ZESZYTY NAUKOWE WYŻSZEJ SZKOŁY PEDAGOGICZNEJ W BYDGOSZCZY
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LEONID LEONOV'S VOR: WRITER AND NOVEL CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE

The endings of things have been a constant source of curiosity and spekulation for mankind. Whether they refer to the closing of a century, demise of a human being, or completion of a work of fiction they are inherently meaningful: the passing of something signifies at the very least the state of change and beginning, forcing us to admit fresh perceptions into our lives. Indeed, endings suggest a time to give meaning to things which may not have been so endowed earlier, by evaluating or judging preceding events. An ending often marks a time of celebration and relief, as in any undertaking brought to fruition, or it can be misunderstood and cause unwarranted sorrow and trepidation. One need only allude to that epitome of feared endings, the Apocalypse, as exemplary of the influence which a future event, fraught with mystery, exerts on the present. Endings by definition have value as signposts of change, but their real import lies in their effect on beginnings and middles: we orient our actions temporally, toward an impending end. Even if we do not occupy ourselves with philosophical musings about the nature of the progression of time, we possess an acute awareness of our mortality and the changing tide of events governing our lives:

> It makes little difference--though it makes some--whether you believe the age of the world to be six thousand years or five thousand million years, whether you think time will have a stop or that the world is eternal; there is still a need to speak humanly of a life's importante in relation to it--a need in the moment of existence to belong, to be related to, a beginning and to an end[1].

In literary works, as in all other things having endings, the narrative sequence should be directed toward, and related to, an outcome that matters and makes sense to the created personages, author, and readers. If we take the example of a promising young writer who finishes his second novel and funds that its polemical ending reflects his own mixed feelings about the future of his country, the result is a lingering artistic dissatisfaction with the work. If, moreover, the writer must cope with increasing pressures exerted by literary critics to take a firm political stand through the medium of his novel, his problems are compounded. When critics further press him to shake off the classical traditions of Russian literature by describing instead a new kind of man, the "man of the future" or "new Adam", before his appearance on the stage of Russian life, the writer in question finds himself in a terrible predicament. He realizes that he does not know this new man, has never met him, and therefore cannot even begin to describe him. His artistic conscience dictates that he can only depict the type of man he knows: the genuine, living man of the 1920s, who moves toward the future but has psychological roots in the past. Irreconcilable conflict between artistic judgment and political pressure results in a writer caught in the middle: the ending of his novel pleases no one, producing at best a description of the forerunner to the "new Soviet man." The writer is Leonid Leonov; the novel is Vor /The Thief/, first published in 1927[2].

Unique in the gallery of Leonov's literary creations, Dmitrij Vekšin has presented a thorny and emotional problem for Leonov throughout the author's career: the first and subsequent editions of Vor from 1927-1936 received mixed reviews, as exemplified by G.Gorbačev's remarks:

> ... Vor krome razobrannogo, realisticeskogo, neposredstvenno-vidnogo plana imeet i ves'ma tumannye, no glubokie simvoličeskie perspektivy v raznyx napravlenijax: social'no-istoričeskom, etičeskom, filosofski-psixologičeskom i, možet byt', ešče kakix-nibud'. Vne etix neprjamyx značenij geroev i ix sud'by sliškom mnogoe v romane bylo by neopravdano. Neponjatno bylo

by, počemu statičeskij, trudno oščutimyj, malointeresnyj Mit'ka javljaetsja centrom romana[3].

