claims Jews were clubbed because they were in the majority and were not Russians.⁴¹⁸ One also learns that during the pogrom there were intentional rumors spread about the butchering by Jews of the family of a wealthy merchant named Petrochenko.

Another question that the narrator asks is why the craftsmen battered the Jews.⁴¹⁹ The views expressed are fragmentary and conflicting. One example of the complexity of the pogrom is that not all witnesses agree upon the course of events; one hears differing views challenging the indictment. The Old Believer Soimonov tells the story of how a Russian peasant hit a Russian blacksmith with a spade for his anti-Semitic remarks.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 130.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 130.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 130.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 132.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 133.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 133.

Furthermore, the Old Believer compares the Jewish plight to that of the Old Believers.

Both groups are persecuted for their religious beliefs, both are forced into conscription, both are forced to convert in order to gain rights, and both experience violence and discrimination.

[...] For example, we are forbidden to build our houses of worship. One should [instead] build an ordinary house, and then turn it into a house of prayers. For instance, they want to convert us to Russian Orthodoxy, and we agree that Russian Orthodoxy is good, but why should they force us? [...] Every person has his dignity, and one doesn't want to be coerced.⁴²⁰

In the same vein, one witnesses the strife between the anti-Semitic locksmith and Soimonov's friend, who disparages the perpetrators for attacking old women and children. The locksmith tirelessly presents a detailed account of the pogrom. He admits that the rumors that Jews were slaughtering Russian families were fabricated not by women (*baby*), but by "smart people" who were well known in the town. The locksmith justifies his position by citing Krushevan's newspaper *Banner (Znamia)* that was agitating for robbing and destroying the Jews.⁴²¹ Soimonov tells him to cut off his agitation. He is tired of the trial's interrogations and hopes that this pogrom will be the last one. This account reveals the contrasting viewpoints, anti-Semitic and philo-Semitic, from the old and the young, all existing within the far-from-monolithic Russian side. The setting is also significant. It is not a courtroom, but rather the house of the Old Believer Soimonov, whose guests belong to the petit bourgeois class and who disagree on the role played by Jews during the Gomel' pogrom. Similar to the French situation during the

⁴²⁰ Ibid., 134-35.

⁴²¹ The newspaper was published in St. Petersburg in 1903 and 1904. During the Kishinev and Gomel' pogroms of 1903, Pavolaki Krushevan (1860-1909) for the first time published the anti-Semitic work *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

Dreyfus Affair in 1894, Gomel's Russian population was divided on the question of Jewish culpability.



Figure 1. Postcard of the defenders of the Gomel' Trial sent to Dr. Cruskall in New York and received on September 19, 1905. Text on the left lists the defense-lawyers of the trial. 1. Krol'; 2. Margolin; 3. Kal'manovich; 4. Zarudnyi; 5. Ganfman; 6. Mandel'shtam; 7. Krasil'shchikov; 8. Ratner; 9. Sliozberg; 10. Kupernik; 11. Vinaver; 12. Sokolov. On the right side in Hebrew reads "leshana tova," Happy New Year.⁴²²

Conclusion

In "Silhouettes from Gomel'," Bogoraz diverged drastically in several ways from the poetic tradition of preceding Jewish writers in several ways. He presented testimonies

⁴²² YIVO Archive, RG 1401, Box 28, Folder 307.

with high-narrative value that encompassed a participant-observation method which called into question the official tsarist indictment. His sketches made Jews the subjects. Their voices were recorded without authorial dominance or intrusion.

Bogoraz's discursive platform enabled him to identify and depict different registers of speech. "Scientific research" and his ethnographic method of participant observation helped to record the multiplicity of voices, so that the reader could get a firsthand view of the accused youth (as it was stated in the official indictment) in the context of other testimonies and voices. The different generic elements in the text and the supporting narratological and descriptive practices, especially the use of heteroglossic techniques, work to deconstruct directly and by implication the central statement of the indictment. The author presents the reader with a spectrum of voices: a Jewish thief, Russian judge, Jewish State Rabbi, and quasi-revolutionary types. Bogoraz's intriguing use of legal principles to refute the indictment, as well as the intertextual dialogic whole, conclusively demonstrates the factual, moral, and conceptual falseness of the indictment. What is most important is that Bogoraz offers empirical evidence that questions the tsarist accusation that the Gomel' pogrom was an ethnic and religious attack against Russians. His text also displays cultural utility — a notion of a higher *truth* (*istina*), which exhibits ethical and judgmental elements. Bogoraz's literary investigation functions in tandem with another text – the indictment. In a sense, Bogoraz's sketches are a multi-faceted commentary on the indictment, showing the inaccuracy of that legal document. Bogoraz's discourse deconstructs the official narrative of the Gomel' events by referencing empirical, factual, and scientific elements of analyses, as it was understood during that time. Bogoraz gave voice to the Jewish victims of the pogrom

whose testimonies during the trial, interviews, and confessions challenged the official narrative of these events. Bogoraz offers a factually and discursively supportive counter-narrative by implications, and sometimes explicitly contradicts the imperial narrative.⁴²³

Gomel' was not the only pogrom that Bogoraz dealt with in his work. In an article after 1918, he summarized the entire twentieth-century pogrom period. In contrast to Khmelnytsky's pogroms, he argued, twentieth-century pogroms displayed more visceral brutality and failed any comparison with Khmelnytsky. He depicts an image of a corpse that was revived to life; he pointed to the carving on its bust "Killed by Haidamak" (*rizav gaidamaka*), which was written in clear, independent, and Ukrainian grammatical language. Bogoraz continues the examination of a "live human monument" ("zhivoi chelovecheskii pamiatnik"), the revived dead corpse, by asking why, in some groups of people, the disasters of the century engendered noble aspirations and, in others, bestiality and avidity. He did not answer the question because there was no rational explanation.⁴²⁴

Two decades after Bogoraz wrote the sketches on the pogrom, he turned again to Gomel' in the edited collection entitled *The Jewish Shtetl in Revolution (Evreiskoe mestechko v revoliutsii. Ocherki*, published in Moscow in 1926).⁴²⁵ He subtitled his ethnographic work again as ocherki - sketches. The fieldwork was carried out in 1924, and it also included the Gomel' pogrom. In his article, Bogoraz briefly gave statistics of

⁴²³ The second half of the twentieth-century witnessed the development of the hybrid genre of a new type of journalism, exemplified by the works of Truman Capote, Thomas Wolfe, Norman Mailer, and Joan Didion, as well as the more recent "scientific journalism" of Julian Assange. "Scientific" implies that the material you present to your readers is based on your research, similar to the work of a physicist. In this regard, Bogoraz's sketches anticipated the elements of this new approach due to his combining journalism and a "literary investigation." Raffi Khatchadourian, "No Secrets: Julian Assange's Mission for Total Transparency," *The New Yorker*, June 7, 2010, accessed on March 27, 2013, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/06/07/no-secrets>.

⁴²⁴ RAN fond 250, op. 2, ed. kh.171.

⁴²⁵ For Bogoraz's ethnographic work during the Soviet period, see Deborah Yalen, "Documenting the 'New Red Kasrilevke,'" *East European Jewish Affairs* 37 (2007): 353-75.

the pogrom: “911 looted places, 1.520 pogroms, 200.000 killed, 300.000 homeless children.”⁴²⁶ Although Bogoraz did not give the time frame for it, he probably referred to the entire history of pogroms. He projected the Jewish past onto a new Soviet future where, as he states, the Soviet government was conducting an ongoing war against anti-Semitism.⁴²⁷ He also showed the continuity of Jewish self-defense in the fight against the White army.⁴²⁸ In *The Jewish Shtetl in Revolution*, he explored the transformation of Gomel' into a more assimilated town, where fewer and fewer Jews observed Passover.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁶ V.G. Tan-Bogoraz, ed., “Evreiskoe mestechko v revoliutsii,” in *Evreiskoe mestechko v revoliutsii. Ocherki* (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1926), 11.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 12.

⁴²⁸ Ibid., 12.

⁴²⁹ Tan, 26.

Chapter Four: Looking Through An Ethnographic Lens. An-sky's *The Dybbuk*:

Demonic Possession, Desire, and Death

This chapter further explores the genre of literary ethnography by situating the discursive practices and narrative style of the Russian Jewish ethnographer and writer Semyon An-sky (né Shloyme Zanvl Rappoport, 1863-1920) in Silver Age poetics. In contrast to Dostoevsky, Korolenko, and Bogoraz, An-sky was not exiled to Siberia or the Far East, although he was arrested for educating Russian peasants and later released in Ekaterinoslav (now Dnepropetrovsk).⁴³⁰ Nine years after Bogoraz wrote about the Gomel' pogrom, An-sky headed an ethnographic expedition for collecting oral Jewish folklore in the Volhynia and Podolia⁴³¹ areas of the Pale of Settlement from 1912 until 1914. His ethnographic expedition exemplified salvage ethnography because he wanted to prevent oral and material culture from disappearing and bring it to assimilated Jews. Therefore, it was also a Jewish national project. During his expedition, he heard a story about a girl possessed by an evil spirit, the dybbuk, which laid the foundation for his play of the same title.

The most famous of An-sky's literary ethnographic production is the play *The Dybbuk: Between Two Worlds* written in Russian (*Mezhdu dvukh mirov. Dibuk. Evreiskaia dramaticheskaiia legenda*, 1912).⁴³² At the same time as he was writing the play, he, along with other prominent Russian Jewish ethnographers, compiled a huge questionnaire *Der mentsh* (*The Human Being*, 1914) for his ethnographic expedition. It consisted of 2,087 questions and focused on the customs and life cycles of Jews from the

⁴³⁰ Gabriella Safran, *Wandering Soul: The Dybbuk's Creator, S. An-sky* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 49.

⁴³¹ The southwest corner of what is now Ukraine, which shares borders with Galicia and Bukovina in the west.

⁴³² Russian title literally translates as *Between Two Worlds. The Dybbuk. Jewish Dramatic Legend*.

conception of the child until life after death. He never obtained answers to them due to World War I. Only the questions exist. This chapter aims to fill this gap by finding possible answers to these questions in his play. I show that An-sky did not simply adapt ethnographic material for his work, but instead used it to address tension within his cultural surroundings and certain social anxieties such as the issue of the social class and the custom of the arranged marriage. This chapter also shows “cultural hybridity” and fluidity in the formation of Russian Jewish identity in the late imperial period. An-sky was a great example of this because he challenged the notion of what constituted a Russian Jew by embracing both Russian peasant life and Jewish life. To understand how he rebelled first against his Jewish upbringing and then returned to his Jewish roots and to his ethnographic project, I explore first his biographical background, and then turn to his play.

An-sky was a bilingual writer; he wrote in Russian and Yiddish, for two very distinct groups of readers. This sets him apart from the three previously discussed writers. He was a social democrat, cosmopolitan populist and a member of the Bund.⁴³³ He was a friend of populist writers Gleb Uspensky and Korolenko, whom I discussed briefly in the Chapter Two, the populist leader Petr Lavrov, the poet Osip Mandelshtam, the artist Nathan Altman, and many other Russian and Jewish members of the intelligentsia. He was a Renaissance man in the sense that he embraced both Russian and Jewish populism, writing polemical essays and fiction, in addition to working as a subversive Jewish teacher, a coal miner and an ethnographer.⁴³⁴ As with Korolenko and Bogoraz, he was

⁴³³ For definition of the Bund, see Chapter Three.

⁴³⁴ Gabriella Safran, “Timeline: Semyon Akimovich An-sky/Shloyme Zanvl Rappoport,” in *The Worlds of S. An-sky: A Russian Jewish Intellectual at the Turn of the Century*, eds. Gabriella Safran and Steven J. Zipperstein (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), xv-xxix.

born in the Pale, in a small *shtetl* not far from Vitebsk. Similar to Bogoraz, he attended a *kheder*, a Jewish elementary school, where he was taught prayers, customs and learned to read biblical texts.

After leaving his hometown of Vitebsk, where he grew up until the age of eighteen, he became a tutor of Russian in a small *shtetl* of Liozno. There he exposed his students to revolutionary ideas and had them read works that challenged their traditional Jewish upbringing. Once the community discovered this, he was immediately expelled.⁴³⁵ In her biography of An-sky, Gabriella Safran points out that this experience gave him material for his later literary works. Afterwards he moved south to the mining area along the Dnieper river, in the Ekaterinoslav area, still in the Pale, where he worked at a salt-processing plant with Russian peasants. He gave them “public readings” with the purpose of educating them, as a consequence of which he was arrested and then released.⁴³⁶

When he first encountered a group of Russian peasants, he was surprised to discover that he had a lot in common with them, particularly their spirit of rebellion. They were itinerant, having run away from the traditional way of life in their home villages; they had no attachments to jobs, land or family. An-sky was drawn to Russian peasants, and to their simple life style for ideological reasons.⁴³⁷ He was a Populist, he believed that the *narod*, specifically Russian peasants could be infused with revolutionary ideas and become allies of the intelligentsia in organizing social changes. This could be achieved through educating *narod* and making them literate. He saw that more and more Russian peasants were going to work in the cities, thus leaving the traditional way of life

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 26-27.

⁴³⁶ Ibid., 43, 49.

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 32.

and adopting a new modern - urban culture.⁴³⁸ He saw a threat to the disappearance of peasant culture and he wanted to preserve it, as much as he wanted later to preserve Jewish Art and folklore in the Pale during his ethnographic expedition of 1912-1914. It was at the end of his six-year stay in the Ekaterinoslav area, in 1891, when he took a Russian sounding pseudonym An-sky, that he used until the end of his life,⁴³⁹ which indicates his desire to transcend the border that separated Russians and Jews, as well as his “ideological flexibility” and cultural hybridity. This also points to the fact that he was a man of multiple identities. He embraced Russian and Jewish folk culture.

When An-sky rebelled against his Jewish upbringing, he left his home and went to work in the Donets mining region, where he became close to Russian peasants. During that time, he collected Russian songs of the salt miners. This engagement with Russian peasants turned An-sky into a Populist who was embracing the concept of “going to the people.” Russian Populists were “going to the people” for the dual purposes of studying their lives and educating them with the intention of making them more politically engaged. It is not a coincidence that An-sky later rediscovered the Hasidic community because of his populist views, his socialist views, and his belonging to the Socialist Revolutionary party. He saw in it an emphasis on the hamoyn (Hebrew for the common people, crowd),⁴⁴⁰ on the people, and thus as a Jewish expression of Populism.

An-sky’s work on collecting folklore also reflects Leopold Zunz’s (1794-1886) understanding of Jewish culture. The German-Jewish historian Zunz founded the *Society for Culture and Science of the Judaism* (Verein für Kultur und Wissenschaft des

⁴³⁸ Ibid., 44.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁴⁰ S. An-sky, “Forrede,” in *Dos yidishe etnografishe program*, ed. L. Ia. Shternberg (Petrograd: Tipografiia I. Lur’e i K, 1914), 9.

Judentums) in 1823, and he proclaimed that “the tradition” (die Tradition), essentially the study of the people’s culture (in German *Volkskunde*), was one of society’s goals. An-sky’s ethnographic fieldwork, in turn, aimed to salvage folk culture from the threat of cultural assimilation.

The German-Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz (1817-1891) grounded Jewish nationhood, which existed without land and state, in religion. For the Russian Jewish historian Simon Dubnow, the Jewish nation was defined through the *kahal*, the community, that bound people and helped to preserve unity.⁴⁴¹ Dubnow’s definition of nation included not only the past but also the existing community of people that possessed a “collective soul.”⁴⁴² Dubnow’s Romantic vision of the nation is in tune with An-sky’s. He talks about *dos yidishe folk* – the Jewish people - and *hamoyn* – the crowd – in his ethnographic program *Der mentsh* (1912).⁴⁴³ In Yiddish, *folk* could mean either people or nation. The Jewish people and the crowd possess the Oral Torah (*toyre shebalpe*) which, for An-sky, is not the interpretation of Torah, but folklore. The Oral Torah encompasses folk stories, legends, parables, witticism, songs, melodies, customs, traditions, and beliefs.⁴⁴⁴

In 1918, a Yiddish literary critic Bal-Makhshoves (né Isidor Eliashev, 1873-1924) echoed An-sky’s view by calling “literature [...] the oral Torah [tradition] which will turn into a written Torah, and grows beyond the first [oral] Torah, [and] strongly surpasses

⁴⁴¹ Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish encounter with Late Imperial Russia*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. 416.

⁴⁴² Ibid., 412.

