

# RUSSIAN LITERATURE

Ayse Dietrich, Ph.D.

## Course Description

This course will provide an intensive introduction to Russian Literature from its beginnings in the 11<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In this course Medieval Russia's historical and cultural makeup, as well as the contents and characteristics of manuscripts from the 11<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> centuries will be examined from the original texts. Later in this course some of the masterpieces of 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Russian literature, among them works by Kantemir, Karamzin, Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev, Goncharov, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Chekhov, Griboyedov, Gorky, Pasternak and many others will be introduced. Students will have chance to look at the writers' works in their social and historical context, examine them as individual representations of their period and consider their place in the evolutionary process of Russian literature. Lectures will aim to give overviews of literary movements such as Neoclassicism, Sentimentalism, Romanticism, Realism, and Symbolism and provide close readings of texts on the syllabus.

## About the Professor

This course has been prepared by Dr. Ayse Dietrich, Professor Emeritus of Russian History, Literature, Language and Linguistics. She has a bachelor degree from Ankara University, Faculty of Letters, Department of Russian Language and Literature. She also has a master degree from the same University. She received a scholarship in 1987 to study in the United States, and received a master's degree from New York University, Department of Russian Language and Literature and a third master's degree and a doctorate from Cornell University, Slavic Department. She was the chair of the Department of Russian Language and Literature at Ankara University since 2008. She is currently working at Middle East Technical University, in the Department of History, teaching courses on Russian and Soviet History. She is the founder and editor of the *International Journal of Russian Studies* (IJORS), published in the U.S.A.

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**Course Materials:***English Sources for the 11<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature:*

- 1- Zenkovsky, S.A., *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*, Meridian, 1974.
- 2- Mirsky, D.S., *A History of Russian Literature, From Its Beginnings to 1900*, Vintage Books Edition, 1958.
- 3- Waliszewski, K., *A History of Russian Literature*, William Heinemann, London, 1900.
- 4- *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, Edited by Charles, A. Moser, Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- 5- Terras, V., *History of Russian Literature*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1991.

*English Sources for the 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature:*

- 1- *A Companion to Russian Literature*, Edited by Neil Cornwell, Routledge, New York, 2001.
- 2- Bortnes, J., *The Poetry of Prose*, Bergen, 2007.
- 3- Balina, Marina, ed. *Russian Writers Since 1980*. Dictionary of Literary Biography, vol. 285. Gale 2004.
- 4- Cizevski, D., *History of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature, The Romantic Period*, Vol.1, 1974.
- 5- Cizevski, D., *History of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature, The Age of Realism*, Vol.2, 1974.
- 6- *Early Modern Russian Writers, Late Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Edited by Marcus C. Levitt. Detroit: Gale Research Inc., 1995.
- 7- *Eighteenth-Century Russian Literature, Culture and Thought: A Bibliography of English-Language Scholarship and Translations*, Edited by Cross, A. G. & Smith, G. S., Newtonville, Mass., 1984.
- 8- Emerson, C., *The Cambridge Introduction to Russian Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- 9- *Handbook of Russian Literature*. Edited by Victor Terras. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1985.
- 10- Holquist, M., *Dostoevsky and the Novel*, Northwestern University Press, Illinois, 1977.
- 11- Kalb, Judith E, ed. *Russian Writers of the Silver Age, 1890-1925*. Dictionary of Literary Biography, vol. 295. Gale, 2004.
- 12- Kasack, Wolfgang. *Dictionary of Russian literature since 1917*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.
- 13- Kropotkin, P., *Russian Literature Ideals and Realities*, University Press of the Pacific Honolulu, Hawaii, 2003.
- 14- Leatherbarrow, W., & Offord, D., *A History of Russian Thought*, Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- 15- Mirsky, D.S., *A History of Russian Literature, From Its Beginnings to 1900*, Vintage Books, New York, 1958.
- 16- Mochulsky, K., *Dostoevsky His Life and Work*, Princeton University Press, 1971.
- 17- Peace, R., *Dostoyevsky, An Examination of the Major Novels*, Cambridge University Press, 1971.
- 18- Proffer, C. & Meyer, R., *Nineteenth-Century Russian literature in English*. A Bibliography of Criticism and Translation. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1990.
- 19- Raeff, Marc, *Russian Intellectual History: An Anthology*, New Jersey, 1978.
- 20- *Reference Guide to Russian Literature*. Edited by Neil Cornwell. London; Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1998.
- 21- *Russian Novelists in the Age of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky*. Edited by Judith E. Kalb and J. Alexander Ogden. Detroit: The Gayle Group, 2001.
- 22- *Russian Literature – Overview and Bibliography*. Edited by Gene V. Palmer. New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2002.
- 23- Rydel, Christine A. *Russian Literature in the Age of Pushkin and Gogol: Poetry and Drama*. Dictionary of Literary Biography, vol. 205. Gale, 1999.
- 24- Segel, H. B., *The Literature of Eighteenth-Century Russia*, 2 vols., New York, 1951.
- 25- *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, Edited by Charles A. Moser, Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- 26- *The Cambridge Companion to Dostoevskii*, Edited by W.J. Leatherbarrow, Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- 27- *The Cambridge Companion to the Classic Russian Novel*, Edited by Malcolm V. Jones and Robin Feuer Miller, Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- 28- Wachtel, A.B. & Vinitzky, I., *Russian Literature*, Polity Press, 2009.
- 29- Wachtel, M., *The Cambridge Introduction to Russian Poetry*, Cambridge University Press, 2004.  
[http://leomars.weebly.com/uploads/4/5/0/6/4506670/russian\\_poetry.pdf](http://leomars.weebly.com/uploads/4/5/0/6/4506670/russian_poetry.pdf)
- 30- Waliszewski, K., *A History of Russian Literature*  
<http://archive.org/details/historyofrussian1910wali>
- 31- Weber, Harry. *The Modern encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet literature*. Gulf Breeze: Academic International, 1977.