Gor'kij, who had been immensely impressed with Vor, indirectly predicted that Leonov would in time "kill" his hero Vekšin. Whether or not Leonov utterly destroyed the Vekšin of 1927 is debatable, but the fact remains that he was preoccupied with the novel for many years: "menja lično vsegda mučilo soznanie nesoveršenstva nekotoryx mest, nedopisannosti, možet byt', neprodumannosti do konca. I spustja tridcat' let menja vse ne pokidalo namerenie kak-nibud' beglo projtis' perom po tekstu romana ... " As recently as 1964 Leonov undertook yet another revision of Vor, which was published the following year[4]. He may have been actuated by a profound discontent with the novel as a whole, even after the extensive 1959 recision, specifically with Vekšin. Leonov's disillusionment stems partly from the political and literary climate of Stalinist Russia: the consistent lack of artistic freedom during the period 1932-1953 has left its permanent imprint on his works, resulting in an almost parental concern about the fate of his progenies. One can only imagine the Herculean task Leonov faced in attempting to reconcile his personal artistic predilection for psychological analysis with socialist realism's optimistic, socially-conscious /"positive"/ heroes[5]. Leonov's unorthodox artistic instincts were also tempered with his genuine patriotism and the desire to serve his country through literary and publicistic activity; this made it much more difficult for him to return to and revise what had been written in the 1920 s.

Leonov's Vor presents a clear-cut conclusion on the surface of the narrative: Vekšin leaves the thieves' underworld of Moscow for the forests of the east, ostensibly by redeem himself through hard work in the wilderness. Remarkably little is said, however, about the internal dynamics underlying his decision to renounce his criminal mode of existence. In the last chapter /bk. 4, ch. XVIII/ several events in rapid succession lead to Vekšin's surprising plans for his future. He has a decisive talk Zinka Baldueva's brother Matvej, which ends in "heartfelt handshakes"

/536/. Immediately afterwards, Vekšin informs Zinka that both he and Matvej are "right," presumably about their respective ideological convictions. He then spends several days in contemplation, before suddenly disappearing; the reader searches for him along with Zinka, rapidly eliminating the possibilities of his whereabouts. Leonov next shifts the scene to Puxov's shop, where Vekšin has come to say good-bye. Here the author includes information for the reader that is denied the characters in the story proper:

> No one knew anything of Mit'ka's fate. No one saw him calling on Puxov. /I'm not saying goo-bye to you, Primus ! I shall return... in five years, but I will return !' And with a final glance at Puxov's modest assortment of iron scraps, he left the workshop./ And no one met him at the railway station, as he was buying his ticket for his long journey /537/.

Puxov represents a psychological father to Vekšin, and the latter's parting words, that he will return, may shed some light on his decision to leave Moscow and its implications for his future[6]. The scene conveys an irrepressible mood of optimism to the reader concerning Vekšin's eventual participation in Soviet society.

As for the immediate future of Leonov's hero, the penultimate paragraph of Vor tells us only:

> The rest--how Mit'ka found himself among wood-cutters and was first beaten and then treated with kindness; how he worked in their guild and grew drunk on the food that was earned by the heavy labor of tree-felling; how he toughened, went to work in a factory, and studied /the great days od study had come into the land/; how he regained the name he had lost--all this remains outside the limits of the present narrative /540/[7].

Leonov would hardly have inserted such a paragraph unless he intended it to be part of his novel, and not "outside [its] limits". By simply enumerating how Vekšin lived with the wood-cutters, worked in a factory and studied, and how he regained his former.

good name Leonov provides an orderly, albeit sketchy, account of the hero's activities and subsequent psychological rebirth. Since endings can exist only in relation to beginnings and middles, it follows that Vekšin's projected metamorphosis must in some way derive from the previous action of the novel.

The questions therefore remain. Does Vekšin return to his forest home /nature/ out of personal preference, or is he actually running away from the problems he faced in the city ? Does Vekšin go forth into the forest and countryside to rejuvenate himself sprirtually, with the intention of returning to the city a changed man ? What does Vekšin's return to nature signify for Russia's future ?

