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**Remizov's *Sunwise* and
Leimonarium: Folklore
in Modernist Prose**

In 1907 Remizov published two books that marked the beginning of a lifelong involvement with folklore: *Sunwise* (*Posolon'*) and *Leimonarium* (*Limonar*).¹ A few years later he expanded both of these books and they became volumes six and seven of his *Works* (*Sochineniia*), published in 1911 and 1912 respectively. These four books serve as a good focus for discussing Remizov's involvement with folklore because they illustrate many aspects of this involvement as well as Remizov's evolving use of folklore between the years 1906 and 1912. Folklore played an enormous role in Remizov's creative life. It permeates the prose of these four books from individual stylistic components on the lexical, morphological, and syntactic levels to imagery and symbolism, from sources of character to entire narrative plots.

Background

The clearest statement we have from Remizov himself on his procedure for using folklore in literature is found in a letter to the editors of the *Russian Gazette* in 1909.² In his letter, Remizov divides folklore into two large categories—myth and folk tales. In working with folkloric material, he says, he has two different aims in mind. The first is “to recreate popular [*narodnyi*] myth, fragments of which I would recognize in rituals, games, *koliadki*, superstitions, omens,

proverbs, riddles, charms, and apocrypha."³

This first aim resulted in the books *Sunwise* and *Leimonarium*. At times what Remizov sees as a fragment of popular myth is only a name or a folk custom. He proceeds by collating various facts about this name or custom, and then by comparing these facts to similar ones from other peoples, "in order, finally, from the senseless and puzzling in the name or custom, to penetrate into its life and soul, which should be depicted."⁴

Remizov does not really define "myth." Instead he gives us a list of phenomena which supposedly had evolved from myth. It is clear, though, that Remizov viewed myth as a phenomenon of the past which had left traces in the present. This view of myth, ultimately traceable to the English scholar Tyler, came to be labeled the "survival theory." According to this theory, "games, folk dances, and popular rhymes were presumed to be degenerate derivatives of original myths or even earlier rituals."⁵ But Remizov was to invert Tyler's hierarchy of values. Tyler approved of the ultimate demise of these useless cultural items as human society continued to march from savagery to civilization. Remizov, on the contrary, viewed this march of "progress" as a march toward destruction. He valued the vestiges of myth as cultural items reflecting prelogical human perception. Rather than looking with approval at its ultimate demise, Remizov wished to revive this folk culture and its revitalizing power.⁶

Remizov's view of myth was reinforced by his reading. In the notes to *Leimonarium* and volumes 6 and 7 of his *Works*, two names keep reappearing—A. N. Afanasiev (1826-1871) and A. N. Veselovsky (1838-1906). In various publications, especially in *The Poetic Views of the Slavs on Nature* (1865-1869), Afanasiev saw remnants of ancient myth in the contemporary beliefs, practices, and language of the folk. It was from Afanasiev that Remizov got the idea that religious verse and apocrypha derive from myth.⁷

It was primarily through the work of Veselovsky that Remizov became acquainted with Tyler's theory of survivals and the comparative method in folk-literary research. Veselovsky used the very comparative approach that Remizov outlines in his letter. It was also through Veselovsky that Remizov was exposed to some of the massive materials compiled by Frazer.⁸ Remizov most likely was attracted to the work of Afanasiev and Veselovsky and to the latter in particular, because of its suggestiveness. Their interpretations of folkloric symbolism must have prompted his imagination with its rich possibilities. Remizov did not necessarily adopt their interpretations, especially those of the "solar mythologist" Afanasiev. It was more the myriad possibilities for interpretation that these two scholars introduced him to.

In the same letter, Remizov explains that his second aim applies to folk narratives that are intact: he wants to render this material in an artistic retelling. He claimed to proceed by reading extant variants of the same tale, and, having chosen one, amplifying it "in order to render the folk tale

in its conceivably ideal form."⁹ What the artist develops, declares Remizov, and what he leaves untouched, reveals his cleverness and mastery. Remizov's notion of an "ideal form" is an aesthetic one, and betrays an orientation toward written literature. As we shall see, to achieve this "ideal form" Remizov introduced changes in the language, structure, and characterization of the folk model.

Remizov's stated aims in dealing with folklore lead to the question of how he viewed the function of literature in general, and of folk literature in particular. Remizov believed that art enables man to cope with life through, among other things, the exercise of his imagination. This "message" is illustrated in a typically Remizovian way in a piece he contributed to the volume *Where Are We Headed?* of 1910.¹⁰ It is much more typical than the letter to the editors of the *Russian Gazette* because it contains a less direct answer to the question addressed. In fact, it is no answer at all but a "parable" (*pritcha*). He cannot, he says, reason about the matter. He illustrates this point with the following tale about Kot Kotofei,¹¹ one of his characters in *Sunwise*. We follow Kot as he makes a trip to a godforsaken northern Russian town, where he gets stuck, so that he has to winter there. The town is described briefly but bleakly. Kot's landlady, Marya Tikhonovna, is as uninspiring as the town. One wonders how people can possibly live there. As the winter comes, and wears on, Kot requests his landlady to tell some folk tales. After the formulaic third such request, she consents, and the result is the following transformation of perception:

The bedbug is biting you, the flea takes a nip or two, all over the walls cockroaches are swarming—you feel nothing, you hear nothing: you're flying on a magic carpet beneath the very clouds to fetch the water of life and of death. Here's the water of life for you, and of death, too, and it's not Marya Tikhonovna, it's Vasilisa the Wise standing there, the princess is standing there and looking at Kot.¹²

This "parable" is a unique mixture of realistic detail, satirically rendered, and the world of the folk tale. Remizov implies that the answer to the question of Russia's problems will not be found through reasoned discourse or education but through the accommodation with reality made possible through the workings of the human imagination as expressed in lore and literature.