32- Wiener, L., *Anthology of Russian Literature, From the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, The Knickerbocker Press, New York, 1902.

*Russian Internet Sources for the 11<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature:*

- 1- <http://www.bibliotekar.ru/rus/>
- 2- <http://old-ru.ru/>
- 3- <http://www.drevne.ru/>
- 4- <http://www.gumer.info/>
- 5- [http://lib.prosv.ru/info.aspx?ob\\_no=17149](http://lib.prosv.ru/info.aspx?ob_no=17149)
- 6- [http://lib.rus.ec/g/antique\\_russian](http://lib.rus.ec/g/antique_russian)
- 7- <http://tululu.ru/drevneruss/letopis.html>
- 8- [http://krotov.info/spravki/history\\_rus/temy/drev\\_rus\\_literatura.htm](http://krotov.info/spravki/history_rus/temy/drev_rus_literatura.htm)

*Russian Internet Sources for the 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature:*

- 1- <http://silver-century.narod.ru/>
- 2- <http://www.rvb.ru/18vek/kantemir/toc.htm> , [http://az.lib.ru/k/kantemir\\_a\\_d/](http://az.lib.ru/k/kantemir_a_d/)
- 3- <http://www.klassika.ru/stihi/trediakovskij/> , [http://az.lib.ru/t/trediakovskij\\_w\\_k/](http://az.lib.ru/t/trediakovskij_w_k/)
- 4- <http://www.klassika.ru/stihi/sumarokov/> , <http://www.sumarokov.org.ru/>
- 5- <http://www.klassika.ru/stihi/lomonosov/> , <http://www.lomonosow.org.ru/>
- 6- <http://www.klassika.ru/stihi/radischev/> , <http://www.radischev.org.ru/>
- 7- <http://www.karamzin.net.ru/> , [http://az.lib.ru/k/karamzin\\_n\\_m/](http://az.lib.ru/k/karamzin_n_m/)
- 8- <http://www.zhukovskiy.net.ru/> , [http://az.lib.ru/z/zhukovskij\\_w\\_a/](http://az.lib.ru/z/zhukovskij_w_a/)
- 9- <http://www.klassika.ru/proza/pushkin/> , <http://lib.ru/LITRA/PUSHKIN/>
- 10- <http://www.klassika.ru/proza/gogol/> , <http://www.ngogol.ru/>
- 11- <http://www.klassika.ru/proza/turgenev/> , <http://www.turgenev.org.ru/>
- 12- <http://www.klassika.ru/proza/goncharov/> , <http://www.goncharow.net.ru/>
- 13- <http://www.klassika.ru/proza/tolstoj/> , <http://www.levtolstoy.org.ru/>
- 14- <http://www.klassika.ru/proza/dostoevskij/> , <http://www.fdostoevsky.ru/>
- 15- <http://www.klassika.ru/proza/chehov/> , <http://www.antonchehov.ru/>
- 16- <http://www.klassika.ru/stihi/krylov/> , <http://www.krylov.net.ru/>
- 17- [http://az.lib.ru/g/griboedow\\_a\\_s/text\\_0010.shtml](http://az.lib.ru/g/griboedow_a_s/text_0010.shtml)
- 18- <http://www.rvb.ru/>
- 19- <http://feb-web.ru/>
- 20- <http://az.lib.ru/>

## *Medieval Russian History*

### *Introduction:*

The lands of Rus, which lie in an area extending from Eastern Europe to central Siberia, are a broad plain bordered by the White Sea and Arctic Ocean to the north and the Black Sea and Caucasus Mountains to the south. The plain starts from the eastern slopes of the Ural Mountains, continues as far as Siberia and ends in the east at the Yenisei River. A number of rivers whose sources lie in the Valdai plateau between Moscow and St. Petersburg flow across this plain. The most important and largest of these rivers is the Volga which starts near the Baltic Sea in the Valdai Hills and flows south for almost 2300 miles to the Caspian Sea. The second most important river is the Dnieper; it too starts in the Valdai Hills and flows south for over 1400 into the Black Sea.

The harsh climate of these plains was able, to a degree, to prevent the lands of Rus from being occupied by foreign invaders. However, the settlement of numerous peoples in the region north of the Black Sea bears witness to how insufficient these natural defenses were. The earliest settlers in the land of Rus, north of the Black Sea, around 1000 BCE were the semi-nomadic Cimmerians who are believed to have come from Thrace. Later, in the 700s BCE the Scythians from Central Asia settled, and by the 200s BCE had taken control of the region. Archeological excavations show that the Scythians were a nomadic people with extremely strong military units. Later in the 200s BCE the Scythians were defeated by an Iranian people, the Sarmatians. The Sarmatians maintained close trade relations with the Greeks for centuries and even intermarried with them. In the 200s CE a Germanic people, the Goths, put an end to Sarmatian dominance in the lands of Rus. The Huns, who were possibly a Turkic tribe, came west out of Central Asia and in 370 CE and swept all before them in the region, eventually reaching Western Europe. After the Huns, the next people to occupy this territory around 558 CE were another Turkic tribe, the Avars. The Avars establish a vast state that extended from the Volga to the Elbe. The settlement of the Slavs in the Balkans and Bohemia, and the establishment of their first political organization are believed to be due to the influence of the Avars.

It is uncertain exactly when the Slavic tribes settled in the valley of the Dnieper. However, Byzantine sources record that the first Slavs came from central Europe in the 6th century and that they served with Avar troops. The first information concerning the settlement of the first Slavic tribes in the lands of Rus is found in a work written during the time of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I (527-565). The 6th century statesman and author Procopius mentions the Sclavenes and Antes living in the lands of Rus in his work *History of the Wars*.