In answer to the first question it is clear that Vekšin departs of his own volition. He seeks to recapture his childhood innocence by returning to a setting reminiscent of happier days in his past, and thereby revitalize his shattered body and spirit. In the last chapter, his search for the child in himself begins with the marked change in his attitude toward children, particularly toward Zinka's daughter Klavdja:

> A strange meekness had also come over Mit'ka. He could walk about now, but he kept looking closely at things ane people with incomprehensible surprise. He often played with Klavdja and talked only with her; Zinka could never make out what they talked about, for they always fell mysteriously silent when a third person came into the room /536/.

Until this point Vekšin has hardly noticed Klavdja's existence and his feelings for her can best be described as neutral. This passage reveals a distinct change in Vekšin's personality and behavior; he views his surroundings with the "incomprehensible surprise" of a child. At this juncture he begins his evolution into a "new Soviet man" : Vekšin must become child-like in order to enter the new dimension of an ideal society. One noted the secularization of a pertinent Biblical passage: "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein" /Luke 18:17/. Only pure, uncorrupted "souls" are worthy of acceptance into the emerging Sovier system.

In order to become a "new man," Vekšin must reexamine his attitude about te NEP /New Economic Policy/, for he will become part of his country's future only when he can faithfully and unquestioningly believe in all phases of the aftermath of the Revolution. He has lived through the "apocalypse" of the Revolution and the Civil War, and in spite of the injustice and disheartenment he encountered during the war years, his basic belief in the new system has remained intact. Vekšin's real dilemma stems from his utter rejection of the NEP which, he feels, betrays the principles of the Revolution by returning to capitalism. He must assuage his anguish about the NEP by regarding it as a catalyst in shaping Russia's future. Leonov's insertion of Vekšin's fantasy of talking face-to-face with Lenin is hence thematically justified: Vekšin could accept the rationale behind the NEP solely from the ideological leader of the Revolution. Since this is historically impossible /Lenin died in 1924/, a plausible solution for him in psychological terms entails his return to the source of his childhood memories, to nature. Vekšin's talk with Matvej several days before leaving Moscow indicates his change of heart and paves the way for his renewed sense of purpose; their handshake seals his commitment to the new political order. The forests of the east represent to Vekšin the innocence of a Garden of Eden, and his journey to them equates him with a "new Adam," or at least with his ancestor. Along with his impending plunge into a new life, he prepares himself to work torelessly and to sacrifice personal happiness; like many others in the late 1920s, he fervently hoped that out of the chaos of this period would spring a new, virgin society.

In abandoning his past life Vekšin also severs his ties with Maša Dolomanova, his adolescent love and adult obsession. Dolomanova's emotional hold on him is unhealthy and destructive; he must purge himself /or be purged/ of her influence in order to take his place in the future Soviet society. Many "new Adams" will populate this untouched world, but there can be no room for "new Eves," in which the prospect od a Second Fall would be inherent[8].

Leonov follows tradition in identifying innocence and

experience with nature and city, respectively: in his view, man's morality remains generally unpolluted in nature, but corrupt in civilization. This analogy is a rough one, however, because the author does not portray Nikolka Zavarixin as the pure, uncorrupted peasant, nor does he stereotype Vekšin as the hopelessly immoral city dweller. On the contrary, Zavarixin adapts with ease to the mercantile atmosphere of the NEP, while Vekšin searches ceaselessly for renewed faith in himself and in his surroundings[9].

Vekšin's return to nature at the end of Vor indicates a partial victory for him, partial because he refuses to accept the NEP in his present state of mind and, in a sense, he is running away from the city and its evils: its injustice to the poor /shown by the plight of Manjukin/, its oppressive atmosphere of filth and greed, and its myriad unsympathetic bureaucrats afflicted with čikilevscina[10]. He emerges victorious by leaving before the city can destroy him; thus he aims to save himself morally and revitalize his flagging spirits.