⁴⁴³ S. An-sky, “Forrede,” in *Dos yidishe etnografishe program*, ed. L. Ia. Shternberg (Petrograd: Tipografiia I. Lur’e i K, 1914), 9-12.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., 9.

it.”⁴⁴⁵ Later, in one of his notes of Jewish literature in Russian, An-sky raised the question of whether Jews are a nation (*natsia* and *narod*), since they do not have their own territory or state. He regretfully observed that Jews did not have a peasant class as Russians did. The paradox of the Jewish literature, he continued, was that it existed in three languages – Russian, Yiddish, and Hebrew.⁴⁴⁶ He also used the Russian word *narod* – people: his main concern is that the educated elite, the intelligentsia, was detached from the people – *narod*.⁴⁴⁷ His ethnographic program was rooted in the ideas of Russian populists and writers of Romanticism who treated folklore as “authentic” knowledge for the foundation of a nation. Similar to the populist ideas of Dostoevsky, Korolenko, and Bogoraz, An-sky stated that the Jewish spirit (*gayst* in Yiddish) that created the written Torah (*toyre shebiksav*) as well as the Oral Torah reflected the beauty and purity of the Jewish soul (*neshome*) and the nobility of the Jewish heart.⁴⁴⁸ Whether it is folklore, which binds people to the nation, or whether it is the hybrid of folk culture and secular topics that unites the Jewish people will be discussed later in this chapter.

At the same time he never ceased to write about his experiences; he even collected the songs of the illiterate miners, and wrote a book about peasant literature – *Ocherki narodnoi literatury* (*Sketches About Folk Literacy*, 1892).⁴⁴⁹ The songs of the miners exemplified the spirit of the workers that preserved a collective past that was about to disappear. Safran points that for An-sky folklore exhibited a “dynamic and ongoing, not fixed” creative process. Furthermore, it also displays, in Safran’s words, his

⁴⁴⁵ Bal-Makhshoves, “Tsvey shprakhn – eyn eyntsike literatur,” *Geklibene verk* (New York: Cyco-Bikher Varlag, 1953), 120.

⁴⁴⁶ IR IFO NBUV f.339, 30: 2.

⁴⁴⁷ IR IFO NBUV f.339, 30: 10.

⁴⁴⁸ S. An-sky, “Forrede,” in *Dos yidishe etnografishe program*, ed. L. Ia. Shternberg (Petrograd: Tipografiia I. Lur’e i K, 1914), 9.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

“ideological flexibility” towards his collecting of folklore of different peoples, Russians, French, and later, Jews.⁴⁵⁰ An-sky’s encounter with Russian peasants evokes the experience he had with the Jewish youth in the shtetl. His experience with the peasants also reminds one of the Korolenko’s story about Fedor the Homeless that I analyzed in Chapter Two. In An-sky’s own words, Russian peasants and Jewish youth represented a new generation, “who had left one shore but have not reached the other.”⁴⁵¹

An-sky, a “wandering soul,” in Safran’s work, was applying the discourse of literary ethnography to several centers of cultures: Russian peasants, French street artists, and later, Jewish people. Safran pointed to the resemblance between him and the wandering soul, the *dybbuk*, that he was like “an archaic character restless and fluid in its identity and loyalties.”⁴⁵² He was a dybbuk in the sense that he didn’t have a sense of belonging, of being rooted. The only comfort An-sky was able to find was through his attempt to collect and salvage his Jewish traditional culture.

After working with the Russian peasants in the Pale, he went to Paris where he spent eight years working as a secretary for the philo-Semite and Populist Petr Lavrov (1823-1900). He also spent time in Switzerland participating in the gathering of the Bund for which he wrote the anthem “Die shvue” (“The Oath”). He returned to Russia after the Revolution of 1905. He continued working for a Russian audience as well as collecting Jewish folklore, but it was not until 1911, that he started his famous ethnographic expedition interrupted by the outbreak of WWI.

⁴⁵⁰ Gabriella Safran, *Wandering Soul: The Dybbuk’s Creator, S. An-sky* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 41.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, 4.

In 1911 An-sky, in his article “Jewish Folk Art,” published in the journal *Perezhitoe*, wrote that Jewish people were still awaiting their ethnographer.⁴⁵³ “Due to the circumstances,” he wrote, “L[ev] Shternberg, M[ikhail] Krol’, V[ladimir] G. Bogoraz, V[ladimir] Iokhelson had to study wild and semi-wild nomads such as Buryats, Yukagirs, Giliaks, Chukchi, and etc. And the Jewish people (evreiskii narod) still awaits its ethnographer.”⁴⁵⁴ An-sky’s statement was inaccurate, since there were already works of Jewish ethnography, though these works were not as exhaustive and thorough as his own future work, conducted between 1911 and 1914, would be.⁴⁵⁵ As early as the second half of the nineteenth-century, the Society for the Spread of Enlightenment Among the Jews in Russia (Obshchestvo dlia rasprostraneniia prosveshcheniia mezhdv evreiami v Rossii) had branches in several cities (Odessa, Riga, Vilna, etc.). It was published predominantly

⁴⁵³ S. An-sky, “Evreiskoe narodnoe tvorchestvo,” in *Perezhitoe*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1911), 276-314. All translations from Russian into English are mine, unless specific translators are mentioned.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 277.

⁴⁵⁵ Here are just a few works on Jewish ethnography prior to 1911: Moisei Isakovich Berlin, *Ocherk etnografii evreiskago narodonaseleniia v Rossii* (St. Peterburg: V. Bezobrazova, 1861); A. Litvin published six volumes of the folkloric material that he gathered in Poland, Galicia, Lithuania and Romania during 1904-1915: *Yidishe neshomes*, vol. 1-6 (New York: Arbeter ring, 1916-17); Noah Prilutskii, *Yidishe folkslider* (Evreiskie narodnye pesni, 1911-13); S. Ginzburg and P. Marek, *Jewish Folk Songs in Russia* (1901); Ignatz Bernstein and B.W. Segel, *Yidishe shprikhverter un redensarten* (Jewish Proverbs and Expressions, 1908). Ignatz Bernstein, *Jüdische Sprichwörter und Redensarten: Erotica und Rustica* (Warsaw: B.W. Segal, 1908); works on Jewish anthropology: Arkady Danilovich El'kind, *Evrei: sravnitel'no-antropologicheskoe izliedovanie, preimushchestvenno po nabliudeniiam nad pol'skimi evreiami* (Moscow: Tipo-lit. A.V. Vasil'eva, 1903); A.Ivanovskii, “Ob antropologicheskom izuchenii inorodcheskogo naseleniia Rossii,” *Russkii antropologicheskii zhurnal* 9.1 (1902): 112-25; K. M. Kurdov, “Gorskie evrei Dagestana,” *Russkii antropologicheskii zhurnal*, no. 23-24:3-4 (1905): 57-87; Samuel Weissenberg published in German works on physical anthropology and ethnography on different groups of Jews, including Russian Jews: “Aaroniden und Leviten,” *ZDSJ* 4. 3 (1908), 48; “Beiträge zur Volkskunde der Juden,” *Globus* 77.8 (1900): 130-31; “Die fest- und Fasttage der südrussischen Juden in ethnographischer Beziehung,” *Globus* 87.15 (1905): 262-71; “Eine jüdische Hochzeit in Südrussland,” *MJIV* 15.1 (1905): 59-74; “Jüdische Kunst und jüdisches Kult- und Hausgerät,” *Ost und West* 3.3 (1903): 202-206; “Jüdische Sprichwörter” *Globus* 97.21 (1900): 339-41; “Speise und Gebäck bei den südrussischen Juden in ethnologischer Beziehung,” *Globus* 89.2 (1906): 25-30; “Südrussische Amulette,” *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte* (1897): 367-69. For more on S. Weissenberg, see John M. Efron’s “Samuel Weissenberg: Jews, Race, and Culture,” in *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 91-122.

on literature, history, education, and religion in Russian and Hebrew.⁴⁵⁶ Under the auspices of this society, Simon Dubnow organized the Historic-Ethnographic Commission (Istoriko-etnograficheskaia komissii) in 1892 that in 1908 became known as the Jewish Historical-Ethnographical Society, which aimed to study the history and ethnography of the Russian Jews.⁴⁵⁷ The Society of Jewish Folk Music (Obshchestvo evreiskoi narodnoi muzyki) was also organized in 1908 in St. Petersburg and began collecting folk music.⁴⁵⁸ Therefore, the modest but significant number of ethnographic societies contradicted An-sky's statement about the absence of Jewish ethnographers. Despite the fact that there were ethnographic works, there was still a lacuna, a missing connection, between ethnographic material, literature, and the audience. For An-sky there were not enough literary works that incorporated folkloric stories and everyday customs in such a harmonic way as Yisroel Aksenfeld's, Mendele Moykher-Sforim's, Sholem Aleichem's, and Isaac Peretz's works managed, or his own play *The Dybbuk*. These works succeeded in educating a wide range of readers on Jewish folklore.

Similarly to Bogoraz, An-sky gave voice to a world that was changing with growing secularization, immigration, migration, and integration into Russian culture. Bogoraz's work "Silhouettes from Gomel" and An-sky's play *The Dybbuk* are both products of a national trauma, in that the subject matter centers around violence: An-sky's by Khmelnytsky's massacre of 1648, the pogroms of 1881-1882, the Kishinev and Gomel' pogroms of 1903, as well as by the Bialystok pogrom of 1906, and by the Beilis

⁴⁵⁶ The Society was against the spread of Yiddish. See book by Brian Horowitz, *Jewish Philanthropy and Enlightenment in Late-Tsarist Russia* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009); *Empire Jews: Jewish Nationalism and Acculturation in 19th- and Early 20th-Century Russia* (Bloomington: Slavica, 2009).

⁴⁵⁷ For more on Jewish secular culture, see Jeffrey Veidlinger, *Jewish Public Culture in the Late Russian Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).

⁴⁵⁸ James Loeffler, *The Most Musical Nation: Jews and Culture in the Late Russian Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

trial of 1913. Both works posit a particular kind of model reader, who is aware of the cruelty of religious and ethnic prosecutions in Russia, is sympathetic to groups who are marginalized politically and has a belief in a rule of law - in other words, an early twentieth-century Russian liberal reader.⁴⁵⁹ Each author wrote about these violent events, employing the literary text and aesthetics as a means of overcoming and remembering the past. Both used different genres to address social issues, including the limitations and falsehood of racial thinking. In An-sky's case, in particular, there was an additional message that the Jews had their own folk art, just like other cultures within and outside of the Russian empire, and this buttressed their claim to peoplehood.⁴⁶⁰

The Dybbuk: Between Two Worlds

In addition to the cross-cultural and cross-generic complexities of the play, which were referred to at the beginning of this section, *The Dybbuk: Between Two Worlds* had a complex history as a written text. *The Dybbuk*, written originally in Russian in 1912 and then translated into Hebrew by Haym Bialik (1918) and into Yiddish by An-sky himself (1920), was conceived with ethnographic questions in mind.⁴⁶¹ I work with the Russian censored version in this chapter, since it was written first.

The main heroine of the play, Liia in Russian (Leah in the Yiddish version of the play), is about to be married off against her will to a wealthy bridegroom, in accordance with her father's wishes. Liia comes from a Hasidic family. Even before Liia was born,

⁴⁵⁹ On the model reader, see Umberto Eco's *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*, ed. Thomas Sebeok (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979).

⁴⁶⁰ On the discussion of the important role of folklore in the creation of the Jewish nation, see Kenneth B. Moss's book *Jewish Renaissance in the Russian Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

⁴⁶¹ The history of the translation of the play is intertwined and full of adventures, as if the play itself had become possessed by the spirit of the dybbuk. Michael C. Steinlauf, "The Dybbuk," in *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, accessed March 2, 2012. http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Dybbuk_The.

her father, Sender, a true Hasid (*istinnyi khasid*),⁴⁶² promised his best friend Nison Rivkes (Nison son of Rivke) that their children would marry each other, but violated this promise by instead choosing a wealthy bridegroom. Liia is in love with Khonon (a student of yeshiva, *eshibotnik*), that very son of her father's friend to whom she was promised, who is poor but a gifted student. Sender housed Khonon for a year while he was studying Torah. It is a custom that a wealthy Jew gives free boarding to a poor student, so that he can study religious texts. Once Khonon realizes that the arranged marriage is unavoidable, he dies and his soul, the dybbuk, enters Liia's body. Khonon's dead spirit is called the *dybbuk*, which literally means "cleaving." Liia is taken to the great Rebbe Shloimele, a Hasidic leader, to end the possession.⁴⁶³ The Rebbe's efforts to exorcise the dybbuk from Liia fail, and she dies.⁴⁶⁴ Thus, Liia's father's failure to keep his promise is the reason for her possession by the dybbuk and, ultimately, her death. An-sky does something unprecedented by subverting prevalent folk belief - showing Liia as a victim of the Jewish custom of arranged marriage. I argue that Liia wants the *original* arranged marriage – the marriage that her father promised to his friend Nison – but is then punished for her father's sin of renegeing on his promise and arranging a different marriage. An-sky's goal was not only to criticize the institution of arranged marriages, but also to give the female protagonist agency and challenge the folkloric perception of

⁴⁶² S. An-skii, "Mezh dvukh mirov. (Dibuk)," in *Polveka evreiskogo teatra: 1876-1926. Antologiya evreiskoi dramaturgii*, ed. Boris Entin (Moscow: Evreiskii kul'turnyi tsentr na Nikitskoi, 2003), 333.

⁴⁶³ Hasidism (Hebrew for "piousness") is a religious movement that emerged around the beginning of the eighteenth-century and differed from the main Jewish religious practices of the time in its exuberant and joyful worshiping of God, veneration of leaders, interest in mystical and Kabbalistic aspects of Judaism, and emphasis on singing. It was very popular in Ukraine, in the Podolia and Volhynia areas where An-sky was conducting his ethnographic fieldwork.

⁴⁶⁴ The Russian play mentions the death of a young couple during Khameliuk's (Khmelnitsky's) massacre of Jews in the eighteenth-century that serves as prolepsis to the play. The Yiddish version also mentions this massacre.

possession. On a metaphorical level, one could argue that An-sky's dybbuk reminds the reader that forgetting one's cultural heritage might bring destruction to the community.

An-sky originally wrote *The Dybbuk* in Russian. The Russian version differs significantly from the subsequent Yiddish one. One difference is that the Russian text contains a framing structure in the form of a prologue and an epilog, which are absent from the Yiddish version of the play. The play is framed and in many ways anticipates and deconstructs the story of Liia and Khonon. In the prologue, the reader learns about the old father and his daughter, who eloped at her very wedding ceremony with the man she loved "wholeheartedly [and] insanely."⁴⁶⁵ After five years of absence, she returned home to her father who forgave her, although not completely. This allusion to the biblical story of the prodigal son, in which the gender is reversed, serves a proleptic function. The story of the daughter is very fragmented, a lot of details are missing, and the reader does not know with whom she eloped or why she came back home. The daughter, in turn, asks her father whether he loved someone. He answered that he loved her mother. But the daughter wants to know whether something similar to what happened to her occurred with the yeshiva students, since her father studied in the yeshiva, "whether someone fell in love with a woman" ("chtoby kto-nibud' vliubilsia v zhenshchiny").⁴⁶⁶ Her father tells her the story about Khonon and Liia. From the epilog we learn that the story left the daughter bewildered, and we never find out what happens to her and her father afterwards. The prologue deconstructs the father's story in that his daughter was able to escape the arranged marriage and live the romantic life with the person she loved, whereas Liia and Khonon are doomed, and unite in the other world, in heaven. One can

⁴⁶⁵ S. An-skii, "Mezh dvukh mirov. (Dibuk)," in *Polveka evreiskogo teatra: 1876-1926. Antologiya evreiskoi dramaturgii*, ed. Boris Entin (Moscow: Evreiskii kul'turnyi tsentr na Nikitskoi, 2003), 327.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., 327.

argue that the play aims to show the daughter the consequences of her actions in attempting to freely choose her love. Thus, the play serves a didactic purpose. But one can also argue that she is emotionally affected by the story, causing her to internalize its message. The play is not only about paternal authority (Sender subjects Liia to his power), and arranged marriage, but also about the corruption of the very Hasidic families and the traditions they embody that were a source for the material in An-sky's ethnographic work. The play is about sexual desires, specifically the romantic relationship that Liia and Khonon are denied. It also raises the questions of whether the story should serve a didactic function showing that sexual desires are destructive, whether it should warn parents not to make arranged marriages, or whether Hasidic members such as Sender are greedy, pragmatic and devoid of the *neshome* (spirit).