Sunwise

It is the imaginative workings of the peasant's and child's mind that dominate *Sunwise*. It sings a paean to man's childhood and to children. This dual theme is introduced at the very beginning with its dual dedications to Vyacheslav Ivanov and Natasha, Remizov's young daughter. Perhaps Remizov's favorite of his own works, he saw it published in three different editions during his own lifetime.¹³

The first edition was written between 1900 and 1907, but mostly in 1906, that is, when Remizov was already settled in St. Petersburg. When preparing a second edition for his eight-volume *Works* published in 1911, Remizov added a whole new section entitled "To the Deep Blue Sea" ("K moriu-okeanu") to the first section of "Sunwise." Although the two editions of this book vary in volume, contents, and order of presentation, these differences do not alter its nature. This is because of the kind of structure that *Sunwise* has: any individual part is not needed to make the whole book. It can be included or excluded. What holds the book together is a controlling point of view—the world as seen through the eyes of the primitive and the child. In this world there are no abstractions: a fear, a joy, a wish—all become concretized into three-dimensional creatures and things. This world is totally animated; Remizov's primary means for conveying this animism is personification.

Sunwise, as the name indicates, roughly follows the sun through the seasons from spring to winter. The pieces selected for each section generally have a connection with the specific season. Most of the pieces are based on what Remizov considered to be vestiges of ancient myths: children's games or toys, holiday celebrations, folk beliefs, charms, counting rhymes, words, and expressions. Remizov freely blends data from various regions of Russia, from Slavic areas outside of Russia, and even from non-Slavic peoples. He makes little attempt to distinguish present from past practices. The language, too, reflects a blend of different regions, historical periods, the language of children, and Remizov's colloquially oriented rhythmic prose.¹⁴ Remizov is not attempting to depict a specific locale at a specific period in its history.

The *Sunwise* pieces combine lyrical nature descriptions, full of personification, with extant "vestiges" of myths and with descriptions of pagan Slavic ritualistic practices and images from folk belief, folk tales, charms, sayings, and popular Christian mythology. The main actors in these pieces are children, pagan Slavs, supernatural creatures, folk-tale characters, and animate nature. Supernatural figures are the presumed sources of toys that come to life. They are also frequently the players in a game which may revert to the presumed original ritual.

The narrative in most of these pieces is quite minimal: a monk comes and hands out the first budding branches ("The Little Monk"); some widows perform the ritual eating and burial of a fertile hen ("The Three-Brood Hen"); during the passage of time from St. John's eve to the following dawn, many evil spirits appear and magic events occur ("St. John Fires"). The spare narrative is filled out through the workings of analogy between the peasant's syncretic world view and the child's.¹⁵ Some pieces are actually prose poems, lacking any semblance of story, and consisting almost wholly of pure lyricism and description ("To Natasha," "At the Fox's Ball," "Kalechina-Malechina," "Indian Summer," "Koro-chun"). Throughout, the inanimate world is animated and nature is

personified. It is the egocentric animistic world of the peasant primitive and of the child in which everything is perceived in terms of human life. There are exceptions to these generalizations, of course, as there always are in Remizov. A recognizable narrative structure turns up in such original stories as "The Snake Kite" ("Zmei"), "The Hare Ivanych," and "Kot Kotofeich." Many of the pieces, both narrative and non-narrative, have an envelope (*kol'tsevoi*) structure: the final lines return to the opening ones. Throughout, Remizov uses a narrator who is best described as naive. In most of the pieces, the naive presentation is not undercut by irony. There are exceptions here, too, of course. The story "The Snake Kite" consists of a play-off between the naive and ironic points of view, represented by the grandmother and the child Petka.

One of the most prominent features of the *Sunwise* pieces is their theatricality. It derives in part from the nature of folklore itself. There is a definite dramatic performer-audience relationship in all "live" folklore, from the less obviously dramatic folk tale, to ritual and non-ritual play, and from the folk wedding ceremony to the more obvious folk drama proper and puppet theater.¹⁶ At times Remizov emphasized the dramatic quality of the *Sunwise* pieces by including in his notes specific instructions for reading certain passages aloud.

Sunwise begins in the spring. The pieces gathered together in this section consist primarily of descriptions of children's games. They are structured on an analogy between a child's game and a ritual. The course of the game becomes the basis of the plot. A player in the game, usually the one who is "it," becomes the main character. Indeed, play itself can be seen as a basic paradigm for much of Remizov's art. Play is a voluntary source of joy and amusement, carefully isolated from the rest of life. A game has only intrinsic meaning, proceeds under its own rules or by the power of "make-believe," a kind of free unreality. Remizov seems to be saying here that the "spirit of play is essential to culture," while "games and toys are historically the residues of culture."¹⁷

In this spring section, an example of a children's game with an origin in Eastern Slavic ritual is "Kostroma." Remizov's source is Anichkov. Assuming that the figure of Kostroma symbolized the seed, Anichkov viewed the "burial" of Kostroma during the game as an echo of a magic ritual which guaranteed the future harvest.¹⁸ He saw in this game (under Veselovsky's influence) a vestige of a cult of the dying and reborn god, discussed at length by Frazer in *The Golden Bough*.¹⁹

The game did retain vestiges of a vernal rite carried out between Trinity Day (fifty days after Easter) and St. Peter's Day (June 29), and therefore Remizov included it in the spring section. By Remizov's time the game had evolved quite a bit from its ritual origin. Usually the game was played by girls only. One of them depicted Kostroma, who would sit or lie in the center of a circle. Kostroma answered a series of questions put to her by the other players about her daily activities. The final questions and

answers revolved around her health—she would fall ill and die. Then the other players, singing lamentations, carried her off. Kostroma would get away, and a game of catch ensued.