The second question, of Vekšin's intention of returning to the city a changed man, is a bit simpler to answer, at least on the literal level: Vekšin explicitly tells Puxov that he will return in five years'time. Nature is Vekšin's first home, but if he truly symbolizes Russia's destiny, the city must become his second, adopted home. Leonov underscores the point by having his hero return to Demjatino, the village of his childhood and the place where his first mother, Nature, can be found: "Mit'ka did not have a mother of his own. Another Mother had fed him on wild strawberries, and had raised him with privations in the heart of nature. After his first misadventures he had been drawn back to his original home" /494/. During his sojourn in Demjatino Vekšin regains his lost dignity, as is clear frome Leonov's use throughout this section of the full name Dmitrij, rather than the nickname /klička/ Mit'ka. This is notably the only time in the novel where Vekšin is consistently referred to as "Dmitrij", making the author's intention unmistakable to any speaker of Russian[11].

In any novel having a problematic ending, the concept of

"ending" itself is suspect, even more so than in a work where the conclusion appears relatively unambiguous. When is an ending in fact an "ending" ? The unambiguous ending may contain, according to Henry James´ formula, "a distribution at the last of prizes, pensions, husbands, wives, babies, millions, appended paragraphs, and cheerful remarks," resolving the fate of the primary characters[12]. "Happy" ending are not counted among the most absorbing in existence, not are the characters who populate such works as compelling as their perplexing counterparts. In the case of Vor, Leonov was unwilling or unable to give the novel a conclusive ending because of his own mixed feelings about the events he was describing; he could present his readers only with an unfinished /nedokončennyj/, fluid /tekučij/ hero[13]. Thus Leonov effectively transforms the conclusion of his novel into a beginning for a hero whose heroic feats remain to be performed. The process of Vekšin´s development, however, involves two transitional periods that help explain and justify his ultimate acceptance of the new society and his maturation into a Soviet man.

The first of these periods begins with Vekšin´s departure from Demjatino and his "mother": "all the threads that had bound him to his home had snapped: the Mother had pushed him away. The whole world seemed the some to him. According to Firsov, it was at this point that Mit´ka had been forged into a citizen of the world, an ancestor of the man of the future..." /494/. Vekšin has clearly been weaned from his "mother" and must learn to survive in his new hone, the city. On the symbolic level Vekšin, as the keystone of Russia´s future, must leave nature /the village/ behind as a permanent dwelling place, although the natural world will continue to play a substantial role in the future by providing sustenance and beauty. Vekšin´s first attempt to acclimatize himself to his ne domicile, the city, fails, a fact to which his underground activities throughout the novel attest. He rebels against the dehumanization and materialism he encounters there and is likened by Leonov to a bear /medved´/ in a cage. His room, wherever it happens to be at a given moment, functions as an animal cage

/kletka/; one senses an immediate affinity between him and the bear he visits in the zoo /bk. 3, ch.XXI/. The prison element in Vekšin's existence is thus significant both physically and psychologically: he must break out of several types and levels of prisons in order to be free. He ironically is an expert at cracking **safes** /called medvedi in the thieves' jargon/, yet he cannot break out of his own, internal safe, for he has not discovered the "combination" that will set him free.

The dénouement of the narrative introduces Vekšin's second transitional period, which takes place in the last chapter of the novel. His final physical illness purges him of his self-serving "underground" behavior, and forces him to move beyond past defeats /his outstanding career in the Red Army was aborted after he had killed a prisoner/. Leonov uses Vekšin's illoness to mark a new beginning and prepare him for the long journey east that will facilitate his rejuvenation and metamorphosis into a "new Soviet man." Vekšin rejects Puxov's "Christian" solution earlier in the novel: "Postradaj, Mitja, prokali sebja dusevnym ogon'kom" /bk. 2, ch. XVIII, p.283/. He opts not to be redeemed, but reborn. His talking and playing with Klavdja, his identification with Matvej's theories, his abrupt departure—all these point to the awakening of a newly-borm man. Vekšin's spiritual renewal logically takes place in spring, the season associated with birth and rebrith. On his journey east he is "met" by a spring /the rodnik for which Leonov is so well know/ and a muzik; again, Leonov emphasizes Vekšin's return to a simple, natural life. Nathan Rosen points out the difficulties Leonov faced in picturing the total man "as a Soviet Adam, a selfconfident, bold man of action whose power stemmed from his complete and deliberate rejection of past culture"[14]. According to this concept, the Soviet hero was powerful in his very innocence and unawareness of the complex problems that had plagued his predecessors in their attempts to bring about social chance. Because he was depicting a man whose time had not yet arrived, Leonov's portrayal of Vekšin as the "new man" was reduced to broad hints in the final paragraphs of Vor.