In the 7th century another Turkic tribe, the Khazars, become dominant in the lands of Rus. The Khazars established the largest political organization in Eastern Europe, built castles and cities, and established a large state in the region of the lower Volga and Don Rivers and the region where the Terek River approaches the Caspian Sea. They collected taxes from the Volga Bulgars and some East Slavic tribes that were subject to them. The Khazars halted the Arab assaults that threatened Europe in the 8th century and brought peace, stability and religious tolerance to the region. It is said that the Khazars, who accepted Judaism in the 9th century, are among the ancestors of the eastern European Jews.

In the 8th-9th centuries we see that the Vikings coming from Scandinavia to the lands of Rus, along the length of the Dnieper to the Black Sea. Starting from this time the Vikings would put the Slavic tribes around Lake Ladoga and Lake Ilmen under their rule and began to establish cities.

Vladimir the Saint accepted Christianity in 988 and the various Slavic tribes were united by the new religion during the 10th and 11th centuries. Throughout the 11th century the grand dukes of Kiev held what centralizing power there was. Kiev was destroyed by the Mongols in 1240 and the Russian territory was divided among a number of smaller states. Russia was put under the rule of the Khanate of the Golden Horde, a part of the Mongol Empire that extended across most of the Asian continent. Over the next two centuries Moscow would gradually become the provincial capital and the center of the Orthodox Church in Russia.

Ivan III acquired Novgorod and Tver in the late 15th century and threw off Mongol domination. The first Muscovite tsar, Ivan IV, the Terrible (1533-1584) is regarded as the founder of the Russian state. Although he destroyed the power of rival princes and boyars (landowners), Russia retained the characteristics of a medieval state until the reign of Peter the Great (1689-1725).

*Reading Assignments:*

- 1- Dolukhanov, P.M., *The Early Slavs*, Longman, London & New York, 1996.
- 2- Heyman, N.M., *Russian History*, McGraw-Hill Inc., 1993.
- 3- Martin, J., *Medieval Russia*, Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- 4- Milner-Gulland, R., *The Russians*, Blackwell Publishers, 1997.
- 5- Procopius, *History of the Wars*, Books VI.16-VII.35., Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England, 1992.
- 6- Montgomery, J.E., Ibn Fadlan and the Rusiyyah,  
<http://www.library.cornell.edu/colldev/mideast/montgo1.pdf>

*Questions:*

- 1- How does Procopius in his *History of the Wars* talk about the Slavs?
- 2- What is the origin of the name Rus'? Who are the Russians?
- 3- Why does Russian literature begin after the adoption of Christianity? How was it influenced by Russian sources, and what are the elements which stand out from these sources?

## Russian Culture Through the 11<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries

### *Introduction:*

The first inhabitants of the lands of Rus survived primarily by hunting and, to a lesser degree, agriculture. Since the territory in which they had settled consisted of swamps and forests it was not particularly conducive to agriculture, with the result that hunting, beekeeping, fishing and the fur trade were the most important activities in making a living. They could farm only by cutting trees and then working the fields they had created. At the same time, the forests provided the East Slavic tribes with the materials to make timber houses, wooden plates, and shoes and clothing from tree bark.

The East Slavs' commercial, economic and political relations with their neighbors (the Finns, Balts, Iranian tribes, Byzantines and other Slavic tribes), together with their acceptance of Christianity created the need for a writing system unique to their language. The transition from paganism to Christianity took place in the 10th century, and the ancient culture Byzantium, one of the most advanced in that period, was assimilated by the Russians.

When Prince Vladimir accepted the Eastern Orthodox faith in 988, he began the process of importing into Rus' of a large collection of religious works that had been translated during the previous century from Greek into the the Slavic language. These literary works formed the base for the development of literature in Rus'.

In addition to translated literature, the writing of original literature flowered in Rus' in the 11th and 12th centuries. All literary activity was conducted by churchmen, so the works of this period were either clearly religious in content or else displayed a strong religious influence. The literature produced in Kievan Rus' consisted of chronicles, homiletic works, and saints' biographies.

The Russians did not blindly adopt the customs of outsiders, but adopted them by adapting them to their own culture. In the villages it is impossible to find traces of these foreign customs which were seen more as a form of oppression in the large cities. It is clear that the conservative Russian villages preserved these ancient customs.

Prior to the adoption of Christianity the Russian people worshiped pagan gods, fairies, spirits, the earth, trees, stones, fire, the sun and water. In order to cure people of illness the Russians would place them in trees whose trunks were split or broken, seek sacred stones, and offer them to the forests, lakes, and wells. The burials of princes and nobles become elaborate rituals; burial mounds were made for the dead, and one of their wives or slaves was buried with them. After the burial competitions were arranged and memorial meals were given.

The Russians' religion was also based on the influence of hunting and agriculture, and for these people things such as fields, forests, rivers, lakes, pools, houses, and stables held great importance. As a result their religious thinking and emotions were formed within the framework of this life. These people who obtained their living from hunting and from the earth sought the aid of supernatural powers to protect them from difficulties and dangers they encountered in their daily lives and to live in peace, even giving these powers a corner in their homes.

The acceptance of Christianity in Kievan Russia began a new era in Russian history. In the late 10th century the centers of eastern and western Christianity were Constantinople and Rome. By accepting Christianity from Byzantium the Russians moved in the direction of Byzantine civilization, and were thus isolated from Rome, and western culture. Through Byzantium the Russians took the customs of Near Eastern, Greek and Christian civilizations "ready-made", but adopted them by giving them a uniquely Russian character. The political hegemony of princes recognized by the Orthodox Church in Byzantium was carried to Kievan Russian also, and was the reason for the princes' consolidation of their power. At the same time, Christianity ended the separation between the indigenous and foreign tribes, merging these peoples with one another. Not only the Slavic tribes, but the Finnish tribes, too, were forced to accept Christianity, and thus, the first step in the new religion's spread from Kiev to Lake Ilmen. As soon as Christianity had been accepted, beginning with Kiev churches and monasteries were constructed, icons made and craftsmen were brought from Byzantium. Kiev became a religious center; the Metropolitan of Kiev was appointed from Constantinople and became the highest ranking religious leader in Russia. The first Metropolitan for the Russians was Greek, and this situation that would continue to 15th century. In 1051 the Metropolitan Ilarion, a Russian, was accepted by Constantinople, but remained in his post for only one year. The rules for the churches in Russia (Nomokanon) were also brought from Byzantium.