Whatever the various scholarly interpretations are, for Remizov Kostroma was a symbol of regeneration which comes with the warmth of spring. So he frames his piece with the refrain in rhythmic prose: "Teplyn' to, teplyn', blagodat' odna!"²⁰ Remizov depicts Kostroma as an animal harbinger of spring. This description is a Remizovian invention—perhaps suggested by a child—for Kostroma is never depicted as an animal in game or ritual.²¹ With Kostroma's rebirth, spring comes to nature and Remizov describes it. He adds other elements of what he considered the folk world view, e.g., the syncretic mixture of pagan and Christian elements in folk belief. For example, St. George (*Egorii*) appears in "Kostroma" because his name day comes in the spring, on April 23. For the Russian peasant, St. George was the protector of cattle. On this day the cattle would be put out in the field to graze for the first time. St. George, like Kostroma, symbolizes the renewal that comes with spring.

Remizov's slight narrative is structured around rhythmic refrains. There is the thematic refrain, already quoted. The two others include the anapestic lines: "Pomerla, Kostroma, pomerla," and "Ozhila, Kostroma, ozhila,"²² as though, through the use of typographically isolated rhythmic lines, Remizov wanted to emphasize the most important dynamic events of the piece.

In his 1909 article Remizov stated that his first aim in working with folklore was to reconstruct ancient myths, and his second aim was to find an ideal form for folk tales. The 1907 edition of *Sunwise* contains only one example of this second aim, indicating that at this point in his career, the potential for myth-creation interested Remizov more. Remizov's source for this folk tale, "The Hare Ivanych," was oral: he heard the tale in Solvychegodsk.²³ "The Hare Ivanych" manifests some of the typical hallmarks of the fairy tale such as retardation through the repetition of motifs. Not only does the repetition of each sister's experience retard the narrative, it also serves to emphasize, by the time the third sister's turn comes, the great obstacles she is going to have to overcome. Here we also have the typical fairy-tale pattern of two attempts and two failures at overcoming an opponent and a third successful try, often by the youngest of three siblings.²⁴

Remizov's title is significant: he is not extending his sympathy to the captive sisters, but to their animal helper, the hare. The latter is quite taken with the third sister, and therefore willingly helps her, only to lose her company forever. Through the figure of the hapless hare, Remizov adds some melancholy lyrical moments. As he commonly does in his reworkings of all types of tales, Remizov individualizes his characters by the addition of psychological motivation: the bear is also more taken with the third sister than with the previous two, and is therefore put a little off guard, enabling Masha to escape.

When Remizov expanded *Sunwise* into volume 6 of his *Works*, he added new pieces to the original scheme and grouped them under the heading "Sunwise." He coupled this expanded "Sunwise" with an entirely new section, "To the Deep Blue Sea." Among the new pieces added to the book we find a tendency toward a more traditional narrative structure. This is true of "The Pilgrimage" and "The Little Bear," both original stories told from a child's point of view. It is also true of "The Fingers," based on a South Slavic etiological legend, and "A Tiny Wrinkle" ("Morshchinka"), a retelling of an animal tale that Remizov heard. A further notable addition which appears only in the 1911 edition of this book is "Plaint," a bride-to-be's wedding lament based entirely on a Zyrian model. It is the only piece in the book not partly based on Slavic materials. It indicates an early interest on Remizov's part not only in non-Slavic, but rather exotic folklore. Remizov placed his "Plaint," a prose poem with an envelope structure, in the autumn section of "Sunwise," and followed it with "The Three-Brood Hen" and "Dark Night" (Noch' temnaia), all three pieces touching on marriage.

We find "The Fingers" in the winter section of the newly expanded "Sunwise." Remizov could have placed it anywhere in the book since it is not tagged to a specific season. It is entirely possible that he placed it here to ensure that the winter section, like the other three seasons, also contained seven pieces.

Remizov's source, a South Slavic etiological or explanatory legend, was related to the linguist Baudouin de Courtenay by an old man in a short, skeletal form, containing only seven sentences. Baudouin de Courtenay published it in Russian translation. Remizov has amplified this translated text so that his work is three times the length of the model.²⁵ His amplifications include: (1) the typical fairy-tale opening of "Once upon a time . . ." ("Zhili-byli"); (2) a longer description of the fingers; (3) words of address when the fingers speak to one another; (4) the type of food they eat; (5) the arrival of their mother; (6) a description of the fingers asleep; (7) additional motivation for the fingers' behavior. All this amplification is in keeping with the basic metaphor of the model—the fingers are personified and given a mother. But the created narrator's amplifications and *skaz* style add a humorous tone to the story, as well as ironic distance from the author, that is absent in the source material. The original image of the human hand with its small tattletale finger becomes a universal symbol of human nature—Remizov reminds us that we all have pinkies, that is, all human beings have weaknesses in their character that are likely to cause trouble for them. In the original legend, Remizov saw a partially developed symbol and developed it into a full-scale commentary on what he saw as inherent in human nature.

In going from the oral performance to the written text, Baudouin de Courtenay already had recourse not only to the format used in playwriting,

but also parenthetical comments as a substitute for the visual and aural effects of the oral performance. Remizov made further additions which compensate for the loss of the human voice (its intonation, pitch, loudness, accent, etc.), gesture, and mime.

The new section, "To the Deep Blue Sea," has a plot framework—a journey to the sea undertaken by Alalei and Leila—that tenuously connects its various episodes, which, like the pieces in "Sunwise" were written at different times. All the works in "To the Deep Blue Sea" date from a later period than those in the "Sunwise" section: most were written in the years 1907-8. Like the new additions to "Sunwise," this new section tends toward a greater use of narrative. Most of the folkloric material still falls in the area of folk belief.