The third question, what Vekšin's return to nature illuminates about Russia's future, is more problematic than the first two. Here one must consider the four recurring symbols associated with Vekšin throughout the novel and especially during his journey east: the train, horse, forest /tree/, and sun. Only one of these, the train, is manmade and linked with industralization. The remaining three are intrinsic parts of the natural world, emotionally evocative of country life and Russia's tortuous past, yet they also represent Leonov's vision of the potential greatness of Russia, with her vast human and natural resources.

The horse and train are significant in Vor on symbolic and structural planes. While the horse embodies various traditional associations, the train serves as a reminder of progress and mechanization; the two symbols relate to the principal male characters Vekšin and Zavarixin. For both men the animal possesses practical and aesthetic value: it is a means of transportation but, unlike the train, has consciousness and its physical beauty brings to mind spiritual as well as sexual connotations[15]. Leonov makes use of a train to establish a symmetrical structure: Vor begins with Zavarixin riding a train into city, and ends with Veksin taking the train out of the city into the country. Crucial to the plot structure is the death of Vekšin's beloved horse Sulim; this event explains why Vekšin had killed the prisoner /the latter had shot Sulim/, develops the relationship between Vekšin and San'ka Babkin, and provides insight into Vekšin's emotions.

The final paragraph takes the Vekšin—horse—sun symbolism even further: Vekšin's new life lays the groundwork for Russia's promising future, and the poetic image of his rebirth assumes mythological proportions:

> And as he entered the forest, realizing that this was henceforth to be his second home, the sun, tossing its mane like an untamed horse seeking its rider through the world, was rising over Russia /emphasis added/.

Not only is Vekšin associated with "an untamed horse" and the

rising over Russia, but the horse, "tossing its mane ..." serves as a metaphor for the sun. Light and hope for Vekšin are now contrasted with the previous darkness and despair of the underground. The above image evokes the future of post-revolutionary Russia, and when coupled with "an untamed horse seeking its rider," it is reminiscent of Gogol's "fiery and matchless trojka" at the end of Mertvye duši, L.Leonov views the sun as so significant a symbol for Russia's destiny that he closes each of the four books of Vor with the word itself; compositionally, this strong end position enhances the emphasis placed on the symbol.

The forest has now become Vekšin's second home, underscoring a fundamental change in his relationship with the city: he has adopted the latter as his first home, and in doing so he displays confidence in, and reconciliation with, the city life he had previoulsy scorned. Not only does the forest play a role as a place respite and growth, but its representative, the tree, is used by Leonov to mirror Russia's suffering. Early in the novel Leonov identifies Vekšin's feelings with the fate of a birch tree: both the tree and young Vekšin are "infected" with the stranger's words about the Revolution[16]. The tree has remained a vital component of Leonov's artistic vision, being linked with the past and reaching toward the future[17]. The forest motif also reflects Leonov's abiding belief in the necessity of maintaining historical and cultural continuity, contrary to the theory that the "new man" could build the future without a backward glance at the past.