The 15th century was the period in which the Moscow church declared its independence. The Metropolitan of Moscow, Isidore, who had signed the declaration of the Council of Ferrara-Florence reuniting the eastern and

western churches, was removed from his position. The newly appointed Metropolitan, Iona, was the Metropolitan of Moscow and thus the head of the independent Orthodox Church. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Moscow's dream of becoming the Third Rome resulted in Moscow's status as a patriarchate being accepted.

The Muscovite period lasted from approximately 1400 to 1700. After tentative attempts, around 1480 Moscow became the unquestioned capital, and the pinnacle of Muscovite literary culture was reached in the 1550s, during the reign of Tsar Ivan the Terrible. However, the writers of Moscow did not continue the literary innovations which appeared toward the end of the Kievan period. Rather, they created strict imitations of existing literary genres; their main achievement was the extensive collections of chronicles and hagiographies which they compiled in the 16th century. The most distinctive characteristic of this period's literature is its conscious service of state policies.

In the 16th century the Church was completely under the control of the state, so much so that Ivan IV removed the Metropolitan Philipp from his post, and going further, he later had him killed. In this period the struggles between two church groups, the *Possessors* and *Nonpossessors* ended with the victory of the *Possessors*, and both the state's power and the Church's properties increased more.

Known as the Time of Troubles, the 17th century was a period in which the Russian church turned its back on Catholic politics. The Patriarch Filaret, who had assumed position after the death of the Patriarch Germogen, gained fame with anti-Catholic policies. As he was also the father of Tsar Mikhail Romanov, he was given the title *Great Lord*.

Russian art and architecture prior to the acceptance of Christianity consists of idols from the pagan period made of wood and stone, and burial mounds. In the 10th century we see that wood craftsmanship held an important place, while in the 11th century we can see an increase in the number of structures made from stone. In the second half of the 12th century and early years of the 13th century both churches and princes' palaces were made of stone. These structures display an architectural style that displays a synthesis of Byzantine elements combined with local traditions.

In the late 14th century and early 15th century the murals of the Greek artist Feofan Grek in Novgorod and Moscow bear witness Russian painting. The icons of the monk Andrei Rublev were the masterpieces of Russian icon painting which was in its golden age in this period.

The two schools of architecture opened in Novgorod and Pskov left their mark on Russian architecture in the 15th century. The Moscow School of Architecture, established on the basis of the architectural traditions of Pskov and Novgorod, later became one of the most important schools.

The building of stone churches and castles continued in the 16th century. Churches and cathedrals built in this period show the influence of Italian architecture.

In 17th century architecture, however, the main building material is again wood. The wooden tsar's palace in Kolomenski is decorated with wood carvings and colorful paintings on the ceiling.

The story of Russian literature begins in 988 - a date of great importance in Russian political and cultural history, when the ruler of Kievan Rus officially accepted Christianity and made it the new faith of his realm. Prior to this date there was no written literature in Rus, but with his conversion Prince Vladimir laid the foundation for what is now known as medieval Russian literature, although it would not attain its true form — on the basis of the literature which survived the destruction of the Mongol invasions - for a number of years thereafter. But the eastern Slavs received an alphabet created by Cyril and Methodius, and also became heirs to the extensive Byzantine cultural heritage which had already been and would later be translated from the Greek.

The needs of the church were clearly predominant in the foreign works which were translated during this period: almost all were from Greek originals, and religious in nature.

Written in 1056-1057, the *Ostromirovo evangeliye* (*The Ostromir Gospel*) is the oldest Russian manuscript which can be securely dated. Hilarion's *Slovo o zakone i blagodati* (*Sermon on Law and Grace*) is another notable work of Old Russian literature.

Hagiography, or biographies of the saints, was the most common genre of Old Russian literature, with a number of works from the earliest period. Among these surviving works are a chronicle and two hagiographies of Boris and Gleb, the first Russian saints.

*The Tale of Igor's Campaign*, an epic poem about Prince Igor's raid against the Polovtsy (Kipchak), his capture, and his escape is one of the masterpieces of Old Russian literature. The Campaign was written some time between 1185 and 1187 and was re-discovered in 1795 by Count Musin Pushkin. However, the manuscript was destroyed in the Moscow fire of 1812. Fortunately, a copy has survived which had been made for Catherine II. A number of scholars have questioned the poem's authenticity, but the majority of experts now accept its authenticity. The destructive infighting among the Russian princes is the main topic of this work.

In the period between Vladimir's conversion and the Mongol invasions in the early 13th century, Kiev was the cultural and political center of Rus, as well the capital and seat of the new Russian church's metropolitan. It was not until the late 13th century that Kievan Rus was able to recover from the results of the Mongol invasion. The first areas to recover were Novgorod and Pskov, since they had not suffered from the raids of the Tatars. These cities, ruled by local assemblies, developed a unique culture. Leadership in the north-eastern lands was transferred from the Principality of Vladimir to Moscow in the early 14th century, which would then fight for leadership against Tver for another century. Functioning as one of the border fortresses of north-eastern Russia, Moscow was a part of the Vladimir lands. By leaving Vladimir and settling in Moscow in 1324, Metropolitan Peter transferred the residence of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The late 14th century was marked by one of the most important events in Russian history - the first serious blow to the Golden Horde dealt by Dmitry Donskoy and his army in 1380.

Reflecting these political conditions, the chronicles and saints' lives served the interests of different local powers. A series of works in assorted genres, known collectively as the Kulikovo cycle, celebrated the first Russian victory over the Tatars in 1380 under the leadership of Grand Prince Dmitry Ivanovich Donskoy. A less-accomplished imitation of the Igor Tale, the *Zadonshchina* glorifies Dmitry Donskoy.