Alalei tells Leila of "The Penduline Tit" ("Remez—pervaia ptashka"), about which Remizov learned partly from Potebnia's discussion of a ritual song (*koliadka*) concerning this bird,²⁶ and partly from the entry in Dal's dialect dictionary. As in many of the pieces in "Sunwise" and "To the Deep Blue Sea," the folkloric materials in this work do not form the basis of a plot dynamics. The plot here is minimal—Alalei and Leila find a place to spend the night. The folkloric material serves thematic purposes: the primitive's and child's apprehension of the world. This view, transmitted by Alalei and Leila, is represented by various folk beliefs about the penduline tit. Leila displays the wide-eyed wonder of the child. Again the repetition of certain phrases or leitmotifs formally holds the piece together. The opening lines: "A strange forest. And nighttime too," become the closing "It's scary in the forest. Night keeps getting closer, comes nearer now." Leila's line, "The stars are so large," is amplified and repeated by the narrator ("And the stars, the stars are so large").

Also in "To the Deep Blue Sea" is "The Vampire," based on a local belief legend. Remizov's source was a scholarly ethnographic study about the belief in vampires in Russian Galicia. The ethnographer included several local legends about vampires and transcribed them in the local dialect. To create his ideal form in this case (in contrast to "The Hare Ivanych" or "The Fingers"), Remizov completely transformed the model. He treated the legend as a total fiction: he provided it with an atmospheric winter setting; the ordinary folk of the model become a fairy-tale prince and princess who live in never-never land. Although Remizov follows the plotline of the model very closely, he dramatizes it by the greater use of dialog. He also individualizes his characters by the addition of psychological detail. As in so many of the works in this book, "The Vampire" comes to a close by returning to the beginning, here—the winter setting.

In our discussion of "The Fingers" we mentioned that it was based on an etiological or explanatory legend. Since the Russians have few such legends²⁷ and Remizov was quite fond of them—they constitute the folk's explanations for natural phenomena—he had to use models from non-

Russian sources. This is true of "The Fingers."²⁸ "A Dog's Lot" ("Sobach'ia dolia") which Remizov included in "To the Deep Blue Sea" has Russian and Ukrainian sources from Afanasiev's *Russian Folk Legends*. "A Dog's Lot" is an etiological tale that attempts to explain why rye has the form it has today—a long stalk with a tiny ear.

Incorporating this work into "To the Deep Blue Sea" Remizov provided the model with a narrative frame. A certain Belun is playing host to Alalei and Leila. He has a dog named Belka, and it is through the dog motif that the tale is introduced. " 'We're eating Belka's lot,' the old man said once, 'a man has a dog's lot.' " There follows the explanation of what he means by this statement. Once there was abundance and rye had only an ear, no stalk. Then abundance came to an end and the appearance of rye changed too. Only because the dogs (or Remizov's Belka) begged the Lord to leave an ear of rye for them do we have this grain at all. So today, man has a dog's lot, i.e., a small ear of rye. No doubt this story, like "The Fingers," appealed to Remizov because of its potential symbolism. It accorded with his view of the human condition, a condition no better than a dog's lot.

Although Remizov provided "To the Deep Blue Sea" with a plot framework, it was a loose one, and allowed for the inclusion of all sorts of works, many of them with little story at all, such as "The Penduline Tit," and others completely storyless. An interesting example of the latter is "The Begetter" ("Rozhanitsa"). In it Remizov fuses pagan and Christian elements with the theme of Russia. After opening with a reference to the pagan Slavic belief that each star in the sky represents a living human soul, Remizov then addresses the Virgin Mary in prayerful tones. Mary notably is appealed to as "Most Holy Mother" (*Mat' presviataia*). Herein lies her connection to the title "The Begetter." The *rozhanitsa*, or more commonly, the plural *rozhanitsy*, were female beings believed by the pagan Russians to preside over birth. At the time of birth, they believed, each person was allotted his destiny.³⁰ The concepts of birth and destiny, then, were bound up in the *rozhanitsy*.

As the bearer of God, or mother, Mary became identified with the *rozhanitsy* as early as the Kievan period of Russian orthodoxy.³¹ It is to this syncretic figure that Remizov's narrator addresses his prayer for Russia. He offers to Mary that same repast that the pagan Russians had offered the *rozhanitsy*: bread, cheese, and meat; not on his own behalf, but on behalf of the Russian land. The gist of the prayer is the request that Russia's bad fortune (*Obida*, *Nedolia*, *Gore*, *Kruchina*, *Likha*) be changed into good fortune, *Dolia*. Only their desperation, caused by misery, has driven the Russians to plunder and theft, he claims. Their good intentions have always ended badly. This must be their destiny, this lot must have been adjudged to them at the birth of their nation. If only, says the narrator, referring to numerous Russian legends and folk tales about Fate-Fortune (*Sud'ba-dolia*), some one could be found who would rid us of this

accursed fate in the manner it is made to vanish in our lore.

Besides bringing in the figure of fate from East Slavic folk tales, Remizov confounds the image of the Mother of God with other folk-tale images—the wise maiden, or the prophetic swan who reads in the book of magic—and with the pagan Slavic cult of Mother Earth.

In “The Begetter” Remizov achieved a rhetorical tone through the use of his favorite device, anaphora, and, as in “Plaint,” the use of the imperative mood. What is most striking about “The Begetter,” unique in this volume of his *Works*, is the way in which the pagan and Christian elements are readily mixed with the theme of Russia’s fate. Often in addressing himself to the question of Russia—its destiny, its national character, its place in world history—Remizov was to do so using syncretic pagan and Christian imagery taken from popular lore.