Another difference is that the Russian version includes several An-sky's own footnotes explaining the play's cultural and historical references so that model readers, members of the Russian Jewish and Russian educated public, can fully grasp the work. For example, he explains that Jewish letters have numerical value, the meaning of *pardes* (a heavenly garden), and why the Jewish calendar has 355 days. The scholar V. Ivanov pointed out that in his first version of the play An-sky had to get rid off of the word *dukh* (spirit) when using the phrase of exorcism of spirit (*izgnanie dukha*), and replaced it with *dusha* (soul) or *ten'* (shadow).⁴⁶⁷ Therefore, the play is an unstable dynamic production, which will always escape a definitive reading because it lacks the definitive text. In that sense, it becomes a part of the modernist tradition of the textual

⁴⁶⁷ V. Ivanov, "Mezh dvukh mirov. (Dibuk). S An-skogo. Iz istorii formirovaniia teksta," in *Polveka evreiskogo teatra: 1876-1926. Antologiiia evreiskoi dramaturgii*, ed. Boris Entin (Moscow: Evreiskii kul'turnyi tsentr na Nikitskoi, 2003), 356.

instability.⁴⁶⁸

Working at the intersection of ethnography and literature reveals the gap between An-sky's scientific interest in collecting knowledge about the complexity of women's lives and the one-dimensional image of women depicted in his early fiction. As David Roskies and Seth Wolitz have noted, An-sky's short stories written prior to his ethnographic fieldwork of 1912 present repulsive and fragmented images of Jewish women living in the Pale.⁴⁶⁹ No female character was given a leading place in his works. His play *The Dybbuk* is an exception to this unfavorable depiction of women. Whereas nineteenth-century Yiddish writers Mendele Moykher Sforim and Yitskhok Leyb Peretz presented mostly male protagonists,⁴⁷⁰ An-sky's play and his contemporary Dovid Bergelson's novel *Nokh alemen* (*When All is Said and Done*, 1913), written at the same time as the disintegration of traditional shtetl-life, augment the female characters' significance in a new way by giving voice to their sexual desires and refusing to accept the longstanding Jewish custom of arranged marriage. Sholem Aleichem's,⁴⁷¹ An-sky's and Bergelson's main heroines found themselves trapped between two worlds: the traditional and secular, arranged marriages (*shiddukh*) versus self-chosen relationship. Bergelson's novel begins with the main heroine Mirl breaking her marriage agreement, (*tnayim* in Hebrew). She pursues the free romantic life she desires, leaving her home in a

⁴⁶⁸ See, the different versions of Andrey Bely's novel *Petersburg*, or Nabokov's alternative versions of his Russian and English texts.

⁴⁶⁹ See for example his short stories, "Hangover" (1892) and "In the Jewish Family" (1900).

⁴⁷⁰ However, Peretz's short story "Downcast Eyes" (1904) explores two different forms of possession of the soul and the body with the examples of the two sisters. One sister, Malke, who is similar to Liia, is married off against her will, and sins with her soul, whereas her sister, Nekhama, sins with her body through a forced relationship with the Polish nobleman. Peretz shows that after Malka's death, her body remained intact and complete, in contrast to her sister's body that disappeared except for the skull. The narrator states that people's eyes only notice what is on the surface, failing to see what is happening inside the human soul.

⁴⁷¹ Sholem Aleichem (né Shalom Rabinovitz, 1859-1916) is a prominent Yiddish writer.

small *shtetl*, gets pregnant by her wealthy husband, and goes to the city to get an abortion.

Like his contemporary and colleague Bogoraz, An-sky subverts conventional racial prejudices by giving voice to the subjects of the empire, in this case the Jews of the Pale. An-sky's play is a symbolist production in which the ethnographic material collected through fieldwork is collated and arranged to address the social anxieties of his time, and was targeted towards the contemporary model reader of his time. He addressed these anxieties in a manner that was supernaturally and mystically coded. His explorations of the supernatural, the Eternal Feminine, and the confluence of life and art were informed by modernist tropes. The play presupposes a heterogeneous, multiethnic audience. By doing so, An-sky essentially decenters the traditional Jewish custom of arranged marriage by giving agency to the female protagonist. He also reconfigures Russian culture by writing about Jews and the imperial Other, while referencing multiple centers of the empire, thus showing several centers of cultures.

There are several reasons why An-sky's rediscovering Jewish folk culture and the theme of the dybbuk created such a success within Russian and Jewish cultures. Still, An-sky's work was unprecedented because of the dramatic genre he chose — the play — that was reflective of the symbolist tradition of the time to which this text belongs. First of all, the play has a preservation function, which is in tune with the Boasian notion of salvage ethnography. Boas argued that cultures were unique and dynamic, refuting the prevailing evolutionary thinking of his time. An-sky was salvaging Jewish folk customs for the assimilated Jews and future generations, as well as for the purposes of educating the larger population of the Russian Empire about Jewish culture. Secondly, it has a

polemical message by challenging the assumptions that Jews were not civilized because they lack a folk culture. Thirdly, his work decentralizes imperial colonial discourse by revealing multiple cultural centers within the Russian empire. The play *The Dybbuk*, while being an example of a specific literary genre, a drama, or in An-sky's words a "Jewish dramatic legend," manifests literary ethnographic dimension and methodology. This particular type of mixture of ethnographic "scientific" elements and fictional fulfillment corresponds to the literary ethnographic genre.

Ethnographic Questionnaire *Der mentsh* – The Human Being

My point of departure in analyzing the play is the questionnaire titled *Der mentsh* (*The Human Being*, 1914), which was written for An-sky's ethnographic expedition. For two years from 1912 until 1914 he headed the ethnographic expedition that was funded by the baron Vladimir Ginzburg.⁴⁷² He along with the photographer Solomon Iudovin and musicologist and ethnographer Yoel Engel went to the small *shtetlekh* (*mestechki*) in Volhynia and Podolia provinces of the Pale.⁴⁷³ The questionnaire resembles narrative fiction, in this case the play, in a key way. It describes and sets the scenes of the play, and guides and informs its plot. Therefore, I argue that the questionnaire exemplifies the literary ethnographic genre.

⁴⁷² At about the time when An-sky was embarking on his ethnographic expedition, his contemporary, a lawyer, linguist, and politician, Noah Prylucki (1882-1941) was asking Jews in Poland to collect folklore in 1912 in Warsaw. For more on Prylucki's ethnographic work, see Kalman Weiser, *Jewish People, Yiddish Nation: Noah Prylucki and the Folkists in Poland* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).

⁴⁷³ David Roskies reports that during the expedition An-sky collected "2,000 photographs, 1,800 folktales and legends, 1,500 folksongs and mysteries (i.e., biblical Purim plays), 500 cylinders of Jewish folk music, 1,000 melodies to songs and *niggunim* without words, countless proverbs and folk beliefs, 100 historical documents, 500 manuscripts, 700 sacred objects acquired for the sum of six thousand rubles." See David G. Roskies, "Introduction," In *The Dybbuk and Other Writings*, by S. Ansky, trans. Golda Werman, ed. David G. Roskies, Library of Yiddish Classics (New York: Schocken Books, 1992), xxiii.

The questionnaire was compiled after An-sky's had completed his ethnographic expedition and had written *The Dybbuk*. His questionnaire chronologically follows the play and therefore is an investigation of its ethnographic dimension, as well as An-sky's other works moreover would benefit from a look at this questionnaire and the ways in which it codifies his ethnographic literary methodology. The questionnaire consisted of 2,087 questions focused on the customs and life cycles of Jews, from the conception of the child until life after the death. Since this ethnographic project was interrupted by World War I, An-sky was unable to collect any answers to his comprehensive questionnaire. It was compiled by An-sky and a group of prominent students at the Jewish Academy in Petrograd, among whom were Sh. Vainshtein, Abram Iuditskii, Sh. Lokshin, Isaac Lurie, I. Neusikhin, and Abram Rechtman, just to name a few.⁴⁷⁴ The questionnaire was edited by Shternberg and Bogoraz, colleagues of Boas.⁴⁷⁵

Where the 2,087 items in his questionnaire are concerned, I examine only those pertinent to the customs of the wedding, death, and about the dybbuk. This chapter aims to fill this gap by finding possible answers to these questions in his literary ethnographic play *The Dybbuk*, which are treated as a structured and methodological investigation and description of those very same parts of the human life cycle. The questionnaire is divided into five sections: 1) The Child from Conception until the Kheyder (Jewish religious elementary school); 2) From the Kheyder to the Wedding; 3) The Wedding; 4) Family Life; 5) Death.⁴⁷⁶ We have only questions but no answers. Thus, we are faced with an

⁴⁷⁴ I could not identify all the first names of the participants.

⁴⁷⁵ Bogoraz was involved in the preliminary meetings of ethnographers who assisted An-sky with his ethnographic program *Der mentsh*, even though his name is not on the cover of it.

⁴⁷⁶ In his volume *Collections of Yiddish Folklore, Philology, and History of Culture*, Prylucki writes, I think that it is long past due to demonstrate the importance of [having] a special Yiddish institution dealing with our folklore, philology, and the history of our culture. There already exist,

intriguing problem. The methodology chosen by An-sky and the area of human experiences he was interested in are clear, but we do not have empirical data.⁴⁷⁷ An-sky's gigantic questionnaire, despite its unwieldy size, shows evidence of a desire to make the ethnographic research more methodologically reliable and to give voice to the subjects of the study in their own words and in a way that enables the researcher to compare their responses.

An-sky's questions assume the centrality of certain topoi of Jewish life, which are illustrated in the division of the questionnaire. By the same token, An-sky bases the narrative content of *The Dybbuk* on empirical observations structured around a specific topos. An-sky's use of a topos-based method of ethnographic investigations and descriptions anticipated two structuralist approaches: Vladimir Propp's functions in Russian fairy tales and Claude Lévi-Strauss's concept of the mytheme. At the same time, An-sky's main preoccupation was a field of ethnography to record and preserve folk

in German, several such publications. The time has come to publish a Yiddish ethnological periodical also in the language of the material itself.

All translations from Yiddish are mine, unless otherwise noted. Noah Prylucki, *Zamelbikher far idishen folklore, filologie un kulturgeshikhte*, Band 1 (Varshe: Nayer verlag, 1912 and 1917). YIVO. RG 90-1373-2. Prylucki's very concise request to send four different folkloric types of oral materials and objects stands in contrast to An-sky's ethnographic questionnaire *Der mentsh*.

⁴⁷⁷ For the analyses of the play, see Seth L. Wolitz, "Inscribing An-sky's *Dybbuk* in Russian and Jewish Letters," in *The Worlds of S. An-sky: A Russian Jewish Intellectual at the Turn of the Century*, eds. G. Safran and St. J. Zipperstein (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); David G. Roskies, "Introduction," in *The Dybbuk and Other Writings*, by S. Ansky, trans. Golda Werman, ed. David G. Roskies, Library of Yiddish Classics (New York: Schocken Books, 1992), xi-xxxvi; David G. Roskies, "An-sky, Sholem Aleichem, and the Master Narrative of Russian Jewry," in *The Worlds of S. An-sky: A Russian Jewish Intellectual at the Turn of the Century*, eds. Gabriella Safran and Steven J. Zipperstein (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 31-43.

The play is arguably based on the story of the Maiden of Ludmir, as suggested by Nathaniel Deutsch. The plot of the Maiden of Ludmir is very similar to An-sky's play. He might have heard this story during his ethnographic fieldwork, but he may also incorporated other ethnographic sources. See Nathaniel Deutsch's essay "An-sky and the Ethnography of Jewish Women," in *The Worlds of S. An-sky: A Russian Jewish Intellectual at the Turn of the Century*, eds. Gabriella Safran and Steven J. Zipperstein (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 266-79. Vladislav Ivanov, in turn, gives a different ethnographic source for An-sky's play. He stated that An-sky witnessed a very emotional account of a girl lamenting her arranged marriage. The lamenting was so visceral that it prompted An-sky to write a play. *Ibid.*, Ivanov 361-73.

knowledge concerning practices surrounding marriage, pregnancy, childbirth, midwives, and wet-nursing, which were receding in importance. However, the stories and other works he wrote before and afterward depict only a tiny fraction of this folk knowledge.

In analyzing the play and the questionnaire, one can suggest two different points of departure, literary and ethnographic. Clearly, the ethnographic is more prominent in the questionnaire and the literary in the play. The questionnaire is also a text in a different voice and form. The narration, by its very nature, states while the questionnaire, by its very structure, interrogates. From this questionnaire, one could infer the ideal respondent. The ideal respondent is a person who is culturally and religiously aware of the life cycles of Jews. Juxtaposing ethnographic questions against the play uncovers layers of Jewish customs that would otherwise be overlooked. I focus in particular on the questions that address the customs of the upbringing of the child, the wedding, as well as the possession by the dybbuk.

Questions About the Midwife - Bobe

In the first chapter, entitled “The Child from Conception until the Kheyder” there is a subchapter on midwives. An-sky asks whether the midwife (*bobe*) receives gifts on the occasion of important events in the lives of the children she helped deliver. He gives an example: the giving of a shirt to a midwife (*bobe*) on the occasion of a wedding.⁴⁷⁸ He also inquires in the questions 65-70 into whether one calls the midwife for the holidays

⁴⁷⁸ An-sky gives three words for a midwife. The Yiddish *bobe* means grandmother and a midwife; the Yiddish *heibam* is of Germanic origin (from *heben* for “to lift”); and *akusherke* (from French *accoucheur*), is a term that denoted a midwife with four or five years of medical training. According to C. Balin, twenty four percent of female medical students at Women’s Medical Courses in Russia were Jews in 1876. On the Jewish midwife’s education, see Carole B. Balin, “The Call to Serve: Jewish Women Medical Students in Russia, 1872 1887,” in *Jewish Women in Eastern Europe*, eds. ChaeRan Freeze, Paula Hyman, and Anthony Polonsky (Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry, vol. 18; Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2005), 133-52.

(*simhas*) of the children that she helped deliver, whether one is always obliged to treat the midwife with respect, how one addresses the midwife, what does the midwife call the children that she helped deliver, and whether there is a belief that the more children the midwife leaves behind, the greater the reward she will receive in the afterlife.⁴⁷⁹ Some of these questions are leading because An-sky gives an example, as in the question on giving a present to a midwife.

These questions are a small fraction of examples that have a strong temporal dimension. They are not only about how customs were practiced in the past, but how they were practiced at the time of the questionnaire, and might potentially be in the future. These questions also illustrate a very distinct narrative style; some questions have impersonal formulation, and some are personal and directed at the answerer, some are leading, some require knowledge of the Torah and religious customs, and some reveal a mixture of scientific and folkloric knowledge.⁴⁸⁰

The play gives answers to the questions. In the Russian version Liia, who is reminded by her nurse Frada about an “old custom . . . [that] must be observed,” goes to the midwife Khana (babka Khana) with a present and invites her to the wedding.⁴⁸¹ She

⁴⁷⁹ S. An-sky, “Forrede,” in *Dos yidishe etnografishe program*, ed. L. Ia. Shternberg (Petrograd: Tipografiia I. Lur’e i K, 1914), 26.

⁴⁸⁰ An-sky’s interest in the everyday lives of women was inspired and influenced by Lev Shternberg (1861-1927), the editor of his questionnaire. A self-trained ethnographer and anthropologist, Shternberg studied the peoples of Siberia. For his ethnographic fieldwork on the indigenous peoples of Sakhalin Island, Shternberg also wrote a twenty-two-page-long program entitled “Brief Program in Regards to the Everyday Life of Peoples of the North.” It is probably not coincidental that An-sky’s *Jewish Ethnographic Program*, which Shternberg edited, focused thoroughly on the family, concerning itself with topics such as the upbringing of a child, education (*heder*), marriage, family relationships and death, as some of Shternberg’s questions regarding childcare and possession remind one of An-sky’s. There is no doubt that Shternberg’s experience with the peoples of Sakhalin impacted the ethnographic questionnaire created by An-sky. All of his ethnographic research uncovered and furthered the preservation of a national past, particularly the lifecycle events of women.

⁴⁸¹ S. An-sky, “The Dybbuk. Censored Variant,” in *The Worlds of S. An-sky: A Russian Jewish Intellectual at the Turn of the Century*, eds. Gabriella Safran and Steven J. Zipperstein (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 410.

gives her a shirt⁴⁸² and homemade gingerbread cookies, and wishes her to live for hundred and twenty years, which is a biblical reference used by Jews. Khana's presence at the wedding connects two stages of Liia's life, i.e., birth and marriage. Khana thanks Liia and wishes that God bestow her with twelve sons. She says it in very formulaic wording, reminiscent of Russian folktale tropes, the following:

Vnuchka moia zolotaia! Kak ty odarila menia rubakhoi, tak da odarit tebia
Gospod' dvenadtsat'iu synov'iami, kotorye den' i noch' sideli by nad Toroi i
proslavili by tvoe imia vo vsem mire! (Tseluet ee. Kladet ei ruki na golovy). Da
blogoslovit tebia Gospod' Avraama, Isaaka i Iakova!

My dear granddaughter! As you presented me with the gift of a shirt, let the Lord present you with the gift of twelve sons who will study Torah day and night and will glorify your name in the whole world! (She kisses her. Puts her hands on her head). Let Lord of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob bless you!⁴⁸³

Khana puts the shirt on and sings a song, which again illustrates a folkloric woman's voice, and creativity that emphasizes the vital significance of acknowledging the work of a midwife in the lifecycle of a person. The midwife Khana sings a joyful song that directly answers the questions that An-sky asked in his questionnaire. It also mentions Liia and her gifts,

Naplodila babka Khana
Mnozhestvo vnuchat.
Vse v den' svad'by ei rubakhu
Beluiu dariat.