Even though Zavarixin adjusted more easily to the NEP, it is Vekšin who will be psychologically reborn ath the end of Vor. Leonov's admiration for both characters, however, is manifest in his depictions of them[18]. Neither by himself wholly fits the characteristics of the "new man" or "new Adam," but together they represent an embryonic stage of the Soviet man's development into what Rufus Mathewson has called "a new breed of man, dignified, alive, intelligent, and humane, who bears a closer resemblance to Marx's 'whole man' equipped with a full range of appetites, senses, emotions..."[19]. For reasons of his own, Leonov has withheld certain key pieces to the puzzle of Dmitrij

Vekšin, making it difficult to fill in the gaps in his personality or explain his motives. At the end of the novel, we still do not fully understand what Vekšin wants out of life or how he feels about those persons most important to him, such as Maša Dolomanova. Even the 1959 edition does not adequatelly delve into the inconsistencies in his actions. Vekšin, not unlike his creator, may be doomed to remain unfinished--nedokončennyj--yet always fascinating to those who would study him.

NOTES

1 Frank Kermode, The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction /New York: Oxford University Press, 1967/, pp.3-4

2 Page references throughout this paper are to the following Russian edition of Vor: L.M.Leonov, Vor /Moscow/Leningrad: n. p., 1928; rpt. with introd. Friedrich Scholz, Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1975/. All translations from the original Russian into English are my own.

3 G.Gorbačev, "O 'Vore' Leonida Leonova," Zvezda, No. 2 /1928/ p.147

4 For an account of Leonov's feelings upon being given the opportunity to revise and republish Vor, as well as his recollection, in his own words, of a conversation with Gor'kij in 1931 /originally published in Leninskoe znamja, Moscow, 18 Sept. 1961/, see: I.A.Demčenko, "Tema kul'tury v koncepcii 'Vora'," in Tvorčestvo Leonida Leonowa: Issledovanija i soobščenija. Vstreči s Leonovym. Bibliografija, ed. V.A.Kovalev /Leningrad: Nauka, 1969/, pp. 200-202. Leonov's conversation with Gor'kij has been noted in many other sources, among them R.D.B.Thomson, "Leonid Leonov," Forum for Modern Language Studies /Scotland: University of St.Andrews/, II /1966/ pp.264-273

5 For a comprehensive examination of the "positive hero," see Rufus W.Mathewson, Jr., The Positive Hero in Russian Literature, 2nd ed. /Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975/. Leonov's Doroga na Okean is discussed in Chapter 13, pp.223-253

[6] Puxov /written "Pčxov" in the original/ is not the only character in the novel who serves this function. The former landowner /barin/ Manjukit may also be considered to be a psychological father of Vekšin, which is clear from the many implication that he and Vekšin are related.

[7] Obvious conceptual and stylistic similarities exist between this paragraph and the final paragraph of Dostoevskij's Prestuplenie i nakazanie, except that Dostoevskij shows his hero's transformation and thus makes his rebirth probable, whereas Leonov indicates /but does not show/ the turnabout in Vekšin's way of life.

[8] This is not to imply that there will be no room for women in the new society; if they are to take their place beside the new man, however, they must behave in a fitting manner. Dolomanova's emotional and willful behavior is "improper." In subsequent novels Leonov provides good examples for "new Soviet women" to follow, such as Suzanna in Sot' /1930/ and Liza in Doroga na Okean /1936/.

[9] Zoja Boguslavskaja touches on this theme in her monograph on Leonov, explaining that the disruption of the fundamental harmony between man and nature develops from the demoralizing influence of the civilized world. See her study Leonin Leonov /Moscow: Sovietskij pisatel', 1960/p. 3

[10] The term čikilevščina derives from the petty and ill-meaning bureaucrat in Vor, Petr Gorbidonyč Čikilev, whose ideas are as repugnant as his intellect inadequate.