The most important hagiography of this period is the *Life of Saint Sergius of Radonezh* written by Epifany Premudry.

Mid -15th century Russia was characterized by bloody internal conflicts for the Moscow seat of the Grand Prince. Ivan III only managed to unite the Russian lands around the end of the 15th century, and ended Russia's subjugation to the Golden Horde after the Great standing on the Ugra River in 1480.

After the end of Mongol rule, Moscow gradually became the center of the most powerful state and through a combination of diplomacy and conquest was able to establish its rule over European Russia. Ivan III (1462-1505) saw his state as the heir to Byzantium and even referred to it as "the Third Rome". The Romanov dynasty was established a century later under Tsar Mikhail in 1613.

Concurrent with Moscow's increasing power, a number of writings appeared on the subject of "translation of empire", writings whose purpose was to legitimize Russia's imperial claims. They sought to do achieve this by creating elaborate genealogies and relating accounts of how imperial and ecclesiastical regalia were transferred to Russia. Among the most influential of these works was the monk Filofei's epistle to Vasily III (written between 1514 and 1521). In it he put forward the claim that in the wake of the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople (the second Rome), Moscow was the Third Rome of the only truly Christian state, Orthodox Russia. In essence, this proposition was an attempt to legitimize Russian ambitions.

A number of encyclopedic works, including the voluminous *Sermon on Law and Grace*, the *Code of Laws*, and other collections were indications of the consolidation of power in Moscow. One of the most well-known examples is the *Domostroy*, or rules for household management.

Some of the other well-known works of the period include stories designed to entertain; the *Tale of Peter and Fevroniya* is one such example. A merchant, Afanasy Nikitin, describes his voyages to Persia and India between the years 1466-1472 in his *Journey Beyond Three Seas*. However, one of the most significant aspects of this period is the fact that the Renaissance completely bypassed Russia, a fact which only helped to increase the cultural differences between Russia and the West. Russia would not produce the secular literature found in the West.



*Reading Assignments:*

- 1- Koptev, A., "Ritual and History: Pagan Rites in the Story of the Princess' Revenge"  
(The Russian *Primary Chronicle*, under 945–946) <http://www.glossa.fi/mirator/pdf/i-2010/ritualandhistory.pdf>
- 2- Fedotov, G.P., *The Russian Religious Mind*,  
<http://www.revelation2seven.org/WebPages/SideLinks/TheRussianMind.htm>
- 3- Horace G. Lunt. "On the Relationship of Old Church Slavonic to the Written Language of Early Rus'."  
*Russian Linguistics* 11. 1987. 133-62.

*Questions:*

- 1- Which deities did the pagan Russians worship?
- 2- How was Christianity reflected in Russian culture?
- 3- Is it possible to see the traces of pagan culture today?

## 11<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature

### *Introduction:*

The oldest translation to survive from the 11th century is a decorated religious manuscript written on parchment. This work, written by the deacon Gregory, is the *Ostromir Gospel* (*Ostromirovo evangelie*). Written between 1056-1057, this Gospel also includes rites arranged by the days of the week. The *Apostle* (*Apostol*), which includes 21 books of the New Testament, contains the epistles of Jesus' disciples and accounts of their lives. After these works comes the *Sermon on Law and Grace* (*Novgorodskie sluzhebnye chet'i i mnei*), written in the years between 1095-1097 and containing sacred songs and hymns arranged by day and month. With the acceptance of Christianity proverbs from religious works began to be translated into Old Russian. The most important of these is the *Book of Psalms* (*Psaltyr'*), containing religious hymns.

At the same time during this period Byzantine historical works were translated into the Russian language. The best known of these is the *Alexandria* which contains legends and stories about Alexander the Great, his life and his victories. Another important translated work is the *Deeds of Devgeni* (*Devgenievo deyanie*), about the deeds of the Byzantine epic hero Digenis. All of these translated works were read by the princes, landowners, merchants and churchmen of that period, giving the Russian people the opportunity to become acquainted with other cultures. It is known that from the 11th century on wealthy families had their children, both boys and girls, taught to read and write. For example, Vladimir Monomakh's sister Yanka had a monastery built in Kiev and opened a school for girls' education there.

The most important work written in the period between the end of the 11th century and the beginning of the 12th century is the *Primary Chronicle* (*Povest' vremennyh let*). Other important works from the early 12th century are the *Testament of Vladimir Monomakh* (*Pouchenie Vladimira Monomakha*) and *The Tale of Igor's Campaign* (*Slovo o polku Igoreve*).

### *Sermon on Law and Grace*

Among the most important religious stories of the 11th century is the *Hilarion's Sermon on Law and Grace* (*Slovo o zakone i blagodati Ilariona*). The *Sermon* was written in the time of Yaroslav Mudriy by the first Russian bishop of Kiev, Hilarion, between 1037 and 1050, the Russian state's most brilliant period both politically and culturally. In the *Sermon* Hilarion compares the Old Testament with the New Testament.

### *Primary Chronicle*

The *Primary Chronicle* consists of manuscripts written by Nestor in the Pecherskiy Monastery in Kiev some time in the first half of the 12th century, and covers the history of Russia between the years 1040-1118. The *Chronicle* begins with the genealogy of the Slavs.

### *Testament of Vladimir Monomakh*

The *Testament of Vladimir Monomakh* holds an important place in the literature of the 11th and 12th centuries. The work is written in the form of a will addressed to Vladimir Monomakh's children shortly before his death.

### *The Tale of Igor's Campaign*

Another significant work composed in the last years of the 12th century is *The Tale of Igor's Campaign*. The *Tale* was first brought to scholarly attention in the 18th century by the manuscript collector Musin Pushkin. It was written in the principality of Kiev-Chernigov in a period when the Kievan state was divided among feudal princes, its political and cultural importance had been lost, and campaigns against the Cumans ended in defeat.