Nariadilas' babka Khana
V belyi svoi ubor
I vykhodit, kak grafinia,
Na shirokii dvor.

⁴⁸² Another possible meaning of this gift exchange might be suggested by the Russian proverb "to be born in a shirt" (*rodit'sia v rubashke*), which means to be fortunate. This expression is often used in a situation when someone has avoided a dangerous situation. The English equivalent of this idiom is to be born with a caul. Though there are no indications in the play that Liia was born with a caul, one could read the meaning of the shirt as a sort of protection for the old Khana, or as a realized metaphor of the Russian proverb.

⁴⁸³ S. An-skii, "Mezh dvukh mirov. (Dibuk)," in *Polveka evreiskogo teatra: 1876-1926. Antologiya evreiskoi dramaturgii*, ed. Boris Entin (Moskva: Evreiskii kul'turnyi tsentr na Nikitskoi, 2003), 357.

Vyplyvaet babka Khana
 Da na star bazar,
 Vybegaiut ei navstrechu
 Vse – mlad, i star.

Vnuchku Liiu babka Khana
 Zamuzh vydaet
 I podnosit vsem sosediam
 Prianiki i med.
 [...] ⁴⁸⁴

This is my literal translation of Khana's song.

The midwife Khana gave birth
 To many grandchildren.
 They all bestow her on the day of their wedding with
 A white shirt.

The midwife Khana dressed up
 In her white gown.
 And she walks as a countess
 In the broad court.

The midwife Khana comes out
 To the old market place.
 Everyone runs to meet her.
 All [who are] small and [who are] old.

The midwife Khana marries off
 Her granddaughter.
 She treats all neighbors with
 Cookies and mead.

The midwife Khana shares Liia's gingerbread cookies (*prianiki*) as well as mead (*med*) with her neighbors, who in return put coins on her tray. The whole scene of Liia's visit to the midwife and presenting her with the gifts, as well as Khana's singing, is omitted in the Yiddish version of the play. This rich ethnographic scene illustrates the network of female relationships that accompanies Liia in her next stage of life, the wedding.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 357-58.

Khana's song exemplifies the Russian folkloric tradition. Its simple rhyme and direct imagery speaks to a Russian general audience, as well as to acculturated Russian Jewish readers. The song by itself has few Jewish cultural markers, which is why it is so accessible to any Russian-speaking audience. Only the well-informed and well-read Russian and Russian Jewish readers would be able to decode the cultural references mentioned in the song. One of the reasons why the midwife's song is excluded from the Yiddish version is that An-sky might not have had a Yiddish counterpart of the song. The song illustrates the ways in which folkloric creativity transcends the fixed borders of Russian and Jewish folklore. It shows that the Russian language is the language not only of Russian writers but also of Russian Jewish writers.

Khana's assistance during Liia's delivery is probably understood as a gift, which should be recognized and reciprocated. Liia gives gifts and receives blessings. Thus, the symbolic meaning of giving a shirt could be interpreted as an embodiment of the life cycle event, particularly the reinforcement of the connection between birth and death. These exchanges between Liia and Khana provide examples of several customs contained within the questionnaire. The aged Khana intends to use the shirt as her funeral gown (*savan*). Thus, there is a connection between the child she helped birth and her own anticipated death. The connection of a child and a midwife, as An-sky's leading questions has suggested, might also indicate that the more children (or "grandchildren" as they were called) the midwife assisted in delivering, "the greater the reward she will receive in the afterlife."⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸⁵ Nathaniel Deutsch, "The Jewish Ethnographic Program," in *The Jewish Dark Continent: Life and Death in the Russian Pale of Settlement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 118.

Another example of this exchange is in the Yiddish version of the play. The prophetic statement is uttered by a messenger who says that “when the soul of a person who has not yet died is destined to enter the body of a person who has not yet been born, a struggle takes place. If the sick person dies, the child will come into the world alive. If the sick person recovers, the child will be born dead.”⁴⁸⁶ This gift presentation and the prophecy of the messenger indicate a bizarre distribution of souls.

The first thing to note is that the questionnaire places women at the center. They are both the objects of this unrealized ethnographic study and also its subjects because the majority of questions concerned experiences that are both female and feminine. Those questions were meant to be answered only by women. Half of the questions deal with femaleness and femininity as interpreted in ethnographic terms. This suggests a certain preoccupation with the gender — it decenters male experiences and perspectives in favor of female ones with important results for the content and diegetic structure of the resulting works of literary ethnography. However, while An-sky focuses on a number of aspects of women’s lives, he still leaves out potentially controversial issues concerning the practice of abortion, family and sexual violence, and promiscuity among both sexes.

Clearly, there is a connection in the subject matter and the conceptual treatment of subjects between An-sky’s literary works and his questionnaire. In part, the questionnaire is based on the kind of autobiographical knowledge and recollection that forms the basis for fictional dramatic works. At the same time, this questionnaire with 2,087 questions represented an attempt to quantify the same material that literary works treat bleakly, imaginatively, and metaphorically. Instead of the metonymy of fiction, we have a focus

⁴⁸⁶ S. An-sky, “The Dybbuk,” *The Dybbuk and Other Writings*, trans. Golda Werman, ed. David G. Roskies, Library of Yiddish Classics (New York: Schocken Books, 1992), 11.

on classification, some collective practices, groups, and questionnaire taxonomy. The metonymy that is the essential element in any nineteenth-century dramatic and fictional work has a counterpart in the questionnaire in the shape of taxonomical and categorizing elements.

Questions about “The Wedding”

The third part of the questionnaire, “The Wedding,” begins with the question of whether there are “cases or stories from the past in which a match was made between children before they were born?” and “for what reason would people do this?,” “[h]ow would the agreement take place” and whether “people still make matches between children who are not yet born?”⁴⁸⁷ These questions show An-sky’s interest in past and present customs. The answers to these questions are in the play. The match between Khonon and Liia was made before they were born; it was made by their fathers because of their friendship.

The questionnaire poses a question of “[h]ow do people regard a broken engagement, and what kind of sayings do you know about this?”⁴⁸⁸ Breaking a marriage agreement was viewed as a sin and a “bad sign for future life,” as An-sky’s questions indicated.⁴⁸⁹ Similar to Bergelson’s novel *Nokh alemen* (*When all is Said and Done*, 1913), An-sky’s play also begins with Liia’s rejection of the wealthy groom.

⁴⁸⁷ Nathaniel Deutsch, “The Jewish Ethnographic Program,” in *The Jewish Dark Continent: Life and Death in the Russian Pale of Settlement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 195.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 206.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 207.

One question asks “how did people in the past deal with matches that were the result of love and not a matchmaker? Were they considered to be un-Jewish?”⁴⁹⁰ The very existence of this leading question indicates that matches based on love existed. This was the case not only in the past, but also in the present, as An-sky’s play fully shows. There is a lot of textual evidence that Khonon and Liia love each other. One could also argue that the thrust of the play is that the force of free love can be realized, regardless of an arranged marriage. The “un-Jewish” aspect of falling in love that is mentioned in the question and the prologue is the very essence of the play, and ultimately becomes Jewish. Therefore, the young people in the Pale were not immune from falling in love, as Bergelson’s protagonist Mirl, the nameless daughter in the prologue of the play, and Liia of An-sky’s play prove.

Another important example which illustrates the network of female relationships and the connection to the other world, death, is in a subchapter on “yom hakhupa” (from the third section “The Wedding”) - “Day of the Wedding Canopy,” where An-sky asks whether there is a custom to invite deceased parents, and who invites them.⁴⁹¹ The play gives an answer to this custom. Liia says to her nurse Frada:

You told me yourself that at midnight dead souls gather in the synagogue for a prayer. My mother died young, before she could experience all of a mother’s joy. Today I will go to the cemetery and will invite her to my wedding. And she will come; and together with my father she will lead me to the bridal canopy, and she will dance with me. And all other souls live with us; they experience joy and sadness. But we do not see them, we do not understand them.⁴⁹²

The custom of inviting the dead mother points out once again the connection between death and the new beginning, in this case the wedding - a new stage in Liia’s life. Her

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 204.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., 225.

⁴⁹² S. An-skii, “Mezh dvukh mirov. (Dibuk),” in *Polveka evreiskogo teatra: 1876-1926. Antologiya evreiskoi dramaturgii*, ed. Boris Entin (Moskva: Evreiskii kul’turnyi tsentr na Nikitskoi, 2003), 354.

mother's spirit accompanies her, so that the connection to the person who brought her into this world is always foregrounded by the death, as a way to ward off the evil eye, as well as a way to honor the mother who cannot share this *simcha* (joy). Therefore, Liia is literally between two worlds, as the title of the play suggests, the world of the dead and a newly-married, which is always connected to the past, to death.

Aside from her mother, Liia also invites her beloved Khonon (even though he is not a relative) and souls of the bride and groom who were slaughtered during the Khmelnytsky massacre. Her nurse, Frada, first protests against this decision because Leah could invite only close deceased relatives. Finally, she relents and allows Leah to invite him, taking the sin upon herself. As with the example of honoring the midwife Khana, Leah is literally placed "between two worlds" - the present world and the otherworldly - between her obligation to follow her father's wish to marry a wealthy groom and her suppressed sexual desire to be with Khonon. By inviting a stranger, she might offend those deceased who were not invited and also hurt the living.

An-sky's play *The Dybbuk* is a product of a national trauma, centering around Khmelnytsky's massacre of 1648 during which a bride and a groom were slaughtered during their wedding. The couple's grave is in the center of the town. Liia says about the holy grave:

I have known this grave since my early childhood, I know resting in it are the groom and the bride. I saw them many times in my dreams, and in reality. They are as close to me as my relatives. [...] An ax flickered and the bride and groom fell dead. And they were buried in the same grave. And they became inseparable forever, and their souls intertwined together. They see and hear each other. And at every wedding, when people dance around their grave, they come out and take a small particle of happiness and joy from the newly wed, and they celebrate their own wedding. ([Talking] towards the grave). Eternal groom and bride! I ask you

to come to my wedding. I ask you to come and to stand with me under the wedding canopy.⁴⁹³

This scene has a proleptic function; it anticipates Liia death and reunion with her beloved Khonon. This passage also illustrates that Liia is constantly reminded about the other world with which she had to share the blissful moments of her life with the dead, so that they have a share of it as well.

The tragedy of the play is that the original arrangement was not honored; instead, Liia's father imposed onerous customs and traditions on the young couple. In the course of her romance and its aftermath, Liia is shown as having important connections to other women. This nexus reveals that Liia embraces and links two worlds - the traditional - the world of her dead mother and her living midwife that is about to disappear, and the modern, which is coming into being through her own love attachments. Therefore, Liia's midwife Khana and her nurse Frada are associated with the traditional customs, whereas Liia exhibits a modern impulse against it.

Questions About the Dybbuk - *der dibbuk*

There is a whole subchapter in the last section titled "Death" dedicated to the dybbuk in the questionnaire. The play provides answers to its questions. The questions are

2034. Do you know any stories in which the soul of a dead person that cannot find rest becomes a *dibbuk* [lit. "something attached," a malevolent spirit that attaches itself to a living person] and enters a living person?

2035. What does a *dibbuk* usually say and cry?

2036. For which transgressions does a *dibbuk* enter a person?

2037. Does a male *dibbuk* ever enter a female, or vice versa?

2038. In whom does a *dibbuk* enter in a majority of cases: in a male or in a female, in an older person or a younger one?

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 355.

2039. What *sgules* [special practices] and remedies do people employ in such a case?

2040. Does a *dibbuk* ever injure bystanders [i.e., people other than the one it has entered]?

2041. Which holy rabbis were famous for exorcising *dibbuku*?⁴⁹⁴

The dybbuk is a common trope of spirit possession in Yiddish literature.⁴⁹⁵

According to Gershom Scholem, in Jewish folk culture the dybbuk is an evil spirit who enters the soul of a living person that is guilty of sin. It “causes mental illness, [it] talks through h[er] mouth, and represents a separate and alien personality” within the living person.⁴⁹⁶ It refers to a phenomenon where an evil spirit, or the spirit of a dead person possesses the body of a sick person because “the spirits of the dead person [...] were not laid to rest and thus became demons.”⁴⁹⁷

“What does a dibbuk usually say and cry?”⁴⁹⁸

When Khonon died, his spirit – the dybbuk – possesses Liia, and she speaks and often screams in his voice. In the Russian and Yiddish versions of the text, Liia (or Leah in Yiddish) has the word dybbuk in parentheses next to her name. When the Hasidic rebbe Shloimele fails to free Liia from the dybbuk, he performs an exorcism with the presence of ten Jewish men, a minyan, and with the sound of a ram’s horn, and lighted black candles. Finally, when the dybbuk leaves Liia, the Hassidic rebbe cites *kaddish*, a

⁴⁹⁴ Nathaniel Deutsch, “The Jewish Ethnographic Program,” in *The Jewish Dark Continent: Life and Death in the Russian Pale of Settlement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 305-306.

⁴⁹⁵ The trope of the dybbuk was employed in a number of works prior to An-sky. See *The Dybbuk and the Yiddish Imagination: A Haunted Reader*, ed. and trans. Joachim Neugroschel (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000). For a contemporary employment of the theme of dybbuk, see the article by Agnieszka Legutko, “Feminist Dybbuks: Spirit Possession Motif in Post-Second Wave Jewish Women’s Fiction,” *Bridges: A Jewish Feminist Journal* 15.1 (2010): 6-26.

⁴⁹⁶ Emphases are mine. Ibid., 349.

⁴⁹⁷ Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (New York: New American Library, 1978), 349.

⁴⁹⁸ Nathaniel Deutsch, “The Jewish Ethnographic Program,” in *The Jewish Dark Continent: Life and Death in the Russian Pale of Settlement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 305-306.

mourning prayer. But the dybbuk does not leave her. Rather, he enters her soul. This is the final scene, and the one where the dybbuk, Khonon's spirit, causes Liia's death.

Liia (tenderly). Don't cry, don't cry... Come back to me, my groom, my husband. I will carry you, the dead one, in my soul. And during nightly dreams we will cradle our unborn children. (Crying). I will sew them shirts, I will sing them songs:

Rock-a-bye, my children,
Unborn [children], died,
Mother is a grave for a father,
She was widowed before having a wedding.

[...]

(Shaken up). Here they come again to take me to a wedding with a stranger... with a stranger... Come to me Come.

Khonon. (Darting). I cannot step over the circle.

Liia. (Raises herself, stretches arms towards him). If you cannot come to me, I will come to you. My eternal groom... my husband! (She rushes towards him. She falls dead. Khonon disappears).⁴⁹⁹

Liia's song exemplifies a folkloric production that could be attributed to both Russians and Jews. The song itself does not contain explicit references to Jewish culture. Rather, it transcends the cultural borders between Russians and Jews. The play's ending is open to multiple interpretations. Liia dies and reunites with her beloved Khonon, which suggests that their lives will combine after death. Despite the fact that Liia's romantic and sexual desires are denied by her father, she symbolically "reunites" with her beloved Khonon in the otherworldly realm. Liia exists at the intersection of several worlds, in none of which she can fully realize her identity.

Scholars, including Gabriella Safran, Nathaniel Deutsch, David Roskies and Seth Wolitz, who have previously analyzed the play all ignored a very important twist in the

⁴⁹⁹ S. An-skii, "Mezh dvukh mirov. (Dibuk)," in *Polveka evreiskogo teatra: 1876-1926. Antologiya evreiskoi dramaturgii*, ed. Boris Entin (Moskva: Evreiskii kul'turnyi tsentr na Nikitskoi, 2003), 379-380.

nature of An-sky's dybbuk. The main protagonist of the play, Liia, had not committed a sin. Her father had. There are several readings of the nature of sin as a means of punishment and as a cause for being possessed by a dybbuk. Reb Shloimele, one of the Hassidic righteous men, who exorcised the dybbuk out of Liia, states that "children are sometimes punished for the sins of their fathers."⁵⁰⁰

The play employs the technique of defamiliarization, causing the audience to see the possession by the dybbuk in a new light by putting the sins on Liia's father. Let us also bear in mind that folkloric and symbolist interpretations can coexist with modern interpretation. Alternatively, the possession by a dybbuk could be explained not in terms of evil spirits and sin but as a manifestation of hysteria and schizophrenia, as Gershom Scholem suggests.⁵⁰¹ Of course, An-sky was not interested in a medical or scientific explanation of possession - he was writing a play where he wanted to give Liia agency, and the capacity to speak and be heard while employing the topoi of traditional Jewish occult belief. Still, one might even argue that the children, Liia and Khonon, are attempting to fulfill the promise that Liia's father broke. An-sky subverted the folkloric myth of the evil spirit by portraying the female character in a favorable light, thus challenging the established preconception about possessed women.