[11] Unfortunately, this subtle alteration in the hero's name does not appear in Hubert Butler's English translation of Vor: he does not follow the original by distinguishing between "Mit'ka" and "Dmitrij." Cf. pp. 332-349 of the Russian edition cited above and pp. 314-331 of Hubert Butler, trans., The Thief, by Leonid Leonov /n.p.: Dial Press, 1931; rpt. with introd. Rufus W.Mathewson, Jr., New York: Vintage Books, 1960/

[12] Henry James, "The Art of Fiction," in The Portable Henry James,

ed. and introd. Mortom Dauwen Zabel /New York: The Viking Press, 1968/ p.392

[13]The term tekučij geroj is borrowed from Viktor Šklovskij's remarks entitled "Tekučest' i dvojstvennost' razvjazok u Čexova," in his Xudožestvennaja proza: Razmyšlenija i razbory /Moscow: Sovetskij pisatel', 1959/, pp. 492-495. Šklovskij's description of this type of hero evokes Leonov's Vekšin: "Oni kak budto otkrytija, kotorye sdelany pisatelem dlja samogo sebja, pričem otkrytija otvergajut obyčnuju razvjazku, delaja xarakter geroja tekučim" /p.492/.

[14]Nathan Rosen, "The Fiction of Leonid Leonov," Diss. Columbia 1961, p.87. If Leonov did indeed reject Russia's cultural and historical continuity /as he seemed to do in Sot', 1930/, it was only for a brief period. Leonov tried repeatedly to depict the "new man"-- Uvad'ev in Sot', Čerimov in Skutarevskij /1932/, Kurilov in Doroga na Okean /1936/, and Vixrov in Russkij les /1953/. His struggles were in vain, for these characters lack depth and complexity, whereas his most colorful characters remain his anti-heroes and representatives of the narod: Muxolovič of "Konec melkogo čeloveka" /1924/; Vekšin and Manjukin /Vor/; Uvad'ev's mother Varvara of Sot'; and Gleb Protoklitov of Doroga na Okean, among others.

[15]One is reminded of the pasage in Dostoevskij's Brat'ja Karamazovy, in which Father Zosima describes the horse and ox, with their beauty and selfless devotion to man /Part 2, Bk. 6, Ch. 1/. In addition to its beauty, the horse in mythology is often associated with sexual potency.

[16]Rufus W.Mathewson, Jr., Introd., The Thief, by Leonid Leonov, trans. Hubert Butler /see Note = 11/, p.viii

[17]The treatise in Chapter 7 of Russkij les will convince even the most ekeptical critic of Leonov's utmost sincerity and dedication to forest conservation.

[18]At least, in the 1927 edition; in the 1959 version Leonov drastically alters the fate awaiting Zavarixin. Instead of becoming a successful merchant /as in the early edition/, he

is sent to a concentration camp, i.e., is punished for his anti-Soviet activities. Vekšin becomes much less fascinating and less romanically enigmatic in the later edition. For a detailed comparison of the two editions, see: Leonid Isaakovič Mihalap, "Leonid Leonov's Revision of 'Vor': A Case Study of Soviet Literary Censorship," Diss. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill 1973.

[19] Mathewson, Introd., The Thief, p. v.

"ZŁODZIEJ" LEONIDA LEONOWA: PISARZ I POWIEŚĆ - SEDNO RELACJI

Streszczenie

Wymieniona w tytule artykułu powieść budzi do dziś kontrowersje wśród badaczy literatury radzieckiej, gdyż jej problematyka dotyczy nowego bohatera prozy porewolucyjnej, którym w "Złodzieju" jest Wiekszyn. W związku z tym autorka poddaje **szczegółowej analizie finał powieści dając odpowiedź na sformułowane** przez siebie pytania: /1/ czy powrót Wiekszyna do lasu /natury/ był spowodowany jego osobistymi skłonnościami, czy też był w istocie ucieczką przed problemami, z jakimi się zetknął w mieście, /2/ czy Wiekszyn udaje się na wieś, do lasu, by się odrodzić duchowo, ale z zamiarem powrotu do miasta jako nowy człowiek i /3/ co oznacza powrót Wiekszyna do natury dla przyszłości Rosji ?