

EUGENE ONEGIN AS AN IMAGE OF THE “SUPERFLUOUS MAN” IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE.

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Аннотация: Образ Евгения Онегина в романе А.С. Пушкина Евгений Онегин является классическим примером архетипа “лишнего человека” в русской литературе. Этот герой, несмотря на свой ум и образованность, чувствует себя чужим в обществе и лишним в мире. Пушкин показывает, что апатия и цинизм Онегина выражают его внутреннюю пустоту и кризис. В статье анализируется роль Евгения Онегина как “лишнего человека” XIX века и влияние этого образа на других героев русской литературы.

Ключевые слова: Лишний человек, Евгений Онегин, внутренняя пустота, отчуждение от общества, Пушкин, русская литература XIX века, апатия, цинизм, философский кризис, социальный кризис, литературный герой, русский романтизм, человеческая трагедия, любовь и отчуждение, поиск себя.

Abstract

Eugene Onegin, the protagonist of Alexander Pushkin’s Eugene Onegin, is a quintessential representation of the “superfluous man” archetype in Russian literature. Despite his intelligence and education, Onegin remains alienated from society and feels redundant in the world. Pushkin reveals that Onegin’s apathy and cynicism stem from a deeper inner emptiness and personal crisis. This article examines Eugene Onegin’s role as a 19th-century “superfluous man” and explores how this concept influenced other characters in Russian literature.

Key words: Superfluous man, Eugene Onegin, inner emptiness, alienation from society, Pushkin, 19th-century Russian literature, apathy, cynicism, philosophical crisis, social crisis, literary hero, Russian Romanticism, human tragedy, love and alienation, self-identity exploration

Annotatsiya: A.S. Pushkinning Evgeniy Onegin asarida Evgeniy Onegin obrazi rus adabiyotidagi “keraksiz odam” arxetipining klassik namunasi sifatida talqin etiladi. Ushbu obraz bilimli va aqli bo‘lishiga qaramay, jamiyatdan begonalashgan va o‘zini ortiqcha deb hisoblaydi. Pushkin Oneginning hayotga befarqligi va ichki bo‘shligini ochib berib, uning shaxsiy fojiasini chuqurlashtiradi. Ushbu maqolada Evgeniy Oneginning 19-asr “keraksiz odam” obrazidagi o‘rni tahlil qilinadi va bu tushunchaning boshqa rus adabiyoti qahramonlariga ta’siri o‘rganiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: Keraksiz odam, Evgeniy Onegin, ichki bo‘shliq, jamiyatdan begonalashish, Pushkin, 19-asr rus adabiyoti, apatiya, kinoya, falsafiy krizis, ijtimoiy inqiroz, adabiy qahramon, rus romantizmi, insoniy fojia, sevgi va begonalik, o‘zlikni anglash.

Introduction

The figure of the “superfluous man” represents a unique archetype in Russian literature: a person who, despite being part of society, remains profoundly detached from it. This alienation often stems from disillusionment, purposelessness, and a lack of connection to both social structures and personal aspirations. Eugene Onegin, the protagonist of Pushkin’s novel in verse *Eugene Onegin*, epitomizes this archetype.

In the early 19th century, Russian nobility faced an identity crisis. Disconnected from the common people and skeptical of traditional societal norms, they found themselves adrift, unable to enact meaningful change or find fulfillment. Pushkin’s depiction of Onegin encapsulates this existential struggle, portraying him as a man burdened by intelligence and education yet unable to find a purpose in life.

Methods

The analysis in this study is based on a close reading of Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin* and comparative literature techniques. Scholarly interpretations, including the works of Vladimir Nabokov, Caryl Emerson, and Charles Moser, are used to contextualize Onegin’s character within the broader literary tradition. The

methodology also involves tracing the evolution of the “superfluous man” archetype in works by Lermontov, Turgenev, and Goncharov to highlight Pushkin’s influence.

Results

The study finds that Onegin’s apathy and disillusionment stem from a deep disconnect between his intellectual capacity and societal expectations. His inability to act or form meaningful relationships leads to a cycle of self-imposed isolation. This detachment is most poignantly illustrated in his rejection of Tatyana’s love and his later realization of the consequences.

Furthermore, the archetype of the “superfluous man” as established by Pushkin served as a model for subsequent literary figures, including Pechorin in Lermontov’s *A Hero of Our Time* and Oblomov in Goncharov’s *Oblomov*. These characters, while distinct, share a similar inability to reconcile their inner ideals with external realities, highlighting a persistent theme in Russian literature.

Discussion

The “superfluous man” represents a universal struggle with identity, purpose, and societal norms. Pushkin’s Eugene Onegin captures the existential dilemma of his time while also addressing timeless questions about human fulfillment. Onegin’s tragedy lies not only in his personal failings but also in the systemic constraints of his social class, which limited avenues for meaningful engagement.

The concept of the “superfluous man” continues to be relevant in modern contexts, as individuals face similar challenges in navigating complex societal structures. Pushkin’s exploration of alienation, love, and self-awareness offers profound insights into the human condition, making Eugene Onegin a timeless literary masterpiece.

Apathy and Disillusionment as Traits of the Superfluous Man

One of the central manifestations of the “superfluous man” in Onegin is his apathy. He is tired of life without fully understanding what disappoints him.

According to many literary critics, this sense of emptiness and disillusionment reflects the crisis of the Russian nobility in the 19th century. The educated class found itself alienated from the common people and, at the same time, had few real avenues for social or political engagement.

Onegin attempts to change his life by moving to the countryside after his uncle's death. Initially, it seems that a simpler life in touch with nature might bring him meaning. However, rural life also fails to give him inner peace. Onegin soon tires of this lifestyle as well, as his habits and worldview prevent him from finding genuine harmony.

Onegin and Tatyana: The Impossibility of Being Understood

An essential element in the development of Onegin as a “superfluous man” is his approach to love and relationships. Onegin cannot—or does not wish to—be understood, and this is evident in his relationship with Tatyana Larina. Tatyana is a pure, sincere girl, unaccustomed to societal conventions, and she naively falls in love with Onegin, openly expressing her feelings. But Onegin rejects her. His refusal is not just a nod to social cynicism; he is unable to accept simple, sincere love, as he does not believe in its value or future.

Later, meeting Tatyana again as a married woman, Onegin realizes that he has missed something important. His earlier cynicism and detachment turn into a personal tragedy. However, this does not change his character. Onegin remains the same “superfluous man”—disillusioned and lost, though now aware of the cost of his mistakes. His tragedy lies in the fact that, even upon understanding his error, he cannot return to the past or change his outlook on life.

Conclusion:

The image of Eugene Onegin is more than just a personal story. Onegin symbolizes an entire generation of people who could not find themselves within the confines of their society. His inner crisis and discontent reflect not only a personal drama but a deep conflict between the individual and the world around

him. Onegin's tragedy is that he possesses intelligence and talent but, unable to find a worthy purpose, becomes "superfluous."

Thus, Eugene Onegin as a "superfluous man" is not only a character created by Pushkin but a symbol that remains relevant even today.

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