By enacting traditional norms and customs, the figure of Liia's father Sender guarantees patriarchal power. The play, in contrast, decentralizes male authority. Liia's father stands as a representation of cultural practices that were privileged by Hasidic customs. That is not to say that his function is an indirect example of injustice. He

⁵⁰⁰ S. An-sky, "The Dybbuk. Censored Variant," in *The Worlds of S. An-sky: A Russian Jewish Intellectual at the Turn of the Century*, eds. Cabriella Safran and Steven J. Zipperstein (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 419.

⁵⁰¹ Gershom Scholem, "Dibbuk," in *Kabbalah* (New York: A Meridian Book, 1978), 350.

guarantees patriarchal power only in the sense that he demands that his daughter subjugate to his power. Liia, in turn, decentralizes the patriarchal power of her father and also subverts the social dynamics of the traditional Hassidic shtetl. Through her subversive behavior, she becomes a subject, an individual with the freedom to act, rather than a mere object subjugated to her father's will. Her father and her nanny Frada are the most authoritative figures in the play. In that sense, by implication, they conform to the authority of the Hassidic way of life, which requires total subjugation.

Questions on "From the Kheyder to the Wedding"

In the section "From the Kheyder to the Wedding," An-sky asks whether there are "diligent young students in your community who sit in the besmedresh and learn all the time?" and whether "you know any stories about such young students;"⁵⁰² "[f]rom what does a yeshiva student live? Does he eat his meals in the homes of well-off families [...]?" "do the local homeowners consider it a duty to take turns providing a yeshiva student with meals for a day, with a place to sleep for a night?";⁵⁰³ "do people today still come to yeshiva to select a son-in-law for a daughter?" and "what stories do you know from former times?;" "Do people still seek a first son-in-law who is a scholar?"⁵⁰⁴

Liia comes from a Hasidic family. Her father, Sender, is a true Hasid (*istinnyi khasid*)⁵⁰⁵ who rejects a poor yeshiva student (*eshibotnik*), Khonon, as a groom for his daughter and, in turn, makes her take a wealthier suitor. Sender housed Khonon for a year while he was studying Torah. It is customary for a wealthy Jew to give free boarding to a

⁵⁰² Ibid., 168.

⁵⁰³ Ibid., 176.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid., 178, 199.

⁵⁰⁵ S. An-sky, "Mezh dvukh mirov. (Dibuk)," in *Polveka evreiskogo teatra: 1876-1926. Antologiya evreiskoi dramaturgii*, ed. Boris Entin (Moscow: Evreiskii kul'turnyi tsentr na Nikitskoi, 2003), 333.

poor student so that he can study religious texts. Sender chooses a groom from a wealthy family, rather than the scholar Khonon, which underlines his greediness, as well as his lack of any spirituality or interest in Jewish learning or tradition. Instead, he sees his daughter as a monetary transaction. An-sky's play points out these contradictions within the Hasidic community that, on the one hand, practices the customs and, on the other hand, adjusts them to their needs, dismissing any intrinsic values in them.

However, Liia's father Sender did not carry out the promise and, instead, found Liia a wealthier groom. This arrangement was made without Liia and her future groom meeting each other, which occurred among the Hasidic community, as An-sky's question indicates. He asks whether "it still happen[s] that parents make a match without the groom and bride seeing one another?"⁵⁰⁶ From the play, we learn that Sender went to see the groom, a custom that An-sky mentions in his questionnaire.

In contrast to Khonon, who spent his time studying Kabbalah in the synagogue, as it was and still is a custom for a man, Liia spent time with her nanny Frada. When Liia visits the synagogue with her nanny and niece Gitel', she says that she has never been in the synagogue at night and that girls are not supposed to attend it. Liia's statement illuminates the question in the section on "The Upbringing and Education of a Girl," where An-sky asks whether "people take girls to the synagogue."⁵⁰⁷

In Act I, Khonon studies the Talmud and Kabbalah, stating that the Talmud

[...] prikovyvaet k zemle, ne daet podnimat'sia v vys'! A Kabbala! A Kabbala!
Ona raskryvaet pered glazami vse vrata nebes! Ona iarkimi molniiami
osveshchaet tysiachi mirov! Ona velikimi poryvami ustremliaet dushu k
beskonechnomu!

⁵⁰⁶ Nathaniel Deutsch, "The Jewish Ethnographic Program," in *The Jewish Dark Continent: Life and Death in the Russian Pale of Settlement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 203.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., 185.

chains you to the earth; it does not allow you to ascend! But Kabbalah! But Kabbalah! It opens in front of you all the gates of Heaven! It lightens with bright flashes of lightning of thousands of worlds! It inspires the soul with a great outburst to the infinite!⁵⁰⁸

Khonon asks the question “Kakoi grekh vsego strashnee dlia cheloveka i vsego bol’she vlechet ego? Kakoi grekh vsego trudnee pobedit’? Grekh stremleniia k zhenshchine? Da?”;⁵⁰⁹ “What sin is the most dangerous for a person and the most attractive? What sin is the most difficult to overcome? Is it the sin of attraction to a woman? Yes?” His friend, who listens to him, replies “yes.” This passage reminds the reader of the prologue, where the daughter of the old man, who tells us the story about *The Dybbuk*, raised exactly the same question about falling in love. Khonon continues by stating that this “sinful desire” will transform itself into the highest holiness, into the *Song of Songs* (“togda velichaishaia skverna prevratitsia v vysshuiu sviatost’, v [...] ‘Pesniu pesnei’”).

After raising this question, Khonon sings Solomon’s famous mystical passage from the *Song of Songs* (*Shir ha-shirim*), the most erotic and sexually explicit declaration of physical attraction. The text has inspired many cultures and artists. The biblical reference situates Khonon’s desire within the context of Jewish tradition as well as Western European tradition. Khonon sings the *Song of Songs*,

You are beautiful, my beloved, you are beautiful. Your eyes are like doves looking under your curls; your hair, like a flock of goats coming down from the mountain of Gilead. Your teeth are like herds of shorn sheep, who have just washed themselves, every one of which has a pair of kids, and none of them are barren.⁵¹⁰

Khonon’s evocation of the song in Russian situates his sexual yearnings in the context of Jewish Biblical traditions that connect the Jewish past with the present. The song adds a

⁵⁰⁸ S. An-sky, “Mezh dvukh mirov. (Dibuk),” in *Polveka evreiskogo teatra: 1876-1926. Antologiya evreiskoi dramaturgii*, ed. Boris Entin (Moscow: Evreiskii kul’turnyi tsentr na Nikitskoi, 2003), 336.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., 337.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid., 337-38.

temporal quality to the play, as well as to Khonon's quest to resolve sexual desire and love. The play transcends the linguistic and Hasidic traditional customs by including the *Song of Songs* in Russian. Khonon's singing is interrupted by Liia's appearance in the synagogue; she came to see the Torah's curtains. As the trope of the dybbuk continues to be employed in contemporary culture, so does the *Song of Songs*. The song is a familiar trope in Yiddish literature. Sholem Aleichem's main protagonist cites the same passage as Khonon does in the first chapter entitled "Song of Songs. Busie," from the novella *Shir ha-shirim. Mayn ershter roman. Ester (Song of Songs. My First Novel. Ester, 1909-1911)*. The *Song of Songs* is recited in the Sabbath service during Passover, hence, the passage was known to An-sky since his childhood.

In Act I, An-sky describes Khonon's contemplation of Liia's name, which equals thirty-six. In this Russian version of the play, An-sky points out that Hebrew letters have numerical value. In the Russian version of the play, before his death, when he finds out that his beloved Liia is betrothed to another man, he announces that Liia's name equals thirty-six, which refers to a Kabbalistic concept that designates thirty-six righteous men who, through their humility, bring about the justice of God. Khonon also says that Liia's name means thirty-six "[...] Lo-ha. Not God, not through God" ("[...] Lo-ha. Ne Bog, ne cherez Boga"),⁵¹¹ which means that not through God's help is he going to marry her, but rather through mysticism, through possession of her soul, and by becoming the dybbuk. Khonon's desire to possess Liia is realized at the end of the play in the form of the dybbuk.

In the second part of the questionnaire, An-sky asks about the thirty-six righteous

⁵¹¹ S. An-sky, "Mezh dvukh mirov. (Dibuk)," in *Polveka evreiskogo teatra: 1876-1926. Antologiya evreiskoi dramaturgii*, ed. Boris Entin (Moscow: Evreiskii kul'turnyi tsentr na Nikitskoi, 2003), 335, 343.

men, known as *lamed vovnikim*, which are two Hebrew letters that have the numerical value of thirty-six. He asks whether one knows the stories about these thirty-six righteous men “who disguised themselves as a teachers’ assistant?”⁵¹² This is an example of a leading question. The play illustrates the answer to this question. Nathaniel Deutsch pointed out that “this question reflects a well-known tradition” about the Baal Shem Tov who worked in a school, *kheyder*, before he announced that he was a holy man.⁵¹³ If Khonon believes that Liia’s name holds a mystical meaning that rests on the same numerical value of thirty-six, then we are faced with the implication that maybe a holy woman is disguised as one of the righteous one, but with a radically different mission as a wise woman who challenges the traditional customs of the community. The play is situated into the Hasidic community; it also raises several concepts from the Kabbalah that were important for Hasidic Jews.

On Hasidism and Baal Shem Tov

Hasidism is a religious movement that emerged in the late eighteenth-century and relied upon mystical concepts from the late Kabbalah, differing from the traditional Jewish belief in its zealous practice and mystical joy of worship that could bring one to a state of dedication to God, known as *devekut* (Hebrew for “clinging on to God”). Founded by the Rabbi Israel ben Elieser (1700-1760), known as the Baal Shem Tov (which means the “Master of the Good Name”), who settled in the town of Medzhybozh of the Podolia province (in southwestern Ukraine), this very diverse movement also differed in how it admired and included the illiterate common folk and women. Hasidic

⁵¹² Nathaniel Deutsch, “The Jewish Ethnographic Program,” in *The Jewish Dark Continent: Life and Death in the Russian Pale of Settlement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 150

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, 150.

tales represent the oral lore and folk spirit of the Jewish people, what Herder calls *Volksgeist*, as do the folk tales collected by the Brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm of the Germans.⁵¹⁴

Yiddish writers in the Russian Empire Yisroel Aksenfeld (1787-1866), Sholem Aleichem (1859-1916), Yitskhok Leybush Peretz (1852-1915), Aizik-Meyer Dik (1814-1893), A. Litwin (1862-1943),⁵¹⁵ and many others were incorporating the stories of the Baal Shem Tov in their works and employing Hasidic legends, depiction of the righteous men (tsadikim) and mysticism in their works. Most of them, except Peretz's Khsidish ("Hasidic," 1901),⁵¹⁶ did this with the intention to reveal moral corruption in the Hasidic community. He was also known as a collector of Yiddish folk songs.⁵¹⁷

An-sky was drawn to the Hasidic community in the Podolia area because it represented the traditional way of life and essentially the *neshome*, or *geist* (soul) of the Jewish people. He was interested in the Jewish folk culture that was preserved in the Hasidic communities. He saw something unique and unprecedented in these

⁵¹⁴ For the discussion of the role of Hassidic folklore during Jewish modernism and Gershom Scholem's criticism of Buber, see Martina Urban, *Aesthetics of Renewal: Martin Buber's Early Representation of Hasidism as Kulturkritik* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

⁵¹⁵ Y. Aksenfeld was born into a prominent Hasidic family, and wrote with irreverence, satire, and a critical attitude about the Hasidic community in his novella *The Headband* (*Dos shterntikhl*, 1820).

Aizik-Meyer Dik was born in Vilna and wrote short stories. He described Hasidic traditional dress in his story "Reb Shmaye der gut-yontev biter" (*Reb Shmaye the Holiday Well-Wisher*, 1860). For more on his works, see David Roskies, "The Master of Lore: Isaac Meir Dik," in *A Bridge of Longing: The Lost Art of Yiddish Storytelling* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 57-98.

A. Litwin (né Samuel Hurwitz) wrote *Jewish Souls*, which consists of five volumes and are based on his nine-year-long travels in Lithuania (Lite), Poland (Poyln) and Galicia (Galitsie) from the Russian Revolution of 1905 until WWI (1914). His and An-sky's ethnographic work overlap in time and material, although they were working on different social classes and Jewish spaces. Litwin turned to urban and rural Jews, and he was interested in collecting stories, finding characters for his *Jewish Souls*. Whereas An-sky worked primarily in the Pale of Settlement, Litwin moved west, closer to the Austrian-Hungarian empire. Similar to An-sky, he also wrote about the dybbuk (a possession by the dead spirit), "The Last Dybbuk" and "The Tale of the 'Baal-Shem' and the 'Dybbuk,'" that was translated by Joachim Neugroschel. See "The Last Dybbuk," in *The Dybbuk and the Yiddish Imagination: A Haunted Reader*. ed. and trans. Joachim Neugroschel (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 391-98.

⁵¹⁶ I discussed briefly Peretz's ethnographic work in Chapter Two. Though Peretz sometimes mocked the Hasidic miracles as in his short story *Oyb nisht nokh hekher* ("If Not Higher," 1900).

⁵¹⁷ I.L. Kahn analyzed his collection. See *Yivo-bletter*, Bukh 12, 1937, 280-85.

communities, which was an inclusion of all social groups, including uneducated people (*am-haarets*, Hebrew for “a person of the land,” uneducated person). An-sky chose to collect his ethnographic material among the Hasidic communities because they managed to preserve the Jewish oral tradition and represent imaginative, dramatic investigation of Jewish customs, religious practices, and folk beliefs. An-sky was not interested in the written culture, but solely in the oral.⁵¹⁸

An-sky was not the first Jewish ethnographer; he had predecessors and contemporaries whose literary ethnographic works contributed to the formation of the Jewish literary ethnography. Martin Buber (1868-1965), an Austrian-born and later Israeli philosopher, essayist, and Zionist, was his contemporary who came from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which shared a border with the Pale of Settlement. It is a striking coincidence that An-sky and Buber were all drawn to the Podolia area, to the center of Hasidic life. They treated the Hasidic community with reverence and uncovered its creative and spiritual soul in their works. Buber collected material for his literary reinterpretation of the Baal Shem Tov stories from the region, and An-sky’s famous play *The Dybbuk* about a Hasidic family was based on a story first heard by the author in the Podolia area. They wanted to preserve the Hasidic communities through their writings and continue their traditions by disseminating oral folklore and incorporating this folk material into their literary works. Both wanted to educate German and Russian audiences, respectively, about Jewish mystical stories and the spiritual community, and they gave

⁵¹⁸ This juxtaposition of the educated and the unlearned goes back to Herder, who made the similar distinction between “Kultur der Gelehrten” and “Kultur des Volkes” (“culture of the educated” and “culture of the people”) in his work *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784-1791). Herder’s backlash against the Enlightenment ideals of a rational perception of the world and universality of cultures brought him to the study of “Kultur des Volkes” and to collections of folklore that he perceived as a unique expression of national particularity.

voice to Jewish subjects of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires.⁵¹⁹ Buber's enchantment with the unity between realm, spirit and reality evokes the idea in Russian Romanticism that the spirit of the national culture is to be found among the common uneducated Volk, the people.

In addition to the various cultural Jewish traditions and realities that shape An-sky's literary ethnographic works, he is also strongly influenced by French and Russian Symbolism. In other words, An-sky's literary production functions at the intersection of scholarship, religious ethnic tradition, and early European modernism. These make his work unique examples of cross border, cross cultural, cross-disciplinary, cross interacting, and cross-generic hybridization.

Symbolist Poetics in *The Dybbuk*

Moreover, *The Dybbuk* is a multi-layered play with two systems of poetics. First, it is a tragic love story with high dramatic value. Second, the poetics of the play can be related to the works of contemporary Russian Symbolists of the period. One can discern a number of tropes and structures that are shared with the works of Russian Symbolists. Yiddish writers, in turn, were not foreign to Modernism and the poetics of the Silver Age. They contextualized the theme of Silver Age poetry with reference to the experience of their fellow Jews as colonial subjects of the Russian Empire. The play fully shows how this was done. In the play, the evil spirit dybbuk is a vision from the Kabbalah, a hidden occult. An-sky's interest in possession, mysticism, and the ethnography of different cultures was in tune with the times.

⁵¹⁹ On the connection between Buber and An-sky's ethnographic works, see Nathaniel Deutsch, "The Rebbe as Ethnographer/ The Ethnographer as Rebbe," in *The Jewish Dark Continent: Life and Death in the Russian Pale of Settlement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 40-53.