*Reading Assignments:*

- 1- Zenkovsky, S.A., *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*, Meridian, 1974, p. 85-90.
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- 3- Zenkovsky, S.A., *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*, Meridian, 1974, p. 153-160.
- 4- Mirsky, D.S., *A History of Russian Literature, From Its Beginnings to 1900*, Vintage Books Edition, 1958, p. 3-17.
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- 6- Zenkovsky, S.A., *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*, Meridian, 1974, p. 43-84.
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- 9- Zenkovsky, S.A., *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*, Meridian, 1974, p. 167-190.
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*Questions:*

- 2- Describe the cultural and the religious life during the reign of Yaroslav the Wise.
- 3- What do Medieval Russian records from the 11<sup>th</sup> century reveal about the style of writing?
- 4- How do the writings about saints' lives differ from modern biographical stories?
- 5- What different literary genres are found in the *Primary Chronicle*? What are the characteristics of the *Chronicle*?
- 6- Talk about the style and structure of the *Tale of Igor's Campaign*.
- 7- Talk about the period in which the *Tale* was written.
- 8- Read the *Tale of Igor's Campaign* and discuss how it is different from earlier texts?
- 9- Why are the Russian travelers' accounts important?

### *13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature*

The most important documents written on birch bark at the beginning of the 13th century were the *Novgorod Birch bark Writings* (*Novgorodskaya berestyanyaya gramota*) from around the year 1200, and personal and commercial letters.

The other important works of this century are the *Supplication of Daniil Zatochnik* (*Molenie Daniila Zatochnika*), *The Battle on the River Kalka* (*Povest' o bitve na reke Kalke*), *The Tale of the Destruction of Riazan by Batu* (*Povest' o razorenii Ryazani Batyem*), *The Tale of the Downfall of Russia* (*Slovo o pogibeli Russkoy zemli*) and *The Tale of Life of Aleksander Nevsky* (*Zhitie Aleksandra Nevskogo*).

The themes of almost all works composed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century are the establishment of the centralized Russian state, the unity of Russian territory, the struggles to re-establish the independence of the lands invaded by the Tatars, and the crushing defeat inflicted on the leader of the Golden Horde, Mamai Khan, at the Battle of Kulikovo in the late 14th – early 15th centuries.

The most important literary works of this century are the *Story About the Bloody Battle of Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich with Mamai* (*Povest' o poboishche velikogo knyazya Dmitriya Ivanovicha na Donu s Mamaem*), *Zadonshchina* (*Zadonshchina*), *Story About the Bloody Battle of Mamai* (*Skazanie o Mamaevom poboishche*), *The Life of the Metropolitan Peter* (*Zhitie metropolita Petra*), and *The Story About Timur Aksak* (*Povest' o Temir Aksake*).

#### *Supplication of Daniil Zatochnik*

An important early manuscript written in the 13th century is *Supplication of Daniil Zatochnik*, in two versions, the *Supplication* and the *Address*, found in copies from the 16th and 17th centuries. Both are believed to derive from an original version composed in the last decades before the Tatar invasions.

#### *The Tale of the Battle on the River Kalka*

The consequences of the Mongol invasions are depicted in the *Tale of the Battle of the River Kalka*, which survives in four separate versions: 1 - Lavrent'yev chronicle, 2 – First Novgorod chronicle, 3 - Īpat'yev chronicle, 4 - Tverskiy manual.

#### *The Tale of the Destruction of Riazan by Batu*

Written in the mid-13th century, *The Tale of the Destruction of Riazan by Batu* centers on the historical events during the Tatar's invasion of Ryazan on December, 1237.

#### *The Tale of the Downfall of Russia*

Another important composition from the same period is the *Tale of the Downfall of Russia*. It is an anonymous work focusing on the Tatar invasion of Russian territory. However, a complete version of the *Tale* does not exist.

#### *The Tale of Life of Aleksander Nevsky*

The *Tale of the Life of Alexander Nevsky*, written at the end of the 13th century, relates the life of Alexander Nevsky (1221-1262) and the important events that occurred during his reign. The main subjects of this work written after the death of Alexander Nevsky are the wars with the Livonian knights at Lake Cud, with the Swedes at Lake Neva, and his victories in other wars.

#### *Story about the Bloody Battle of Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich with Mamai*

One of the first works of the 14th century, the *Story about the Bloody Battle of Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich with Mamai* relates events prior to the Battle of Kulikovo. The epic ends with the murder of Mamai by Tokdamish, Tokdamish becoming the Golden Horde's new khan, the failure of the Russians (who had been weakened after the Battle of Kulikovo) to muster the courage to start a new war against the Golden Horde which was marching on Moscow, the siege of Moscow and the Russians' agreement to pay tribute.

### *Zadonshchina*

Another work composed in the last years of the 14th century and whose subject is the Battle of Kulikovo is the *Zadonshchina*, written by Sofoniy. It relates how the failure of the princes in Kayala to unite owing to the disputes among them resulted in Prince Igor's defeat. Inspired by the rhetoric in *The Tale of Igor's Campaign*, this work seems to criticize the defeat described in *The Tale* and shows how victory should have been won.

### *Story about the Bloody Battle of Mamai*

The main theme of this work written in the mid-15th century is the unity and integrity of the princes. The predominant idea in the work is the necessity for the Russian princes to unite in the war with Mamai for the sake of the Russian lands.

### *The Life of Metropolitan Peter*

Prepared by Prokhor of Rostov and re-written by Kiprian in the 15th century, *The Life of the Metropolitan Peter* appears to be a work in which Kiprian defends himself through the personality of Peter.

### *The Story about Timur Aksak*

Composed of two parts, the first part of *The Story about Timur Aksak* contains a legendary biography of Timur. The second part relates how an icon of the Virgin Mary was brought from Vladimir to Moscow after it was learned that Timur was on the borders of Russia, and Timur's withdrawal from Russian territory.