Leimonarium

The book *Leimonarium*, which also appeared in 1907, forms a companion piece to *Sunwise*: both contain examples mostly of what Remizov understood to be “myth-recreations.” If *Sunwise* treats the folk calendar, *Leimonarium* mixes folk etiology with mythology: five explanatory tales on the origin of various natural phenomena and one apocryphal tale, full of folklore, about the crucifixion. Again, as in *Sunwise*, Remizov presents a syncretic pagan and Christian view of the world. Yet all the works in *Leimonarium* have a narrative core. As we noted before, Remizov considered apocrypha to contain remnants of myth, so he would have considered this book too part of his myth reconstruction activity. To create these six stories, Remizov had recourse to various folkloric and bookish materials: etiological legends, spiritual verses (*dukhovnye stikhi*), rituals and ritual songs (*koliadki*), charms, folk beliefs, laments, the folk puppet show (*vertep*), apocrypha, and old Russian literature. The child’s presence is not felt in *Leimonarium*. Instead there is a greater contribution from the unofficial, popular version of Christianity.

Formally, both early books display signs of experimentation, though *Sunwise* to a much greater extent. The latter is much more oriented toward oral performance. “On Herodias’ Frenzy”³² in *Leimonarium* stands out precisely because it is more experimental than others in that collection. Like the *Sunwise* pieces, “Herodias” exhibits a marked theatricality. It too is based on folkloric materials, primarily Eastern Slavic and Romanian *koliadki* and the Eastern Slavic folk puppet theater (*vertep*). Its narrative core is the explanation for the natural phenomenon of the whirlwind. But this pagan explanation is surrounded by popular and official Christian interpretations of the subject matter.

A dialog version of the Russian folk puppet (*vertep*) play, *The Death*

of King Herod, forms the basis of Remizov’s plot.³³ To flesh out this plot Remizov used the same technique of analogy that figured so often in *Sunwise*. He found suggestions for these analogies primarily from Veselovsky’s *Inquiries*, but he also made use of folklore from Potebnia, Shchegolev, and Shein that had become associated with the Christian Yuletide celebration.³⁴ This pagan Slavic folklore revolves around the ancient festivities in honor of the winter solstice and the onset of the new year. One of the old calendar rites reflected in “Herodias” was *koliadovanie*. Groups of young people would go from house to house singing special songs called *koliadki*. Originally songs to honor and guarantee the welfare of each household, the traditional *koliadki* eventually died out and were replaced by songs glorifying the birth of Christ.³⁵

If in other parts of his narrative Remizov has recourse to all sorts of apocryphal materials—primarily Romanian, but also Ukrainian, Belorussian, Byzantine, German, and Catalanian—the scene at Herod’s makes the greatest use of ritualistic pagan practices from all over Europe, but particularly from Byzantium and the three eastern Slavic countries. Remizov found that he could motivate the inclusion of unadulterated pagan elements more readily here than anywhere else. Most of this material comes from Veselovsky. Remizov introduces us to Herod’s court with a description of the palace, paraphrasing the Great Russian *koliadka*. The narrator (*vertepnik*) informs us that Herod is celebrating the New Year with a harvest feast (*zhatvennyi pir*), a Byzantine ritual, during which the emperor regaled the public. It was accompanied by a bellicose dance of mummers.³⁶ This “dance” gives Remizov the opportunity to introduce a series of Russian pagan New Year’s practices. These include entertainers and a series of mummers. The mummers dance, invoke the plough, personified by Remizov, and greet the one whose name day it is, *Ovsen’*, also personified. These latter details are taken from *koliadki*. *Ovsen’* can occur as a refrain in these songs. Remizov sees *Ovsen’* as an echo of a divine figure.

If the Russian folk puppet play *The Death of King Herod* shifted the focus of attention in the Christmas legend from the birth of Christ to the story of Herod, then Remizov made one more shift—from Herod’s story to that of his daughter, Herodias (Irodiada). Remizov’s source for this elaboration was again Veselovsky.³⁷ From his research Remizov derived the psychological motivation for Herodias’ actions: her love for John the Baptist. Remizov has amplified this motivation: it is Herodias, not her father Herod, who demands John’s head because John has spurned her love.³⁸ Remizov devotes some of his best writing to the details of this motivation.³⁹ The prose here is markedly rhythmical. Herodias dances to an amphibrachic line: “I pliashet neistovo, bystro i besheno—panna strela.”⁴⁰

In punishment, Herodias is turned into a whirlwind, fated to dance till

the end of time. This is the explanatory element of the legend. At this point Remizov picks up another detail reported by Veselovsky: Herodias has a red line around her neck. Even without the notes the symbolism of the red line is suggestive.⁴¹ In other cases, one finds that Remizov's inclusion of details, culled from his research, is perplexing rather than enriching.

"On Herodias' Frenzy" displays features typical of both *Sunwise* and *Leimonarium*. In its theatricality, its unique form, and its use of pagan folkloric elements it resembles the former. But it is closer to the latter cycle in the presence of a story-line, in the explanatory core of the story, and in the use of Christian figures. Remizov seemed fascinated by the popular version of the Christian legend, with its focus on the persecutors of Christianity. Stimulated by his reading of Veselovsky, Remizov included the tragic theme of frustrated love and revenge, subjects he was to return to on other occasions.

There are also signs of formal experimentation in another *Leimonarium* story, "Mary of Egypt." The etiological element here is the explanation for the origin of the moon and stars. A lovely narrative based on Romanian folklore, "Mary of Egypt" also has an envelope structure: it begins and ends with the narrator's rhetorical address directed to the reader. Also marking off the opening and closing of the legend is the use of negative parallelisms, a device found frequently in Russian folk poetry: "Ne ot tsvetov beleiut luga.../Ne ot tumana sereiut gory..."⁴² Remizov has endowed this prose narrative with the envelope structure he used in such *Sunwise* pieces as "Plaint," "The Little Monk," "The Vampire," and "The Penduline Tit."