The play fits comfortably in the modernist, symbolist discourse of the period. I also interpret Liia's demonic possession as an instance of "eternal memory, eternally triumph[ing] over death," to quote Viacheslav Ivanov's poem "Eternal Memory" (Vechnaia pamiat', a poem from his first collection *Kormchie zvezdy*, 1903). Interestingly, that memory lies at the heart of the ethnographic and symbolist texts. Of course, in each case, the memory was refracted through the respective genre poetics. An-sky detested the fantastic tales of the Symbolist Zinaida Gippius, whose work was published in *Russian Wealth* (Russkoe Bogatstvo), the journal where he was also published.⁵²⁰

An-sky in a sense was aware that Jewish culture would disappear. There was a concern that Jewish culture was under the threat of forces of Modernity, and the interest in the rural identity and in the patterns of the vanishing traditional life was surging. The Russian Symbolists cultivated the past, as in Dmitry Merezhkovsky's trilogy *Christ and Antichrist* (*Khristos i Antikhris*, 1896-1905), which depicts pagan and Christian worship; Valery Briusov's novel *The Fiery Angel* (*Ognennyi angel*, 1909) takes place in sixteenth-century Germany, and deals with the occult and the demonic possession of the female protagonist Renata, which echoes that of Liia. Russian Symbolism also undergoes several stages. During the aesthetic crisis after the Revolution of 1905, Symbolists were preoccupied with the fate of the Russian people and turned to national and folkloric themes. Feydor Sologub's *The Petty Demon* (*Melkii bes*, 1907) explores evil in a provincial town; his drama *Death's Conquering* (*Pobeda smerti*, 1907) turns to the theme of love that surpasses death; Alexandr Blok's poem "On the Field of Kulikovo" (*Na pole Kulikovom*, 1908) centers around the victory of Russians over the Tatars; Andrey Bely's

⁵²⁰ Gabriella Safran, *Wandering Soul: The Dybbuk's Creator, S. An-sky* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 75.

novel *The Silver Dove* (*Serebriannyi golub'*, 1910) depicts a sectarian group — the Doves (*golubi*) — who murder a poet. These themes were also present in the works of An-sky. Memory that connects the past, the present, and an untextualized future is embodied in the spirit of the dybbuk, who mediates between Liia's unsatisfied desires and her death, which brings her a kind of "salvation" and reunification with her beloved. Moreover, through this dramatic merging her tormented past, her traditional Jewish environment, and the otherworldly, she realizes her desire for her lost love and thus asserts her autonomy and individuality.

A contemporary of An-sky, a Yiddish critic Bal-Makhshoves (né Isidor Eliashev, 1873-1924), in his essay "A Grandson to the Grandfather" (1907), compares the emergence of the literary works of Yiddish writers Sholem Aleichem, Peretz, and Mendele Moykher-Sforim to such Decadent writers as Charles Baudelaire and Paul Verlaine whose literature earned the respect of their French audience. French Symbolists were known for their poetic innovation. As the decadent poets rejected the literary conventions of their time and created symbolist poetics, Yiddish writers were also innovative because of their use of folk language and themes in their works from the everyday life of the common Jewish population in the Pale.

Both ethnographers and Symbolists placed memory at the heart of their works. Russian Symbolists also cultivated an interest in mysticism. Viacheslav Ivanov, Aleksandr Blok, and Andrey Bely shared with An-sky an interest in the Kabbalah, and in Jewish mysticism as a whole, or, in Marina Aptekman's words, "kabbalistic symbolism [and] kabbalistic mythology."⁵²¹ The difference between Russian Symbolists and An-sky

⁵²¹ Marina Aptekman, *Jacob's Ladder: Kabbalistic Allegory in Russian Literature* (Boston: Academic Studies Press: 2011), 188.

is that An-sky privileged the topos of the dybbuk as a cultural marker, whereas the Russian Symbolists turned to the Kabbalah as a source of esoteric knowledge, one of several of such sources.

An-sky's political and ethical engagements were inseparable from his views on the proper function of literature. Similar to his colleague Bogoraz, he saw literary work as an effective platform for employing specific and textual strategies to deal with the social and legal problems that Jews were encountering. In this regard, the symbolist aesthetics of "art for art's sake" was foreign to him because it was divorced from social concerns. Working as a secretary for the populist Petr Lavrov had made a big impact on him in 1895. He shared with Lavrov the notion that works of art should have an emotional and ethical impact; he was critical of modernism.⁵²²

The Russian Symbolist tradition, in the context of which the play *The Dybbuk* is an example, was influenced by the French Symbolists. Certain symbolist approaches resonated with An-sky. In 1871, at the age of seventeen, Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891) wrote about his aesthetic vision as poet as "being a seer," by having "derange[d] [. . .] all the senses,"⁵²³ a state of being that involves a great deal of suffering. Such sentiments resonated with An-sky's aesthetics and his depiction of the main heroine, Liia, in his play. In his famous letter, "Letter of the Seer" ("Letter du voyant"), Rimbaud explained:

The poet makes himself a seer by a long, prodigious, and rational disordering of all the senses. Every form of love, of suffering, of madness; he searches himself, he consumes all the poisons in him, and keeps only their quintessences. [. . .] He reaches the unknown; and even if, crazed, he ends up by losing the understanding of his visions, at least he has seen them!⁵²⁴

⁵²² Ibid., 79.

⁵²³ Graham Robb, *Rimbaud* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2000), 79-80.

⁵²⁴ Melissa Kwasny, *Toward the Open Field: Poets on the Art of Poetry* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 147. The original text is:

Le poète se fait voyant par un long, immense et raisonné dérèglement de tous les sens. Toutes les

An-sky knew German and French, and he may have read works by French Symbolists during his stay in Paris from 1892 until 1900. As a point of departure, one can read An-sky's play as an indication of an emerging new type of Jewish cultural phenomenon, as well as being a prophetic or mystical depiction of a new type of feminine behavior. An-sky's "prophetic vision" went hand in hand with his ethnographic pursuits. An-sky, who combined in his writing multiple artistic and ideological orientations, strove to cross the Russian, French, and Jewish cultural borders by being a preserver of what the majority of the intelligentsia failed to notice and by being able to incorporate this into the text.

Michael Wachtel has argued that, for Russian Symbolists, the past was embodied in the works of German Romanticism. This was particularly true for Viacheslav Ivanov, who was fluent in German and even experimented with writing in that language. He also translated Goethe, Novalis, E.T.A Hoffmann, and Schiller, as well as works by Rilke, Nietzsche, Martin Buber, and others.⁵²⁵ Andrey Bely (1880-1934), another Symbolist, echoed Ivanov's impetus for overcoming death and love through the act of remembering, suggesting as well a turn to the past. In his essay "The Emblematic of Meaning" (Emblematika smysla. Predposylki teorii simvolizma, 1909), Bely stated:

The novelty of contemporary art lies merely in the overwhelming amount of all the elements from the past that have suddenly surfaced before us. We are experiencing in art all centuries and all nations. Past life flies by us.⁵²⁶

Writing during the late symbolist period, Bely defined art holistically, and furthered our

formes d'amour, de souffrance, de folie; il cherche lui-même, il épuise en lui tous les poisons, pour n'en garder que les quintessences. [. . .] Il arrive à l'inconnu; et quand, affolé, il finirait par perdre l'intelligence de ses visions, il les a vues.

Accessed February 28, 2012, <http://www.bacdefrancais.net/voyant.php>.

⁵²⁵ Michael Wachtel, *Russian Symbolism and Literary Tradition: Goethe, Novalis, and the Poetics of Vyacheslav Ivanov* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 6-13.

⁵²⁶ The essay was first published in 1910 by Musaget. A. Bely, *Kritika Estetika. Teoriia simvolizma*, ed. A.L. Kazin (Moscow: Iskustvo, 1994), accessed February 16, 2012, http://az.lib.ru/b/belyj_a/text_0320.shtml.

understanding of it by suggesting that it evokes not only emotions, as Tolstoy suggested in his essay “What is Art,” but that it is also impossible to separate its meaning, its emotions, and its discursive practices:

The school of Symbolists only unites the declarations of artists and poets in that the meaning of beauty is in the artistic image, neither only in the emotion – which excites in us regarding the image – nor solely in the rational interpretation of the image. One cannot separate a symbol from its meaning, its emotions, and its discursive practices.⁵²⁷

Bely’s holistic interpretation echoed Franz Boas’s “relativized notion of culture.”⁵²⁸ The German-American anthropologist Boas (1858-1942) was the first, between 1894-1911, to introduce the word cultures in the plural form. During the Jesup Expedition (1897-1902),⁵²⁹ Boas explored the cultural similarities between the indigenous peoples living on both sides of the Bering Strait.⁵³⁰ Among the members of Boas’s team were three self-taught Russian-Jewish ethnographers/anthropologists, Vladimir Bogoraz, Lev Shternberg, and Vladimir Yochelson,⁵³¹ whose previous experience in Siberian exile prepared them for the expedition. Matti Bunzl has shown that Boas’s definition of culture was rooted in Herder and Humboldt’s philosophy of “viewing cultural achievements – in the forms of knowledge, art, literature, and science – as equivalent to the liberation from

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

⁵²⁸ Matti Bunzl, “Franz Boas and the Humboldtian Tradition,” in *Volksgeist as Method and Ethic: Essays on Boasian Ethnography and the German Anthropological Tradition*, ed. George W. Stocking, Jr., vol. 8 (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 67.

⁵²⁹ See “Introduction” and Chapter Three on the Jesup Expedition.

⁵³⁰ George W. Stocking, “Franz Boas and the Culture Concept in Historical Perspective,” *American Anthropologist* 68.4, New Series (1966): 870-71.

⁵³¹ During the Jesup North Pacific Expedition of 1897-1902 Vladimir Bogoraz was accompanied by his wife, Sof’ia, who took photographs of indigenous peoples. Yochelson’s wife, Dina Yochelson-Brodsky accompanied him during this expedition in 1900-1902. Similar to Sof’ia, she was also taking photographs. Along with her husband, she was applying physical anthropology to indigenous peoples, such as the measurements of Yakut, Tungus, and Koriak women. In her study, she concluded that Yakut women did not differ in measurements from other Turkic-Mongolian tribes. For more, see Dina Yochelson-Brodsky, “Zur Topographie des weiblichen Körpers nordostsibirischer Völker,” in *Archive für Anthropologie*. eds. Johannes Ranke and Georg Thilenius (Braunschweig: Druck und Verlag Friedrich Vieweg und Sohn. 1906), 43.

the control by nature,” by showing the diversity and multitude of cultures.⁵³² Moreover, Boas argued against the scientifically racial accusations leveled against African Americans. He was a major influence on Bogoraz’s and Shternberg’s ethnography. Both of whom worked with An-sky’s ethnographic questionnaire *Der mentsh*.

The connection between ethnography and Symbolism lay also in the interest in and revival of German Romanticism, and that movement’s keen interest in the Volksgeist. In the introduction to his questionnaire, *Der mentsh*, An-sky refers to the Jewish people using the Herderian concept of a nation as an organic being animated by a unique spirit, whose past (in Yiddish *der over*) is a vital part of its makeup.⁵³³ The romantic metaphor of a nation as a unique being that is distinct because of its folk treasures is reflected in An-sky’s play.

As a writer, An-sky proclaimed as his mission the transformation of his own experiences into literary forms – *zhiznetvorchestvo*. Safran in her biography of An-sky called him “the wandering soul” since he was a restless soul. He was unfortunate in his private life; he was always in the process of searching for new inspirations and creative forces.⁵³⁴ He was always in the process of inventing and reinventing himself. If An-sky’s play functions as a creative interpretation of concrete ethnographic material and as a vehicle for preserving Jewish popular culture and learning about it, it also invites its educated Russian and Jewish audiences to treat it analytically. If, in the Symbolist model, Beauty transforms the world, so does beautiful Liia, who refuses to accept the confining social practices of her traditional world.

⁵³² Ibid., 68.

⁵³³ S. An-sky, “Forrede,” in *Dos yidishe etnografishe program*, ed. L. Ia. Shternberg (Petrograd: Tipografiia I. Lur’e i K, 1914), 11.

⁵³⁴ Gabriella Safran, *Wandering Soul: The Dybbuk’s Creator, S. An-sky* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

Conclusion

The play analyzed above is a valuable ethnographic record that takes the form of a fictionalized account based on the authors' immediate experience with the people he describes. Thus, the literary style and devices combined with the ethnographic raw material form this hybrid genre, i.e., literary ethnography. Seth Wolitz rightfully called the play "a creative voice of subaltern functioning in the hegemonic culture of the Russian Silver Age" and suggests that it "reflects [the] cultural hybridity of the Silver Age."⁵³⁵ He also emphasizes the popularity of the play and notes the fact that it "evoke[s] a world that is lost" and that "[i]t is more artifact than art."⁵³⁶ With this play, in Wolitz's words, An-sky attempted "to bring Slavs and Jews together," thus creating a "Russian-Jewish work of art."⁵³⁷

Bogoraz and An-sky wrote their works when Russian and Russian Jewish society were in considerable flux and turmoil. While Bogoraz's sketches can be read as a harbinger of both the rural communal violence and demands for constitutional rights during the 1905 Revolution, An-sky's play captures the generational tensions of a traditional community exposed to the new mores of an encroaching modernity. By "going to their own people," they used recently developed social science methodologies to simultaneously document the old ways and advocate for their at least partial replacement by something new.

The Dybbuk contains numerous ethnographic references to the life of Jews and especially to Jewish women's customs. The play employs the tropes and topoi of the

⁵³⁵ Seth L. Wolitz, "Inscribing An-sky's *Dybbuk* in Russian and Jewish Letters" in *The Worlds of S. An-sky: A Russian Jewish Intellectual at the Turn of the Century*, eds. Gabriella Safran and Steven J. Zipperstein (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 167, 202.

⁵³⁶ Ibid., 202.

⁵³⁷ Ibid., 201-02.

Silver Age poetics, especially those of French, German, and Russian Symbolists. By analyzing the plentiful literary ethnographic material contained within the play, one sees that An-sky used ethnographic material to various ends. First of all, his ethnography serves as a tool for fostering and preserving national culture, particularly that of women. Secondly, An-sky combines Jewish traditional beliefs with modernist Symbolist perspectives. He uses ethnographic material to address the social anxiety of young Jewish people, especially around arranged marriage, and he gives voice to the sexual desires of young Jews. Thirdly, An-sky subverts the stereotypical representation of Jewish woman possessed by a dybbuk through placing the sin on Liia's father.

Reading the play with the ethnographic questions in mind helps the reader to decipher different aspects of Hasidic traditional life, and gives a sense of the tensions and anxieties that young people were undergoing in the late imperial period. Not all of the Hasidic customs that An-sky presented are lost. The Hasidic community managed to sustain the very customs that An-sky challenged in his play throughout the twentieth-century and into the twenty-first. Even nowadays, in the observant Hasidic communities of the United States and Israel, the marriage customs that An-sky described in the play still govern the life cycles of women and men.

Conclusion

In Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, the narrator wonders what it means to experience the world from the perspective of someone else. The narrator states that "the true voyage is discovery," not to visit the remote geographical places, but rather "to possess other eyes, to see the universe through the eyes of another, of a hundred others, to see the hundred universes that each of them sees."⁵³⁸ One must ask how a person could be able "to possess other eyes," and what this would entail in practical terms. Genre, tradition, historical times and "the possession of eyes" could mean different things, depending on the geographic location and time period. In the case of Russian literature, there has always been an emphasis on the victims and the revolutionaries, rather than perpetrators and the autocrats.

This project has presented a literary ethnographic tour of the Russian Empire through the ethnographic lenses of Dostoevsky, Korolenko, Bogoraz, and An-sky. The writers in question did not travel freely; rather, they were exiled and learned how "to possess other eyes," by imagining and writing about the lives of Others. What unites them in addition to their practice of literary ethnography, whether as imaginative writers of the empire and as current or former exiles, as in the case of Dostoevsky, Korolenko, and Bogoraz, is that they can all tell a compelling narrative. Moreover, their works have high narrative value; they contain exceptional description of ethnic diversity in the late imperial period. In the case of Dostoevsky and Korolenko, they are part of the canon of Russian literature; they are quoted, anthologized, and translated, and their authorial voices occupy considerable Russian space. Bogoraz and An-sky are less well-known;

⁵³⁸ Marcel Proust, "The Captive," in *In Search of Lost Time*, trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (New York: The Modern Library, 1993), 5: 343.

however, they are of great interest to modern audiences in their meticulous exploration of the contradictions and discontinuities of the nineteenth-century imperial project, which is being resurrected in the twenty-first-century – both geopolitically, militarily, as well as symbolically and discursively.

These writers shared the same interest in political engagement and had similar political views. An-sky fled to Western Europe because he could not reside in St. Petersburg and was seeking out new opportunities. Bogoraz's and An-sky's respective rebellions against the tsarist government were the driving force behind their innovative ethnographic research, which aimed to register and conceptualize the diversity and validity of ethnic voices that the colonial discourse of the empire previously suppressed. All four wrote across several cultures: Dostoevsky about Russian, Muslim and Jewish peoples; Korolenko about Yakut culture, Russian peasants, Udmurt and Jewish people; Bogoraz studied Russian peasants, indigenous peoples of Siberia (Chukchi people), as well as Jewish cultures;⁵³⁹ An-sky produced studies of particular groups among French, Russian and Jewish peoples. Korolenko, Bogoraz and An-sky grew up in the Pale of Settlement. Korolenko was culturally aware of Jewish religious customs; although Bogoraz and An-sky were raised in the traditional Jewish culture, both published under pseudonyms, both were proponents of socialism, and both eventually returned to their Jewish identities.