#### *Reading Assignments:*

- 1- Zenkovsky, S.A., *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*, Meridian, 1974, p. 193-198.
- 2- Zenkovsky, S.A., *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*, Meridian, 1974, p. 224-236.
- 3- Zenkovsky, S.A., *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*, Meridian, 1974, p. 249-255.
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- 5- Supplication of Daniil Zatochnik <http://clover.slavic.pitt.edu/zatochnik/>
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[http://www.shsu.edu/~his\\_ncp/Zadon.html](http://www.shsu.edu/~his_ncp/Zadon.html)
- 9- *Zhitie metropolitana Petra* <http://people.ds.cam.ac.uk/jrh11/petmetpar.doc>
- 10- *Povest' o Temir Aksake*  
[http://www.gumer.info/bibliotek\\_Buks/History/Article/pov\\_temir.php](http://www.gumer.info/bibliotek_Buks/History/Article/pov_temir.php)

#### *Questions:*

- 1- Are there any stylistic changes in writings after the Mongol conquest?
- 2- Which Medieval Russian sources talk about the Mongol conquest? How are the Mongols described in the tales?
- 3- Describe the major events which occurred in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and their significance.
- 4- What sources mention the battle of Kulikovo?
- 5- Was the battle of Kulikovo the end of Mongolian domination?
- 6- What is the connection between the *Zadonshchina* and the *Tale of Igor's Campaign*? What similarities do you see to the *Tale*?

## 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature

In the works written in the last years of the 14th century and the early years of the 15th century, when patriotic consciousness reached its peak, reflections of this consciousness are clearly seen in the works of writers such as Epifaniy Premudriy, Maksim Grek and Andrey Rublev. Biographies maintained their place in the literature of this period.

Important works from the 15th century include *The Life of Stephen Permsky (Zhitie Stefana Permskogo)*, *The Life of Sergiy Radonezhsky (Zhitie Sergiya Radonezhskogo)*, *Nestor Iskander's Tale on the Taking of Tsargrad (Povest' Nestora Iskandera o vzyatii Tsar'grada)*, Afanasy Nikitin's *Journey across Three Seas (Khozhenie za tri morya Afanasiya Nikitina)*.

16th century literature consists of popular literature on socio-political subjects. Writers both within and outside of the church dealt with the most important state and societal issues in their works.

The most important works of 16th century literature are *The Tale of the Princes of Vladimir (Skazanie o knyazyakh Vladimirkikh)*, *Legend of Sultan Mehmet (Skazanie o Magmete-saltane)*, *Great Monthly Readings (Velikie Chet'i - Minei)*, *The Book of Degrees of the Tsars' Genealogy (Kniga stepennaya tsarskogo rodosloviya)*, *Chronicle of Kazan (Skazanie o Kazanskom tsarstve)* and *Domostroy (Domostroy)*.

The most important reform carried out in the mid-16th century during the time of Ivan the Terrible who took the throne after the death of Vasiliy III was the start of printing. The first Russian book *Apostol* was printed by Ivan Fedorov in 1564. In these years in which the rate of literacy outside the church increased greatly, Ivan Fedorov's first grammar book *Alphabet (Bukvar')*, and Lavrentiya Zilzaniya's *Grammar (Grammatika)* were published in 1574 and 1596 respectively.

The continuing social conflicts, foreign interventions, changes in the socio-economic life of the country, and the unavoidable influence of western European culture all played a major role in the development of 17th century Russian culture. In this century we see that the attempts of Russian culture, which was beginning to become more universal, to free itself from the influences of church become more important.

In this period, called by contemporaries as the *Time of Troubles (Smutnoe vremya)*, works whose subjects were the period's stormy event were written by both churchmen and lay authors. Of these, one group of writers wrote works such as *The Tale of the Year 1606 (Povest' 1606 goda)*, and *Metaphor (Inoe skazanie)* claiming that the ruling landowner class would save the the Russian people from this confusion. Another group of writers produced works whose topics were the people's hopes, behavior and psychology, such as *The Tale of the Death of Mikhail Vasil'yevich Skopin-Shuyskiy (Povest' o prestavlenii ry Mihaila Vasil'evicha Skopina-Shuyskogo)*, *The New Tale of the Orthodox Russian Tsardom (Novaya povest' o preslavnom Rossiyskom tsarstve)*.

In the second half of the 17th century for the first time a history book, *Synopsis (Sinopsis)*, written by the monk Innokentiy Gizel was published. This was followed by Andrei Lizlov's *History of the Scythians (Skifskaya istoriya)* and S.U. Remezov's *History of Siberia (Istoriya Sibirskaya)*.

The most important works written in this period were *The Life of Avvakum (Zhitie protopopa Avvakuma)*, *The Tale of Ersh Ershovich (Povest' o Ershe Ershoviche)*, *The Tale of Woe and Misfortune (Povest' o Gore-Zlochastii)*, and *The Tale of Savva Grudtsyn (Povest' o Savve Grudtsyne)*.

### *The Life of Stephen Permsky*

*The Life of Stephen Permsky*, written by Epifaniy Premudriy, was composed in the early years of the 15th century. The subject of the work is the canonization of Stephen Permsky, who faithfully served the prince of Moscow and who, in addition to his church duties, played a major role in the efforts to unite the Russian territories around the Moscow state.

### *The Life of Sergiy Radonezhsky*

*The Life of Sergiy Radonezhsky*, also written by Epifaniy Premudriy, relates the struggle to prevent Sergiy from being included in the ranks of the saints.

### *Nestor Iskander's Tale on the Taking of Tsar'grad*

The conquest of Constantinople by Mehmet II brought an end to the almost 600-year-long religious and cultural relations between the Russians and the Byzantine Empire, and the subsequent transfer of the political sovereignty of Rome's successor the Byzantine Empire to its successor, Moscow, and Moscow's status as the Third Rome became subjects of debate.