When Remizov enlarged *Leimonarium* to create volume 7 of his *Works*, published in 1912, he did so by adding more narratives, not based on etiological legends, but on spiritual verses, religious legends, folk sayings and the folk calendar, pre-Petrine church literature, and apocrypha, both Russian and non-Russian. He divided this volume into two parts, "Leimonarium" and "Paralipomenon."⁴³

One addition was "Nick the Saint" ("Nikola Ugodnik"), based on folklore—the folk calendar, folk sayings, and a religious verse (*dukhovnyi stikh*)—and Nicholas' official saint's life (*zhitie*). St. Nicholas combined two prominent features which Remizov saw as the main reason for his popularity in Russia: his compassion and readiness to help those in need and his ability to perform superhuman miracles. "Nick the Saint" was the first of a long series of works that Remizov was to adapt from folkloric sources which concerned St. Nicholas. Remizov felt that St. Nicholas had a special place among the Russians as proven by the numerous folk narratives that he had inspired. So his stories about St. Nicholas often explore questions about Russia itself—its destiny, its past, and its popular heritage. His "Nick the Saint" refers to Russia as St. Nicholas' "land."

The first two parts of "Nick the Saint" are almost plotless pictures of the saint—first on earth and then in heaven—compiled from official and

apocryphal church sources and from Russian folklore, especially from the folk calendar and folk sayings. The third part shows St. Nicholas as an intercessor, this time on behalf of a non-Russian group of seafaring monks. There is more narrative in this part. The source is folkloric, a religious verse. The inclusion of this third part broadens the perspective on St. Nicholas. He is shown not only as the patron saint of Russia, but as an intercessor for non-Russians as well. The piece ends with a reiteration of the opening theme of Nicholas as the "intercessor for the Russian land." Through his cycle of St. Nicholas stories, Remizov explored the Russians' high regard for charity and their hope for justice through miraculous intervention. Remizov's exploration of the popular view of St. Nicholas in sayings, religious songs, and legends was a search for shared values at a time when the social fabric of Russia was being torn asunder (1905-17).

An example of a religious legend (*legenda*) in "Leimonarium" is "Job and Magdalene" ("Iov i Magdalina"). Although Remizov lists three different sources for his adaptation, the plot, details, and language come entirely from Onchukov's collection of folk narratives. In constructing his "ideal text," Remizov usually did not arrive at a composite, but rather at a version that was a reworking of only one of the texts that he consulted. There are two major themes that run throughout the different versions of this folk legend: the theme of charity toward the poor, and sometimes, toward the physically ugly, and the theme of a just fate. In his version, Remizov underscores the idea of humility present in the folk legend: all the characters who meekly accept their fate receive some form of deliverance.

Four of the six stories in "Paralipomenon" are religious *legendy*, and like "Job and Magdalene" deal with moral issues. There are two exceptions: the folk tales "The Dread Skeleton" ("Ligostai strashnyi") and "King Solomon" ("Tsar' Solomon"), the last two pieces in volume 7. Remizov offsets the serious theme of death in "The Dread Skeleton" with the humorous, occasionally ribald, "King Solomon." This is a typical Remizovian juxtaposition: the theme of human mortality next to a comic presentation of earthly justice—the tragi-comedy of existence.

The theme of the folk tale "The Dread Skeleton" is man's inability to come to terms with his own death. In general Remizov's changes create a more leisurely literary tale. Some of the changes he made include: the elimination or elucidation of dialect words; the replacement of non-standard morphology and syntax by the standard; the use of an idiosyncratic word order; a prose made more rhythmic through verbal and syntactic repetitions; a more consistent use of alliteration and assonance. Remizov fills in the narrative a great deal; some of this additional verbal material, however, simply makes up for the non-verbal material of a live performance such as intonation, gesture, and mime. By far the greatest "defects" in the folk tale, from a literary viewpoint, are its abrupt transitions. Remizov carefully motivates the transitions and plot se-

quences. As usual, Remizov individualizes his characters to a greater extent: the hero is endowed with a pious and good nature. But the process of individualization most affects the figure of death. The latter, although repeatedly called fearsome (*strashnyi*) is a carnivalesque figure with chattering teeth and a grimacing face.

"King Solomon"—published seven times—must have been one of Remizov's perennial favorites. He thus opens and closes volume 7 with two symbolic figures—St. Nicholas, the figure of divine justice, and King Solomon, of earthly justice. They are figures which inspire hope and a good-humored compassion. In both cases Remizov has taken stock figures from folk literature and elaborated them into personal symbols. But because these figures derive from popular lore, they signify also supra-personal concepts. Through the use of such figures Remizov was able to combine a cluster of ideas and attitudes from the pre-logical past with the modern world.

"Paralipomenon" marks a shift in Remizov's work with folkloric materials. In the first place we find a thematic concern with moral issues.⁴⁴ In the second place, they are pure narratives and exemplify Remizov's expressed aim of finding an ideal form for such material. Furthermore, most of this material can be classified as folk legends. And it was the folk legend, more than any other type of folk literature, that was to dominate Remizov's adaptations. He often chose the legend because of its direct revelation of popular views of the world and man's place in it.

Conclusion

All of Remizov's subsequent involvement with folklore was presaged in some form by volumes 6 and 7 of his *Works*. After their publication, Remizov devoted most of his subsequent efforts to the creation of ideal texts, whether narrative or dramatic. In choosing which folk literary works to adapt, Remizov selected his models, for the most part, not on the basis of availability, but on suitability. Thus, since there are few etiological legends to be found in the Russian repertoire, Remizov's fondness for this genre led him to Ukrainian, Romanian, and other sources. The changes we noted between Remizov's adaptations and his models generally fall into two categories: changes necessitated by the shift from the oral to the written medium and consequently a shift in audience, and changes effected because of his own sensibility as a writer.