⁵³⁹ In his essay "Brothers and Sisters in Toil and Struggle," Valerii Dymshits discusses An-sky's interest in the political life of Jewish workers and his aspirations "to discover progressive work practices in the heart of Jewish tradition" (65). He compares An-sky's hopes to mobilize Jewish workers and craftsmen for the socialist changes to Russian Populists, who believed that peasants were the driving force for the revolution. Eugene M. Avrutin, Valerii Dymshits, Alexander Lvov, Harriet Murav, and Alla Sokolova, eds., *Photographing the Jewish Nation: Pictures from S. An-sky's Ethnographic Expedition* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2009), 64.

Exile in Siberia introduced Dostoevsky, Korolenko, and Bogoraz to the multiethnic and multilingual peoples of the empire. During an interrogation, Korolenko humorously and wittingly remarked that the imperial state sent him to the very peoples on whose behalf he advocated for in his revolutionary populist endeavors prior to his exile.⁵⁴⁰ His polemical point could be extended to the entire group of literary ethnographers and for drawing attention to the ways in which the empire subverts itself; its project of acculturating and coopting local religious and ethnic elites giving rise to centrifugal forces operating on the periphery of the empire that eventually contributed to its collapse. The history of many empires, from the Roman to the Soviet, shows the logic of this tendency. As Joseph Brodsky prophetically wrote in his poem “Post Aetatem Nostram” (“After Our Epoch,” 1970) “izveztnyi mestnyi kifared, kipia negodovan’em smelo vystupaet/ s prizyvom imperatora ubrat’/ (na sleduiushchei strochke) s mednykh deneg,” “a famous local poet, raging with furor, bravely gives a speech/ with a call to dispatch the emperor/ (on the next line) from copper money.”⁵⁴¹ The poem, set in the Roman Empire, clearly alludes to Soviet times, as well as to the late imperial period. The prison and exilic experiences turned these four writers into the self-taught ethnographers who wrote fiction that gave voice to the Others — the *inorodtsy* — of the empire. The imperial ethnographers who were sent on the field mission by the Russian Geographical Society and the literary ethnographers who are the subject of this study do not form distinct imposing categories such as ethnographers, scholars, researchers and scriptors of the empire. Instead, we see a spectrum of approaches to the codification of the *inorodtsy*

⁵⁴⁰ See Vladimir Korolenko’s autobiography *History of My Contemporary (Istoriia moego sovremennika)* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1954), 6:294.

⁵⁴¹ Iosif Brodsky, “Post Aetatem Nostram,” *Izbrannye stikhotvoreniia: 1957-1992* (Moscow: “Panorama, 1994), 207.

(aliens). How each of these writers “possess[ed] other eyes” and gave voice to the multiethnic subjects of the empire was what sets these writers apart. Even though Dostoevsky, Korolenko, and Bogoraz had similar encounters in Siberia, and were surrounded by peoples of different social classes and backgrounds, religions, languages, and cultures, they produced very distinct literary ethnographic texts. Although An-sky was not exiled, as his predecessors and colleagues had been, he shared with them the political ideas of populism and the urge to document the multiethnic lives of the empire. His and Bogoraz’s status as Jewish *inorodtsy* made both of them more susceptible to the legal and social inequalities of their own people, Jews, and those of others, including the Russian peasants, who were not aliens. My close readings of the texts of these four writers show that writers-ethnographers embrace several cultures and peoples by decentering the very notion of what constitutes the Russian national character. Under decentering, I imply that the inclusion of the centrifugal forces – the multiethnic and multilingual subjects from the imperial borders - into the literary texts effectively displaces the Russian-speaking protagonists at the center of literary works with the *inorodtsy*. Each of these writers responded differently to the imagined communities of the peoples they encountered.

Literary ethnographic texts are scripted to allow the reader, whether in the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries, to discover the cultural, ethnic, and heteroglossic diversity of the empire that the reader would not have encountered otherwise. Therefore, the question of what constitutes a Russian, a Yakut, a Ukrainian, and a Russian Jew in the late imperial period is inherently fluid. These four writers

present diverse groups of characters that do not conform to only one linguistic or cultural identity; they challenge the very notion of a Russian canon.

This dissertation argues that the treatment of the imperial project by an individual writer depends on his geographical location, the logical sequence of the specific encounter with the individual or collective imperial Other (including Russian peasants), and the political and ethical conclusions that are drawn from these encounters. The writers' studies of the communities they meet illustrates the authors' comparative look at the imperial project vis-à-vis the empirical reality. In this sense, the analytical logic of all these writers relies on the empirical knowledge of closely-examined lived experiences. Unlike the ideal nominal geographer of the empire, these four writers do not arrive at the point of contact to the imperial Other seeking to translate the situation they encounter into the language of the imperial mission.

Without a doubt, these writers acknowledge the multi-confessional, polyglot nature of the Russian Empire, the imperial linguistic space that not only includes the minority languages, such as Yakut and Yiddish, but also diverse dialects of Russian. It is important to note that the majority of the characters depicted by the writers barely speak or understand Russian. Therefore, the literary imaginative representation of these characters depicts them from the point of view of language, not only indicating their own non-Russian native tongue but also showing their problematic relation with the language of the empire.

Dostoevsky documented heteroglossic linguistic diversity in his "Siberian Notebook," where he recorded expressions in Russian dialects, prison jargon, Ukrainian, Yiddish, and some Polish that he later used in the *Notes*. Instead of learning the

languages, Gorianchikov taught Old Church Slavonic to the young and beautiful Muslim Alei so that he could read the Christian Bible. Dostoevsky never learned any of the languages of his fellow convicts, whereas Korolenko was able to learn the Yakut language and converse with the ethnic Russians and local Yakuts. Bogoraz learned the Russian dialect of the Kolyma area, as well as the Chukchi language. An-sky was almost bilingual, fluent in Russian, although his Yiddish was rusty.⁵⁴²

Even though the authors analyzed in this dissertation worked in isolation from each other, their experiences still illustrate the pluralistic structure of imperial culture. The four writers show how stories, sketches, and a play begin to increasingly represent the disenfranchised and ignored groups. Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* briefly depicts the German community of St. Petersburg.⁵⁴³ Turgenev's Russian peasants in *Sketches from a Huntsman's Album* are individualized for the first time. These writers see the next step in the extension of the literary fictive treatment of characters from non-Russian groups into the fictive groups as fully-fledged coequal representatives of their own cultures. Tolstoy's scripting of Cossacks and the Muslim people of the Northern Caucasus was also part of this process in his short novel *The Cossacks*. Dostoevsky's Alei is the first fully developed Tatar character, although still a caricature, as Khadzhi-Murat is the first fully-

⁵⁴² During his ethnographic fieldwork, An-sky reported that he was terrified no one would understand his Yiddish; still he managed to conduct interviews. See *The Worlds of S. An-sky: A Russian Jewish Intellectual at the Turn of the Century*, eds. Gabriella Safran and Steven J. Zipperstein (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); Eugene Avrutin and Harriet L. Murav, "Introduction: Photographing the Jewish Nation," in *Photographing the Jewish Nation: Pictures from S. An-sky's Ethnographic Expeditions*, ed. Eugene Avrutin, Valerii Dymshits, Alexander Ivanov, Alexander Lvov, Harriet Murav, Alla Sokolova (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2009), 3-25.

⁵⁴³ "I khlebnik, nemets akkuratnyi,
V bumazhnom kolpake, ne raz
Uzh otvorial svoi vasisdas."
"And the baker, a diligent German,
In his paper chef's hat, already several times,
opened his vasisdas (peephole)." A.S. Pushkin, "Evgenii Onegin," in *Sochineniia v trekh tomakh*, vol. 3 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1958), 21.

fledged Chechen. Certain works are signposts. Whereas empire failed to integrate these *inorodtsy*, Russian literature was able to bring the experience of aliens and give them agency through fictional representation. They are coequal with Russian analogs. The very fact that heterogeneous groups of peoples start to inhabit the literary space sheds light on the complexity of the representation of the imperial imaginary. The authors give fictive mediated agency to the marginalized characters starting from the literate convict Petrov, a Jew (Isai Fomich) from the *Notes*,⁵⁴⁴ to the Russian Yakutified peasant Makar from “Makar’s Dream” and the Russian Jewish youth in Gomel’ from Bogoraz’s sketches, as well as An-sky’s fateful couple Liia and Khonen from the Pale. In this way, the Russian literary canon came to take the diversity of cultures, religious, and linguistic realities within the empire into its purview. At the same time, while ethnic and even religious hybridity was possible, there was no single, stable, imperial identity that united Russian and non-Russian.

This dissertation followed a conceptual itinerary. Chapter One started in 1850 with Dostoevsky’s prison experience in Omsk, a Siberian city on the border of what is now Kazakhstan. Then, in Chapter Two, I traveled farther east to the territory of Yakutia, where Korolenko explored the culture of the Yakut people, as well as Russian Yakutified settlers and peasants, while he was in exile there. In Chapters Three and Four, I moved west to the Pale of Settlement, where Bogoraz and An-sky were doing ethnographic fieldwork by interviewing Jews. Each chapter captured a snapshot, a fragment, of the lives of the multiethnic empire. Writers presented their ethnographic encounters by centering the plots on the lives of the *inorodtsy*. By moving away from monolithic Russian-speaking characters to the multilingual, these writers were demonstrating

⁵⁴⁴ Dostoevsky was not the first writer to depict Jews; he relied upon Gogolian Jewish stereotypes.

heteroglossic realities: the practices of different categories of imperial subjects. In other words, the writers in question acknowledged the centrifugal forces, as Bakhtin has argued, by decentering the very canon of the Russian texts and showing the hybrid nature of the literary ethnographic genre.

Although the writers generated ethnographic texts in different forms, their texts have several elements in common. The essential characteristics of the genre are the hybrid nature of the style itself, i.e. the combination of literary tropes and ethnographic descriptions, the tendency of the narration to switch from topic to topic and character to character in a manner that is almost kaleidoscopic, and the richness of the multi-cultural realities presented which includes introducing the model Russian reader to the presence of diverse languages, ethnic and religious identities inside a space that reader would consider “Russian.” The four writers use distinct ethnographic tropes to show how one ethnic group differs from another, such as a group of Russian peasants as distinct from convicts, or aliens. These ethnographic tropes and narrative strategies contain a mixture of cultural descriptions of clothing, religious practices, folk expressions, folk beliefs and linguistic markers that often include racial and anthropological descriptions. In other words, ethnographic elements combine culturally specific ethnic depictions with racial discourse. The wide range of fictive techniques and subject matter reflects the size of the task that these writers faced as they investigated the relationship of the imperial imaginary to the empirical ethnic realities on the ground. These writers wrote about the extreme borders of the empire.⁵⁴⁵ All of the texts examined here convey the idea of

⁵⁴⁵ Katya Hokanson, in her book *Writing at Russia's Border*, argues that the formation of Russian national identity in the works of Pushkin, Lermontov, Bestuzhev-Marlinskii, and Tolstoy took place predominantly in the Caucasus, on the southeastern borders of the empire. She states that this national identity was formed on the peripheries, with uninhabited empty space in between, during the period of 1820-1860. I depart from

remoteness and distance, an important theme in Russian literature. For example, in the beginning of *Dead Souls* two Russian peasants converse about the wheel;⁵⁴⁶ or Oblomov's dream, where the inhabitants of the Russian village "Oblomovka" endow Moscow and Petersburg as seats of imperial power and even imbue the provincial capital with semi-mythical representation.⁵⁴⁷ This is precisely the part of the Russian canon that gets deconstructed and gains geographical palpability in the works of the literary ethnographic genre.

Siberia, which previously functioned as a largely mythic space (c.f., Ermak and the works by Decembrists), acquires concreteness in Dostoevsky's and Korolenko's works. They replace cultural imperial myths with closely researched literary texts.

Similar to Siberia, the Pale was imagined as a place inhabited by savages and steeped in poverty. Bogoraz and An-sky situate their texts in specific geographical locations in the Pale with determined and fully developed Russian-Jewish protagonists.

her argument by showing that ethnography allows one to show several cultural and national centers, even though, geographically, these were the margins of the empire. Hokanson limits her analysis to the Caucasus, privileging Russian discourse. I, in turn, show that the national identity, or cultural identification in the late imperial period, is more than simply Russian. Cultural hybridity, the identification with several cultures, is what makes the late imperial ethnographic journey indispensable. *Writing at Russia's Border* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

⁵⁴⁶ "[...] von kakoe koleso! Chto ty dumaesh', doedet to koleso, esli b sluchilos' v Moskvu, ili ne doedet?" – "Doedet," – otvechal drugoi. "A v Kazan'-to, ia dumaiu, ne doedet?" "V Kazan', ne doedet." "Oh, what kind of a wheel it is! What do you think? Would it reach, if it were to happen, Moscow, or not?" "It will reach it," answered the other. "And what about Kazan, I think, it won't reach it?" "Kazan - it won't reach." See Nikolay Vasil'evich Gogol, *Mertvye dushi*, in *Sobranie sochinenii v devyati tomakh*, vol. 5 (Moskva: Russkaia kniga, 1994), 5.

⁵⁴⁷ Oni znali, chto v vos'midesiati verstakh ot nikh byla "guberniia", to est' gubernskii gorod, no redkie ezzhali tuda; potom znali, chto podal'she, tam, Saratov ili Nizhnii; slykhali, chto est' Moskva i Piter, chto za Piterom zhivut frantsuzy ili nemtsy, a dale uzhe nachinal'sia dlia nikh, kak dlia drevnikh, temnyi mir, neizvestnye strany, naselennye chudovishchami, liud'mi o dvukh golovakh, velikanami; tam sledoval mrak – i nakonets vse okanchivalos' toi ryboi, kotoraiia derzhit na zemle zemliu.

They knew that eighty verst from them there was a province (guberniia), i.e. a principal town of the province, but few have visited it. They also knew that further on was Saratov or Nizhnii [Novgorod]; they heard that there is Moscow and Piter, and that outside of Piter there lived French and Germans. But beyond that it was for them as it had been for ancient peoples: obscure world, unknown countries populated by monstrous people with two heads, by giants. After that there was pitch-darkness, and finally everything culminated with a fish which held the earth. Ivan Goncharov. "Son Oblomova," In *Oblomov* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe uchebno-pedagogicheskoe izdatel'stvo ministerstva prosveshcheniia RSFSR, 1959), 83.

In all these texts, we see the imperial imaginary undergo a process of fragmentation. In Dostoevsky's *Notes*, the reader sees the stockade through the eyes of Gorianchikov, a nobleman-convict, who is an outsider among the other convicts. He finds that it is absolutely impossible to classify the prisoners with whom he lives. He fails "to see the universe through the eyes of another," as he constantly privileges his views over the Others. As he rightly states, "reality aspires towards fragmentation," a reflection on the epistemological failure to comprehend and embrace the multi-ethnic subjects of his stockade. Gorianchikov raises important questions that are never resolved in his own writing, or even by the narrator who knows him and publishes his manuscript. Fragmentation remains the salient feature of his perception of the heteroglossic nature of the stockade, which in turn serves as a metaphor for the whole empire. No coherent unifying narrative is viable if the linguistic, social, cultural, and religious barriers that he encounters with the prisoners are so prevailing.

The novel contains a succession of sketches of different criminals, political prisoners, and peasants that Gorianchikov encounters, although he barely establishes a long-term relationship with any of them, and together these individual disparate portraits and episodes illustrate the disjointed reality of that bit of the empire which Gorianchikov encounters inside the prison. Ironically, he is turning into the Other. His relationship with the convict Petrov, the "cantonist and literate" and the representative of the narod, illustrates his failure to have a dialogue, in a Bakhtinian sense, with the people. Similar to the Muslim Alei, he continues his *mission civilisatrice* with Petrov. Petrov, described as a "literate," is nothing more than a hoax. He needs Gorianchikov's knowledge to clarify what he heard about Napoleon III and the antipodes. These two themes are not

coincidental. Similar to Gorianchikov, Petrov also tried to make sense of human diversity by, for example, verifying who were antipodes and establishing the connection between Napoleon III and Napoleon I. Gorianchikov and Petrov mirror each other in their attempts to deal with the fragmentation of reality, though they differ in their methodologies. The reader learns that Gorianchikov's answers only confuse Petrov. He is startled when he sees him and, ultimately, avoids him in the end. In his relationship with the only Jewish character, Isai Fomich, Gorianchikov is not much different. He sees him through the Gogolian Jewish character Yankel' and fails to recognize him as an individual. Whether it is Gorianchikov's noble class or his general failure to embrace imperial hybridity, and its heteroglossic linguistic nature, that separates him from the convicts is a question that never gets resolved. Despite Gorianchikov's shortcomings, the ethnographic dimension of the text makes the *inorodtsy* palpable characters. From the stockade, Gorianchikov overlooks the Irtysh River and sees the Kirghiz steppe (in fact, Kazakh). He perceives the space as uninhabited, imbued with romantic tropes as a wild and enticing space. However, he never manages to cross the steppe, and dies uneventfully as a teacher in a provincial town that goes unnamed in the *Notes*, though we know is Omsk. The traumatic and forced imprisonment with the peoples of the empire is what gives him his own voice in the novel and a "resurrection" from the "House of the Dead." What happens to him after he leaves the stockade is absent from the novel because, I argue, he no longer has his alien interlocutors and companions to communicate/miscommunicate with him. Therefore, Gorianchikov as a character is made possible by the presence of non-Russian characters around him.

