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Comparison of French and Russian Masterpieces In Literature

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Abstract. The article examines the influence of French culture on Russian. It is known that French culture has influenced and played an important diplomatic role in Russia. Especially in St. Petersburg and in its cultural and artistic history, the influence of French philosophers and thinkers, especially the Enlightenment era, is noticeable.

Key words: literature, culture, dialogue, culture, novel.

INTRODUCTION

Cultural ties are aimed at finding common ground between countries or at creating a positive and at the same time realistic image of the country. One of the most fruitful forms of cultural relations at the international level is the organization of exchange cultural programs between countries. It is worth noting that the form of dialogue is the optimal form for such events [1].

In the eighteenth century, Russia became the object of extraordinary intellectual interest. French enlightening philosophers played a leading role in the development of the definition of "Eastern Europe." They created a new concept of separation. Prior to this, the leading concept was the Renaissance North-South concept, where the North was represented by barbarian tribes and the South by Italian city-states. Thanks to the enlighteners, the opposition changed to the West-East. This led to the creation of a new concept of "Eastern Europe," which, in turn, was inextricably linked with the development of "Orientalism." The main point of "philosophical geography" or "orientalism" was the exclusion of Eastern Europe from Europe and inclusion in Asia. Thus Europe (and France) portrayed itself through opposition to Eastern Europe, where the latter was a kind of bridge between true Europe and the East.

Geography was also instrumental in creating ideological boundaries. In 1716, the Parisian Royal Almanac included Poland in Eastern Europe, and a year later Muscovy was included in this list. This case proves the general trend of the 18th century, when Western Europe had an advantage over Eastern Europe and received the right to decide what geographically and culturally belongs to Europe and what to Asia. Thus, geography

was associated with subordination. With its help, France established relations with other European countries, and Europe formed its attitude towards the rest of the world. The French view of Russia was shaped by the French nobility, philosophers who wrote about their real or imaginary travels to Russia. One of the most notable figures of this period was the French ambassador to St. Petersburg, Count Segur. Recalling his experience in the 1780s, Count Segur believed that Russian noblewomen "were ahead of men in this progressive movement towards improvement: you have already seen many elegant women and girls remarkable for their grace, fluent speakers of seven or eight languages, playing several instruments and familiar with the most famous novelists and poets of France."

Segur portrayed 18th-century St. Petersburg as a chaotic mixture of "a century of barbarism and a century of civilization, a century of the tenth and eighteenth, Asian and European mores, crude Scythians and refined Europeans, brilliant nobility and ignorant crowds." On the one hand, fashionable dresses, magnificent feasts, like in London or Paris. On the other hand, he wrote about merchants in Asian clothes, servants and cabbies in sheepskin coats with long beards and in fur hats.

He added that for fifty years, all (Russians) were taught to imitate foreigners, dress, eat, build houses and furnish them, greet each other, give balls and dinners, as the French, Germans and British did. Segur admitted that Russia is a European country, but its different parts were at different levels of development. He made the following conclusion: Russia had a chance to become similar to Europe, but to Europe feudal (not modern).

In the history of the development of European culture, France has a special role. It had the deepest and longest cultural impact on almost all other Western countries. For centuries (with the exception of the Renaissance, when Italian cultural influences excelled) France was the true cultural metropolis of Europe, Paris - the recognized capital of the European world, French - the only language that could claim the position of international.

The process of Europeanization of the Russian nobility leads in the second half of the 18th century to the spread of the French language in the "best societies" and the formation of conversational, everyday and literary styles of the noble language on a Russian-French basis. The changes affect all areas of the country's cultural and political life. In the field of education, teaching the French language is necessarily included in the program of educational institutions, textbooks and programs of the 30s were written in French and German, speeches for public acts also, reports for academic conferences - in Latin [2].

The Russian perception of France of the 18th century was carried out at two main levels. At the first (official) level, Russia viewed France first as an unattainable ideal of state and social structure, and then, after the revolution, as a "hotbed of republican disease." The second level exposed France as a trendsetter in all aspects of cultural life. The figures of three Russian rulers - Peter the Great, Elizabeth Petrovna and Catherine the Great - will be the focus of attention at the official level.

