

CONFESSIONAL DISCUSSION IN N. S. LESKOV'S STORY "AT THE END OF THE WORLD"

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Abstract: This article analyzes the perception of the image of Christ by Catholics and Orthodox Christians in N. S. Leskov's story "At the End of the World" through works of art and literature.

Keywords: Christianity, Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Christ, Savior, painting, iconography.

A distinctive feature of Russian literature of the XIX century is the comparison of Western European religious painting and Russian Christian iconography, which is manifested in the analysis of the perception of Christ by Catholicism and Orthodoxy, which is expressed in the individual perception of the Savior by different cultures because of the difference in the religious and ideological worldview of the above. The relevance of this topic is justified by the desire of Russian writers and poets to realize the causes of the crisis of Christian faith, which makes them turn to the Gospel stories, and in an effort to find the truth - resort to a comparison of the main branches of Christianity.

H. Throughout his career, Leskov searched for the "true faith", then in the teachings of schismatics, who were closer to him than the Orthodox, then through iconography, that is, through the "figurative" vision of Christ by

representatives of different branches of Christianity. It also became the subject of the writer's reflection on the moral ideals of European artists.

We are introduced to the Orthodox and Western understanding of Christ in the story "At the End of the World", which begins with a conversation between the bishop and the guests present on the subject of biblical motifs in Western painting. Moreover, the depictions of Christ lack historical coherence; Leskov describes paintings from different countries and different time periods, which range between the 15th and 19th centuries, at the expense of which the writer creates a holistic view of the cultural and religious traditions of Western Catholic Christians.

Western artists, in Leskov's opinion, portrayed Jesus not as a deity, but as a mere man, reinforcing the image with the biblical surroundings of Christ - Judas, Caesar, the Samaritan woman, etc., which allowed European artists to show the human gentleness of the Savior to the Samaritan woman, instead of strict attention, the expression of restraint of nastiness on the lips during the kiss of Judas, instead of the expression of boundless patience. Among other things, in the portrayal of the "Western" Christ, the protagonist was repulsed by the presence of licentiousness, sentimentality, and contempt in the divine face. The bishop's attacks were directed at artists and their works, including Rembrandt's "Christ and the Samaritan Woman," Gverchino's "The Crowning of Thorns," Rubens' "The Kiss of Judas" and "The Denarius of Caesar," Kauer's sculpture "The Head of Christ," Metsu, who created the image of the beaten Christ, Lafont's "Christ in the Cave," Titian, Plato, and other artists, which shows Leskov as a connoisseur well versed in iconography.

The bishop, in conversation with his guests, mentions a painting by "Mr." Lafont, "Christ in a cave", which the narrator happened to see at a prince's

acquaintance's house "not quite in place" - in the winter garden; the painting was framed on a table, and the dreaming princess was sitting in front of it. The author describes a beautiful setting: palm trees, aurum trees, bananas, birds chirping and flitting, and she was dreaming, and in her dreams, "looking for Christ".

Here, the winter garden is contrasted with the "bitter frost" outside the window, with the vast cold steppes of the "edge of the world" - Siberia. The image of Christ is separated from human eyes not only by the "frame" but also by the hostess herself, as if detached from reality. This "separation" is also traced in the bishop's album, which hides the works of Western art he has collected. The borders of the album page and its cover are also a kind of "frame" separating the Western Christ from the Russian man. In the 19th century, Europeans considered it fashionable to depict portrait paintings "out of place" - in the winter garden, in which comfort and luxury contrast sharply with the real world. Western luxury is demonstrated by Leskov in his description of the same album, with its large size and richly decorated ivory carvings. The "dandy, canary Christ" far from the spirit of the ordinary Russian man does not find "admirers" among the bishop's guests.

The Western Jesus inspires "only compassion and nothing more. Here Leskov singles out Metsu's painting, being lost in speculation as to why the great master "beat, dissected and sparked him so much", Metsu knocked out all the spirit from Christ, leaving only a suffering body, which, in the words of the bishop, "is even scary to look at". In the "written" body and face of Jesus, humanity is emphasized, expressed individually - the author's understanding of Christ's Passion, which Metsu so convincingly depicts on the canvas - swollen eyelids, blood, bruises. Such a believable, even slightly embellished image of the Savior becomes a kind of obstacle to the prayer of believers.

Representatives of the Western world, who grew up on the tragedies of Corneille, Racine, and Moliere, with their "delicate, vulnerable natures" find it easier to perceive the "dramatic and tragic" Christ, while the Orthodox Jesus looks more like a simple Russian muzhik, close to the peasant understanding.

It is noteworthy that in the story, Leskov refers to Catholic images of Christ as "paintings" and their creators as artists, while Orthodox images are referred to as "icons" or "faces" and their creators as masters or iconographers.

Russian iconographers were more restrained in depicting biblical motifs. The bishop, and with him Leskov himself, contrast the "erroneous", in their opinion, depiction of the Catholic Jesus Christ with the Orthodox Messiah on the icon. When discussing the Russian icon, "frames" are not mentioned: "...Let us now close all this, and turn to the corner to which you stand with your back to. Again the face of Christ, and this time it is not a face, but a countenance. Typical Russian image of the Lord <...> in my opinion, our simple-minded master understood better than anyone else - who he had to write ... ". [I, p. 341]. We assume that we are talking about a wooden icon. In "The Sealed Angel" Leskov brings specificity in iconographic details, characterizes schools and types of writing, gives a detailed idea of the distinctive features of the masters of different provinces, however, in the work "At the Edge of the World" the writer, for some reason, avoids specificity in the description of the icon of the bishop's drawing room, absolutely nothing is said about either the subject or the master who created it.

Information about the icon is given very generalized, from what is said it is clear only that it depicts a truly "Russian Christ", with a direct, simple look and slightly marked features and full impression, elevated parietal, which, as is known, according to the system of Lafatera means the ability of sublime piety,

and most importantly, in his countenance there is expression, but no passions. It is in the depiction of "passions" reproaches Nikolai Leskov Western artists, who made their Christ ordinary man deprived of "spirit". In the first edition of the story "At the End of the World" (1876), Leskov prefaced the Russian Christ "behind the sinew" with an epigraph with lines from a poem by I. Tyutchev entitled "These poor villages...":

Saddened by the burden of the godfather,
 All of you, dear land,
 In slave form, the Heavenly King
 Went out blessing [I, p. 336].

The author emphasizes the "slave form" of the Orthodox Christ, in the author's opinion, the Russian people better understood the external features of Christ's image, came closer to comprehending the Truth, and understood the internal features of his character. "... I more than any idea of deity love this Russian God, who makes himself a dwelling "behind the sinew". Here, what we can not explain to us the gentlemen Greeks and no matter how to prove that we owe them that we know God through them - but they did not reveal Him to us; not in their lush Byzantium, we found Him in the smoke of censorship, but He is our own, pritomanny, and in our way, simply, everywhere walks <...> where He as He opened, so He walks <...>" [I, pp. 348-349]. "Russian Christ" is a manly man, he will not be called to the winter garden to listen to canaries. The verbs "opened and walks" free the Orthodox Christ from restrictions and "frames". The Western image of Christ appears only at the beginning of the narrative, while the "manly Christ" "accompanies" the work up to the last chapter - from St. Petersburg to Kamchatka.

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