Dostoevsky endorsed the imperial mission of spreading Russian cultural influence by training local elites. When after his imprisonment, he met the young and educated Kirghiz ethnographer Valikhanov, he instructed him “to be useful to his motherland” by writing about his own Kirghiz people. Korolenko, Bogoraz, and An-sky move away from Dostoevsky’s partial acceptance of the imperial imaginary, in that they neither imposed the Russian language as the language of the empire, nor did they instruct the aliens to write about their ethnic experiences.

Although Korolenko echoes some of Dostoevsky’s themes, he also noticeably departs from him. His ethical position is more all-inclusive towards the aliens. When, for instance, he presents Russians and Jews living in the Pale in his short stories, he equally gives them voice. In Dostoevsky’s novel, we see a certain element of cultural inertia in the depiction of non-Russian characters. Gorianchikov’s attitude and understanding carry a great deal of imperial colonial baggage, even though he was able to relate to them not as imperial abstraction, but as fellow human beings. In his description of Jews, Korolenko implicitly rejects established Russian stereotypes by playfully showing the absurdities of anti-Semitic topoi. He also gives his Jewish characters agency. In contrast to the nobleman Gorianchikov, his peasant Makar adopts the language and lifestyle of the Yakut people with whom he inhabits the same place. Gorianchikov and Makar are located more than three and a half thousand miles apart from each other. This fact shows that time and space could be experienced in completely different ways in different loci of Siberia. The difference in presenting the imperial imaginary is contingent upon the geographical location and the social class of the characters.

Similar to Bogoraz and An-sky, Korolenko's writing was informed by his biographical experience of growing up in the Pale, in the Volhynia area, and his exile in the western part of Siberia. Although, what sets these writers apart is how each of them employed heteroglossia, the inclusion of different voices and narrative strategies of representing the Others, or in Proust's words "see[ing] the universe through the eyes of another." In Korolenko's stories, the narrator situates two linguistically and culturally distinct groups of *inorodtsy* side by side with their Russian neighbors. Russians and Yakuts in Yakutiia, and Russians and Jews in the Pale coexist by creating new hybrid identities that point to the symbiosis of cultures without diminishing each other's agency. This is a major departure from Dostoevsky's linguistically and culturally Russo-centric protagonist Gorianchikov. Although Jews and the Yakut people geographically occupy the borders of the empire, their experiences are similar in that their identities are in flux; sometimes they reject colonial power, and sometimes they appropriate the culture of the empire. In Yakutiia, the Russian peasant, Makar, loses his status as a "Kulturträger," and assimilates to the culture and language of Yakuts, the *inorodtsy*. In the Pale, Russian Jews and their Christian Ukrainian neighbors borrow from each other's folklore and create tales that contain Jewish cultural references along with the Ukrainian fairy-tale tropes as in "The Day of Atonement. Yom Kippur." The anti-Semitic topoi are part of this tale because these are the everyday experiences of Jews both in and outside the Pale. This anti-Semitic topoi pervades the empire, reaching as far as the prison where Isai Fomich, the only Jew in the stockade, has to endure verbal abuse and mockery by the prisoners before they include him into their realm. In contrast to Dostoevsky, Korolenko's narrator does something unprecedented in this Ukrainian tale. Instead of

punishing the Jewish tavern owner Yankel', the Jewish devil Khapun, punishes a Russian moneylender. The didactic emphasis of the tale is very powerful. Korolenko defends Jews against anti-Semitism, whereas Dostoevsky's protagonist takes a neutral position during the scene when Isai Fomich is laughed at. In his autobiographical novel *The History of My Contemporary*, Korolenko gives a very similar account to what he presented in "The Day of Atonement. Yom Kippur." In Viatka, on the way to Yakutia, Korolenko meets a Russian shoemaker who confesses that he would rather go to a local kike (*zhid*) settler to borrow money than to a Russian because, as he explains, "ours [Russians] flay" ("nashi derut shkuru")⁵⁴⁸. The tale illustrates that once this particular Russian peasant gets into the profession of moneylending, he exploits his Russian fellows more than the Jewish Yankel'. With this tale, Korolenko points out that anti-Semitic hostility is a part of the Ukrainian folklore and, as a writer, he was ethically compelled to oppose and fight against it with his literary ethnographic and journalistic works. This ethical position urged him to defend the Udmurt people during the Multan Case (1892-1896) and the Jew Menakhem Beilis ("The Beilis Trial," 1911-1913) against the false ritual murder accusations. He wrote ethnographic journalistic essays that aimed to subvert the myth about ritual murder. His role was vital in both cases. As a result of his journalistic work and political engagement, the Udmurt case and the Beilis trial received significant attention in the local and international press.⁵⁴⁹

Bogoraz and Shternberg called Korolenko their teacher because he preceded them in the exilic experience and established a model for their fictional and ethnographic

⁵⁴⁸ Vladimir Korolenko's autobiography *History of My Contemporary* (Istoriia moego sovremennika) (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1954), 6: 282.

⁵⁴⁹ For the discussion of the importance of press during the Beilis trial, see recent book by Robert Weinberg, *Blood Libel In Late Imperial Russia: The Ritual Murder Trial of Mendel Beilis*, Indiana-Michigan series in Russian and East European Studies (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014).

writing.⁵⁵⁰ From his exile in Kolymsk, Bogoraz sent to the journal *Russian Wealth*, whose editor was Korolenko, his first short story about a Chukchi reindeer herder, “Crooked-Legged” (“Krivonogii,” 1899). Korolenko published it; as a result, Bogoraz called him his “godfather” (“krestnym ottsom”).⁵⁵¹ He believed that Korolenko more than anyone else would understand it. Bogoraz and Shternberg read “Makar’s Dream” and praised it. Bogoraz saw in it the confluence of fictional and ethnographic elements; he pointed out that Korolenko possessed the “ethnographic hunch” (“etnograficheskoe chut’e”), it indicates that he had an eye for the cultural material.⁵⁵² He called him a “hybrid” (“smeshanny”) writer because of his fictional and journalistic works. He extends this term of hybrid writers (pisateliami smeshannoi porody) to his own works and the works of other writers in exile, precisely because of the journalistic and public work of their ethical positions speaking on behalf of and defending the aliens. As he put it, “[t]he writer of fiction barely criticizes. He mirrors, he transforms life.” (“Belletrist ved’ sovsem ne kritikuet. On otrazhaet, on preobrazhaet zhizn”).⁵⁵⁴ Writers in Siberian exile were confronted with “cold, dead life” that could not be described by employing the fictional tropes; they did not want to “transform” it, but rather struggled to “unmask it and [were undergoing] internal fighting with [that life]” (“my oblichali ee i vnutrenno borolis’ s neiu”).⁵⁵⁵ Bogoraz points out that Korolenko was the first to represent in fiction “the horrible conditions of the life that resembled Dante’s lowest circle of hell.”⁵⁵⁶ This

⁵⁵⁰ Tan, “V.G. Korolenko i sibirskaiia shkola pisatelei,” in *Korolenko. Peterburgskii sbornik*, ed. A.B. Petrishchev (Peterburg: Mysl’, 1922), 31, 38.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, 31.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

metaphor of Siberian life as Dante's hell is also prevalent in Dostoevsky's *Notes*, which preceded Korolenko's works and informed his as well as Bogoraz's poetics.

In 1903, Korolenko was the first Russian writer to go to Kishinev right after the pogrom to report about the atrocities. During the Gomel' pogrom of the same year, he was asked by the Jewish lawyers to go there and write an ethnographic essay about it. Because of health concerns he could not go, but he encouraged his colleague Bogoraz to write about it. Prior to the Gomel' trip, Bogoraz's exile to Kolymsk, his collaboration with Boas during the Jesup Expedition and his work in New York at the American Museum of Natural History prepared him for his ethnographic journalistic fieldwork on the pogrom. Bogoraz went to Gomel', and conducted interviews with Jews and Russians, including the defendants, thugs, and a Russian judge. Based on his interviews, he wrote "Silhouettes from Gomel': Sketches" that were similar to Korolenko's influential ethnographic journalistic essays on the Multan Case, Kishinev pogrom, and the Beilis Trial, which shed light on the legal rights of *inorodtsy*. During the pogrom, Gomel' Jews did not passively endure physical beatings, as was the case during the Kishinev pogrom; rather, they fought back against the Russian thugs. It was the first account of Jewish self-defense during a pogrom. Here, Bogoraz gives for the first time a very nuanced account of Russians and Jews living side by side, by presenting stories where during the pogrom the Russian neighbor was saving a Jew, and vice versa. For Bogoraz, a pogrom is not always a black and white story - the victim becomes perpetrator, and the perpetrator becomes the savior. Similar to Dostoevsky's *Notes*, the sketches give a very fragmented account of Russian and Jewish characters. Bogoraz presents both sides of the pogrom - the anti-Semitic Russian thugs and the judge Kotliarevskii; Jewish youth; a thief, Gaiskii,

a Jewish teenager, who was fighting with the Russian soldier, Khana Kats; a state rabbi, Frumson; and many other heteroglossic voices. The Jewish characters are raised in religious families, embracing Russian culture as well. They are linguistically bilingual; they speak Russian and Yiddish. Still, their legal status prevents them from being a part of the empire they are confined to live in. Bogoraz preserves the characters' *ideolects* and views, as if giving a photographic snapshot of the provincial town. The reader also encounters a different notion of *narod* - violent and hateful Russian thugs that destroy Jewish houses, and viciously attack Jews of both genders and all ages. This is not the *narod* that the populists Korolenko, Bogoraz, and An-sky envisioned to enlighten and liberate from autocratic exploitation. The sketches also give voice to women, young and old, the voices that are absent in Dostoevsky and Korolenko. The voice of the seventeen-year-old Khana Kats, called in the sketches the Jewish Jeanne D'Arc because of her appeals to the Jews to fight against the Russian soldiers, gives a heroic picture of a Jewish girl. Here, Bogoraz challenges the mute depiction of female characters in Dostoevsky's and Korolenko's works by showing Kats's determination and self-consciousness during the pogrom.

Bogoraz stated that the main character among the Gomel' silhouettes was the judge Kotliarevskii, who used racial discourse to argue that Jews are savages and therefore are violent. Bogoraz's background in anthropology enabled him to dispute the judge's view in his sketches, stating that his "scientific" arguments were outdated. When the "Silhouettes from Gomel'" were published in the newspaper *Russian News (Russkie Vedomosti)*, Kotliarevskii wanted Bogoraz to remove his statements from the press. Bogoraz's goal was achieved; he wanted to show the biased attitude of "justice" towards

the Jews. As a result of Bogoraz's public and journalistic engagement with the Gomel' trial, and the publication of his sketches, the Jews were acquitted, or received very short sentences. Bogoraz continued to work on Jewish ethnography throughout his career. Along with Shternberg, he was among the ethnographers who consulted An-sky on his ethnographic program *Der mentsch*.

Although An-sky's experience was different from that of Dostoevsky, Korolenko, and Bogoraz, because he was never exiled to Siberia, he still shares with them the ideas of populism, of "going to the people," of politically engaging peasants and Jews, as well as collecting ethnographic material on different peoples, on documenting his experiences in fictional and journalistic forms. As with Korolenko and Bogoraz, his writing also belongs to the hybrid genre. He shared with them a very strong ethical position to defend Jews against alleged blood libel accusations; he also spoke on behalf of Russian workers and peasants. He was a bilingual writer and an alien who was not allowed to reside in the capital without permission. An-sky turned to conduct encyclopedic ethnographic fieldwork in the Pale just before World War I. He, along with other ethnographers, wrote a questionnaire with 2,086 questions that covered the life cycles of Jews from conception through life after the death. Because of the start of World War I, he never was able to collect the answers to them. During his ethnographic trip to the Volhynia area, in the Pale, he heard a story about the young girl who was about to be married off against her will. He was so moved by her reaction to it that he immortalized the story in the play he wrote in Russian *The Dybbuk, or Between Two Worlds* that was staged in Hebrew in Moscow under Evgenii Vakhtangov's direction in 1922. The play exists in three languages, in the original Russian (although a censored version), in a Hebrew translation

by Bialik, and, finally in a Yiddish translation by An-sky himself. I situate the play into modernist Silver Age poetics, showing that the trope of possession, the dybbuk, the notion of the supernatural, were a part of it. I read the questionnaire and the play side by side. Since there are no answers to the questionnaire, I extract them from his play. The play is saturated with Hasidic ethnographic material, such as the upbringing of a girl, wedding customs, marriage arrangements, stories about possession by the dybbuk, and tales about the founder of Hasidism, the mystical movement, Baal Shem Tov. The play gives voice and agency to two main protagonists, a girl Liia and her beloved Khonen that yearn to be together. From the play, the reader learns that girls were not expected attend the synagogue as often as men, although Liia breaks the custom by attending it with her nanny. Liia, who resembles Bogoraz's protagonist Khana Kats in her self-determination, challenges the passive behavior of women by rebelling against the Hasidic custom and rejecting the wealthy groom by insisting on being together with Khonen. She succeeds by becoming possessed by the spirit of Khonen, the dybbuk, that enters her body and ultimately causes her death. She becomes reunited with him in the other world. An-sky succeeded in the Proustian notion of "possessing other eyes" in his sympathetic and empathetic depiction of the young couple, whose eyes and spirits he managed to possess and, ironically, he was possessed himself by a restless spirit and personal misfortunes, as Safran has argued. An-sky's goal was to collect and preserve Jewish customs and tales by incorporating them into literary form and educating secular Jews, as well as Russian readers, about his own culture. The play with its trope of dybbukian possession becomes immortal; it is widely employed in contemporary literature and films.

Ethnographic material has long been used in the literary construction of national literatures. These national literatures prove to be constructions because the employment of knowledge about diverse cultures by its very nature stresses the heterogeneous nature, as well as the hybridity, of national cultures. Benedict Anderson's idea that a nation is an imagined community that is sovereign and limited is valid to some extent in the Russian context.⁵⁵⁷ It is imagined because people don't personally interact with all members of the nation. Therefore, it is an imagined relation to the nation. His statement has been criticized because in addition to the imaginary relation to the nation, one also has a real nation of real people, even though one does not know or relate to all of them. While writing the *Notes*, Dostoevsky was informed of the joyful news of his rehabilitation from his status as a soldier. He supported Alexander II and his idea of abolishing serfdom. His "imagined community" consisted of Russians, or those *inorodtsy* who assimilated to Russian culture or spoke Russian, like young Alei. Korolenko's, Bogoraz's, and An-sky's "imagined community" was all-inclusive. It unites *inorodtsy* with the Russians, and vice versa.

The four authors widely employ different forms of texts -- including the novel, short stories, journalistic essays, and the play -- to display ethnographic and fictional elements. The incorporation of ethnographic material on the lives of *inorodtsy* and the Russian peasants demonstrates the variation in which writers manage, or fail, to "possess other eyes." The ethnographic literary genre allows writers to uncover the linguistic heteroglossic nature, the cultural, religious and multiethnic aspect of the empire that would not have been presented otherwise. This is precisely the thrust of the works

⁵⁵⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006).

contained within the genre of literary ethnography. This genre extended the established practice of empowerment in Russian literature to new categories of characters, unexplored ethnicities, and geographical locations. The writers I analyze centered their works around the lives of imperial Others. They aimed to give them a voice, through Proustian observation of “see[ing] the universe through the eyes of another, of a hundred others.” In addition, literary ethnographers Dostoevsky, Korolenko, Bogoraz, and An-sky located the relationships of power between articulators and practitioners of the imperial discourse and those ethnicities and religious communities who are scripted as the *inorodtsy*, and as such subject to the civilizing and Russifying priorities of the empire. Also, they show that the imperial discourse of power breaks down and loses its ability to explain and control. Literary ethnography includes imperial discourse and the description of religious minorities and ethnic groups that are *othered*, including Russian peasants who were not a minority but a majority group. The term literary ethnography concretizes an otherwise broadly ethnographic component that most if not all works of fiction maybe be said to share.

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