Peter the Great began to reinvent himself and his aristocracy on a European model. The first thing he did upon his return from Europe in 1698 was to order all boyars to give up their kaftans in favour of Western dress rules. He forbade them to wear beards, ordered his nobles to have fun in a European way. The aristocracy had to learn French, talk politely and dance minuet⁸⁶. Peter, as they often say, turned Russia to Europe. Civility,

a tendency to commerce, interest in the sciences, arts and various innovations have become hallmarks of his time. Although Peter was the first Russian ruler to look at European experience as a source of Russian renewal, his treatment of art and culture in general was utilitarian. His main goal was to create a modern army and navy rather than collecting Old Master paintings. His personal library consisted of 1,500 volumes on military affairs, shipbuilding, works on history, architecture, gardening, etc. In 1703, he founded the city of St. Petersburg, which in 1712 became the capital of the Empire, the cultural laboratory of subsequent centuries and the center of the metaphor of civilizational construction in Russia. He was the first Russian ruler to secularize culture.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analyzing the problem we are considering, it should be recalled that the French culture influenced and played an important diplomatic role in Russia [1].

Both literature turn out to be very similar in the choice of topics. Indeed, we can see important coincidences in the most popular themes: satire, unconventional love stories, revolutionary literature and absurdity - the four main themes in both cultures. However, the way they are treated by their authors often varies widely.

Satire: "The Master and Margarita" by Mikhail Bulgakov and "The Stingy" by Moliere. In these two empires there is a contrast of dominant and strong leaders, then these elites are worth laughing at. Satire and doubt about the existing system have thus not only been the dominant theme of literature for centuries, but have also often served as a trigger for revolutions and protests. However, their humorous tone also often allowed these Romans to witness a social situation at a certain point in time.

How this is done by different and very numerous authors is very interesting and says a lot about the state of mind of the population. Since there are so many works in this area, I decided to focus on two iconic works: "The Master and Margarita" by Mikhail Bulgakov and "The Stingy" by Moliere.

Mikhail Bulgakov's "The Master and Margarita" is a multifaceted story in which realistic characters interact with abstract figures such as Satan and God. In this novel, Bulgakov gives the reader a double satire: not only on individuals, but also on institutions. Indeed, he not only describes mental hospitals, as literary circles, as a parody, but also questions the political police and its leaders. Therefore, the author uses a fantastic frame to portray his gloomy Soviet-era truth.

Molière, on the other hand, also known as the father of French satire, uses a very different method. Indeed, the theater frame gives the author much less creative scope.

This underlines his rule of "one": the play describes one day, one intrigue and one place. Thus, realistic and interesting stories are how he asks questions to the society in which he lives, allowing the audience to ask questions during the play. In this case, Moliere describes the actions of an old father obsessed with his money, and in contrast to the dark Bulgakov novel, Moliere specializes in humor.

Non-standard love stories: "Lolita" by Vladimir Nabokov and "Dangerous Connections" by Pierre Chauderlot de Laclos. If there's one thing in common that unites all cultures and all times, it's romantic literature. However, classics depicting very unconventional love stories are known almost only for French and Russian literature, for better and for worse.

Of course, one cannot fail to mention Nabokov's extremely ambiguous "Lolita." Indeed, the perversity of the story, contrasted with its undeniable beauty and intelligence, makes the reader ashamed of himself for wanting to read further. Indeed, the book tells a "love story" between Humbert Humbert, 40, and Lolita, 12, the daughter of his late wife. Contradictory elements make this book a masterpiece: since the story is told from the perspective of the perpetrator, the reader catches himself thinking that it is a love story, and abroad the cruel behavior of the pervert towards the child. Humbert's awareness of his illness, however, allows him to reflect on it and, in addition, enhances the reader's sympathy for him, as he shows a weak and damaged image of himself when he is actually an executioner. This duality makes this masterpiece unique.

On the other hand, the French are known for their romantic and conflict love stories. One book that shows this in a particularly good light is Pierre Chauderlot de Laclot's *Dangerous Connections*. Exposing the correspondence between the Marquise de Merteuil and the Comte de Vermont, the author tells the story of a rivalry between a man and a woman belonging to the highest French society. The rivalry is based on sexual competition, as the antagonists share their many experiences and partners and try to surpass the performances of their enemy. However, their struggle is on different levels: if the count can openly brag about the hearts he has broken, then the marquise tries to use her charms to defeat the sexual superiority of men, especially those present at that time. As both die as they must pay homage to the troubles they have created, the author still prays for the thrill of romance, warning the reader of the consequences [2].

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