We have also noted certain tendencies in chronology and in the type of folklore that most interested Remizov. In the two 1907 publications, *Sunwise* and *Leimonarium*, Remizov found the greatest stimulation in what he perceived to be remnants of myth, actually evidences of a syncretic pagan-Christian belief system among the peasantry, which he wove into short prose works, many with no or minimal narrative framework. What

held them together was a controlling point of view, a primitivism born of the peasant and of the child. By the time that Remizov expanded these two books for inclusion into his multi-volume *Works*, a shift occurred away from such "myth recreation" to the creation of "ideal forms." The works created with either aim in mind display the marks of experiment in prose through the exploitation of poetic devices: progression through analogy, an abundance of symbolism and imagery—especially personification, repetition of leitmotifs, syntactic parallelism, rhythm, alliteration, and assonance.

The varied means and manner of expressive folklore penetrated into almost everything Remizov wrote. His involvement with folklore formed part of an examination of the Russian cultural heritage in particular, and of the general culture heritage of twentieth-century man. Whether he was attempting to recreate myth or to render the ideal form of a folk narrative, Remizov modernized the folkloric material, enabling this traditional culture to enter contemporary culture. He must have thought that the expressive lore of the folk could and should speak to us "non-folk," made accessible through intermediaries such as himself. Folklore was a means by which to explore essential truths, not through logical or scientific discourse, but through alogical, analogical, and symbolic means. The products of the folk imagination, less subject to the limitations of scientific and rationalistic thought, could speak to modern man about the tragic tenor of life and its incomprehensibility, but also about the joy of existence which is ours if we give free range to our imagination and look at the world with wide-eyed wonderment and ready humor.

Ultimately the results of these endeavors must be judged on their own merit as literature. They form part of Remizov's contribution to modernist prose. As such they display features of formal experiment, a concern with consciousness and perception, a weakened narrative structure and unity compensated for by poetic means, and, often, a *skaz*-like narrator or multiple points of view, and the measurement of the passage of time by the non-scientific sign-posts of folk and church holidays and the seasonal agricultural cycle.⁴⁵ Some of these works stand today as minor literary masterpieces because they integrate vision, structure, and language. Folklore did not so much shape Remizov as a writer, as he shaped folkloric materials to suit his own sensibility.

NOTES

1. The works in the 1907 edition of *Posolon'* were written between 1900 and 1907, but mostly in 1906. The works in the 1907 edition of *Limonar'* were all written in 1906.

2. *Russkie vedomosti*, 6 September 1909. Remizov was defending himself against a charge of plagiarism printed in an earlier issue of that newspaper. His letter was reprinted in *Zolotoe runo*, nos. 7-9 (1909), 145-48.

3. "Pis'mo v redaktsiiu," *Zolotoe runo*, 146. Note that Remizov considered apochrypha to contain vestiges of myth.

4. Ibid.
5. Alan Dundes, "The Devolutionary Premise in Folklore Theory," in *Analytic Essays in Folklore*, Studies in Folklore, no. 2 (The Hague, 1975), 24. The connection to Tyler and his "survival theory" was first pointed out by Patricia Carden in "The Ritual Theory and Remizov's *Posolon*," paper delivered at the AATSEEL meeting, Chicago, December 1977.
6. Alan Dundes has an excellent discussion of Tyler's "survival theory" in his essay, "The Devolutionary Premise," 21-24.
7. M. K. Azadovsky, *Istoriia russkoi fol'kloristiki*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1958), II, 80. Afanas'ev's views, as well as abundant amounts of material were also absorbed by Remizov from three of his other publications: *Russkie narodnye skazki* (1855-63), *Russkie narodnye legendy* (1859), and *Russkie zavetnye skazki* (1872).
8. O. Freidenberg, *Poëtika siuzheta i zhanra* (Leningrad, 1936), 118.
9. "Pis'mo v redaktsiiu," *Zolotoe runo*, 146. There is little evidence that Remizov, more than occasionally, collated different variants of any tale.
10. *Kuda my idëm? Nastoiashchee i budushchee russkoi intelligentsii, literatury, teatra i iskusstv: Sbornik statei i otkvetov* (Moscow, 1910), 109-11.
11. A name for a cat in Russian folk tales, particularly animal tales.
12. *Kuda*, 110. The water of life and of death are magical objects that appear in Russian folk tales. Vasilisa the Wise is a heroine in Russian fairy tales.
13. *Posolon'* (Moscow, 1907); *Sochineniia*, vol. 6 (St. Petersburg, 1911); *Posolon'; Volshebnaia Rossiia* (Paris, 1930); reprint ed., *Posolon'*, Slavische Propyläen, no. 79 (Munich, 1971). The 1907 edition has been republished in: A. M. Remizov, *Izbrannoe* (Moscow, 1978), 315-407. For the contents of each of these books and publication information about other published work, please see *Bibliographie des oeuvres de Alexis Remizov*, comp. Hélène Sinany (Paris, 1978).
14. Anne Worontzoff-Weliaminoff, "Tradizione e Innovazione in *Posolon'* di Aleksej Remizov" (Ph.D. dissertation, Università degli Studi di Firenze, 1971), 147.
15. Carden.
16. Nina Ivanovna Savushkina, *Russkii narodnyi teatr* (Moscow, 1976), "Vvedenie," 3-11. Remizov exploited almost all of these forms at some point in his career.
17. Roger Caillois, *Man, Play, and Games*, tr. Meyer Barash (New Uork, 1961), 59. See also 6-10.
18. E. V. Anichkov, *Vesenniaia obriadovaia poëziia na zapade i u slavian*, I (St. Petersburg, 1903), 339-48.
19. There has been much controversy about the original ritual meaning of Kostroma. Veselovsky and Anichkov postulated that the Kostroma game was a vestige of a cult of the dying and reborn god and that the ritual had been aimed at securing a good harvest during the height of the growing season. Others have viewed the Kostroma ritual as an echo of the ancient New Year's celebration in which the original act of creation was re-enacted. A more recent scrutiny of the game, its verbal content, and geographical distribution has given rise to yet a third view—that the Russian game of Kostroma goes back to the ritual burial of a cult symbol for the purposes of purification. See Orest Zilinsky, "Iz istorii vostochnoslavianskikh narodnykh igr (Kostroma-Kostrub)," *Russkii fol'klor*, no. 11 (1968), 211. For a discussion in English, see Elizabeth A. Warner, *The Russian Folk Theatre* (The Hague, 1977), 24-27.
20. "The warmth, oh the warmth, only abundance!"
21. A. V. Rysten'ko, *Zametki o sochineniiakh Remizova* (Odessa, 1913), 65-66.
22. "Has died, Kostroma, has died." "Came alive, Kostroma, came alive."
23. This information comes from a note by Remizov in vol. 6. The story itself adheres to the basic plot of the folk tale "The Bear and the Three Sisters" which can be found in N. E. Onchukov, *Severnye skazki* (St. Petersburg, 1908), no. 55, 145-46.
24. N. M. Vedernikova, *Russkaia narodnaia skazka* (Moscow, 1975), 35-37; Linda Dêgh, "Folk Narrative," in *Folklore and Folklife*, ed. Richard M. Dorson (Chicago, 1972), 61-62.
25. Rysten'ko, 71-72.

26. In Potebnia's "Ob"iasneniia."
27. V. Ia. Propp, "Zhanrovyyi sostav russkogo fol'klora," *Russkaia literatura*, no. 4 (1964), 60.
28. It is also true of "Kukushka" (The Cuckoo), another *Posolon'* piece about the origin of the cuckoo.
29. Remizov's stated source is Veselovsky's "Sud'ba-dolia v narodnykh predstavleniiakh slavian: Razyskaniia v oblasti russkogo dukhovnogo stikha, XI-XVII," *Sbornik Otdeleniia russkogo iazyka i slovesnosti Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk*, XLV (1889), 173-260.
30. George Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind* (New York, 1960), 349.
31. "It is noteworthy that the most common name of Mary among the Russian people is 'The Bearer of God (Bogoroditsa), the literal translation of the Greek *Theotokos* . . . 'Mother of God.'" Fedotov, 360.
32. There are two versions of "O bezumii Irodiadinom" which differ very little. The earlier version, found in *Limonar'* and reprinted as *Plias Irodiady* (Herodias' Dance) in 1922, lacks the external form that connects the second version, found in Remizov's *Sochineniia*, with the theater. In this second version, Remizov included stage directions, and divided the narrative and lyrical parts of his piece into "parts" for a puppeteer (*vertepnik*) and a chorus.
33. Remizov used a summary of the play by Nikolai N. Vinogradov: "Velikorusskii vertep," *Izvestiia Otdeleniia russkogo iazyka i slovesnosti Akademii nauk*, X, no. 3 (1905), 360-82 and X, no. 4 (1905), 404-14.
34. Veselovskii, "Razyskaniia," VI-X, *Sbornik Otdeleniia russkogo iazyka i slovesnosti Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk*, XXXII (1883), 1-461; A. A. Potebnia, "Ob"iasneniia," II, "Koliadki i shchedrovki"; "Ocherki istorii otrechennoi literatury: skazanie Afroditiiana," *Izvestiia Otdeleniia russkogo iazyka i slovesnosti Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk*, IV, no. 1 148-99, and no. 4, 1304-44; P. V. Shein, *Velikoruss*, 2 parts (St. Petersburg, 1898-1900), part one.
35. In these songs, the singers (*koliadovshchiki*) would honor the master of the household and his family, wishing them prosperity in the coming year. After these songs were sung, the members of each household were supposed to reward the singers with special foods. See I. I. Zemtsovskii, Foreword to *Poëziia krest'ianskikh praznikov*, ed. L. A. Nikolaeva (Leningrad, 1970), 12.
36. Remizov is quoting directly from Veselovsky. A ritual "battle" may also have taken place among the Eastern Slavs at the New Year's celebrations and may have left its trace in the Kostroma ritual. See V. Ia. Propp, "The Historical Basis of Some Russian Religious Festivals," in *Introduction to Soviet Ethnography*, 2 vols., ed. Stephen P. and Ethel Dunn (Berkeley, 1974), II, 393.
37. Veselovskii, "Razyskaniia," XI-XVII, 307.
38. Rysten'ko, 80.
39. Aleksandr Bakhrakh, "Plias Irodiady," *Volia Rossii*, no. 1 (15 January 1923), 92.
40. "And she dances unrepressedly, swiftly and frenetically—madame arrow." *Sochineniia*, VII, 30.
41. The notes in vol. 7 of Remizov's *Sochineniia* inform us that in Catalonia it was believed that Herodias fell into a river up to her neck and her head was cut off by ice. It eventually grew back, but a mark remained on her neck where the head had been severed.
42. "Not from the flowers do the meadows look white . . . / Not from the mist do the hills look silver . . ."
43. The Russian biblical term "Paralipomenon," from the Greek, means "omission." In the Russian Bible it is the title of the first and second "Books of Chronicles."
44. Remizov, as always, is not consistent. He could have readily included "Iov i Magdalina" and "Kuz'ma i Dem'ian" in the "Paralipomenon" section rather than in "Limonar'" since they too are adaptations of religious legends from Onchukov's collection.
45. I am paraphrasing here David Lodge's criteria for the definition of modernist fiction in his article "The Language of Modernist Fiction: Metaphor and Metonymy" in *Modernism: 1890-1930*, ed. Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane (New York, 1976), 481.