The theme of Constantinople's fall was the subject of a number of manuscripts. The most important of these was *Nestor Iskander's Tale on the Taking of Tsar'grad*. Beginning with an explanation of how Constantinople was founded, it ends with a description of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI's defense of the city.

### *Afanasy Nikitin's Journey across Three Seas*

In addition to tales and biographies, travelogues were also written in this century. The most significant of these is *Afanasy Nikitin's Journey across Three Seas*. It describes the journeys a

### *The Tale of the Princes of Vladimir*

In *The Tale of the Princes of Vladimir*, written at the beginning of the 16th century, significant ideas related to the autocracy's official doctrines are presented. It is recorded in the *Tale* that the Russian princes are from the line of the Roman emperor Augustus, and that Vladimir Monomakh received the symbol or tsardom from the Byzantine emperor. Writers of the period began to debate in their works such subjects as the structure of the state and its development; laws and justice; the role of the church in the state and its acquisition of property; and the problems of the peasants.

### *Legend of Sultan Mehmet*

In the first half of the 16th century, when the autocracy of the landowners was at its height, the writer and ideologue Ivan Peresvetov, who came to Moscow from western Russia, found himself in the midst of a political war. He depicted the dangerous effects of the landowners' system determining the fate of the state in his work titled the *Legend of Tsar Constantine*. In his work the *Legend of Sultan Mehmet*, written as a type of satire, Peresvetov compared the Byzantine Empire with Sultan Mehmet's rule.

### *Great Monthly Readings*

One of the most important works written in the mid-16th century is the 12-volume *Great Monthly Readings* prepared according to the order of the months by the Metropolitan Makariy. He became Metropolitan during the time of Ivan the Terrible, and in this book that he wrote to strengthen the church's authority includes saints' lives, tales, monks' writings and readings from the Gospels arranged according to Christian holidays and saints' days. Makariy, with the exception of those not approved by the church, by including all the books read in Russia in his work, formed, in a sense, the first compilation of Russian literature.

### *The Book of Degrees of the Tsars' Genealogy*

*The Book of Degrees of the Tsars' Genealogy*, written by the priest Andrei Afanasiy through the initiative of Metropolitan Makariy, presents the genealogical order of 17 generations of tsars, beginning with Rurik up to Ivan the Terrible. In addition to the lives of the tsars, biographies of the metropolitans and saints are also given in the book.

### *Chronicle of Kazan*

The *Chronicle of Kazan*, written in the mid-16th century is a tale in 100 chapters. It covers all historical events from the founding of the Kazan Khanate to its fall in 1552.

### *Domostroy*

The *Domostroy* is an anonymous work composed in the mid-16th century which contains household rules, instructions and advice on the various religious, social and family matters of Russian society. Rather than a didactic work, the *Domostroy* is more of a record of the social and political structure of the Russian people in the medieval period.

### *The Life of Avvakum*

In the second half of the 17th century the abbot Avvakum defended the position that only religion held a higher position than the tsar, and opposed the Patriarch Nikon who had caused the church to split into factions by making small changes in the rituals and practices of the church. Not only did he oppose the Patriarch and struggle against him, he opposed the use of overly elaborate language, and by his masterful use of the simple language of the people, put his mark on the development of Medieval Russian literature.

### *The Tale of Ersh Ershovich*

The writer of *The Tale of Ersh Ershovich*, written as a satire at the beginning of the 17th century, is unknown. The subject of the tale is the case between Ersh Ershovich, a member of the landowning class who was attempting to maintain his hold on Lake Rostov by force, and the lake's long-time owners the villagers Leshch and Golavl.

### *The Tale of Woe and Misfortune*

The main subject of the anonymous *Tale of Woe and Misfortune*, written in the second half of the 17th century in the form of a poem, is the tragic fate of the young generation which was struggling to free itself from old dogmas. In this work the conflict between old generation, made up of good people who say that the family and the young return home, and the new generation, who see freedom superior to everything else, oppose the patriarchal family and break their bonds with this family and the bitter fate that eventually awaits this new generation are presented.

### The Tale of Savva Grudtsyn

The anonymous *Tale of Savva Grudtsyn*, like *The Tale of Woe and Misfortune*, has the conflict between two generations as its subject. *The Tale of Savva Grudtsyn* is considered to represent a transition period between the literature of medieval and modern Russia.



*Reading Assignments:*

- 1- Zenkovsky, S.A., *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*, Meridian, 1974, p. 259-262.
- 2- Zenkovsky, S.A., *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*, Meridian, 1974, p.262-300.
- 3- Zenkovsky, S.A., *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*, Meridian, 1974, p. 333-353.
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<http://www.etd.ceu.hu/2009/nphpok01.pdf>
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*Questions:*

- 1- In what ways did Muscovite literary style differ from the style of the Kievan period?
- 2- Does Nikitin's work demonstrate a religious framework? Why?
- 3- How would you compare Nikitin's *Journey* to Ibn Fadlān's story of *his Journey to Rusiyyah*?
- 4- How does Ivan Peresvetov describe Sultan Mehmet in his Legend on Sultan Mehmet? Why does he compare the Sultan with the Emperor?
- 5- To what other books in history can we compare Domostroy (the rules of domestic discipline)?
- 6- How are gender roles described in the Domostroy?
- 7- Discuss the conflict between the two generations in the *Tale of Woe and Misfortune*.
- 8- Why does the *Tale of Savva Grudtsyn* represent a transitional period between medieval and modern Russian literature? Can we talk about a transition from religious to secular themes in the *Tale*?
- 9- What is the impact of the *Tale of Savva Grudtsyn* in Russian literature?

## Russian Culture Through the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries

### *Introduction:*

During much of the Muscovite period the land of Rus' was a closed kingdom. Contact with outsiders from Europe was uncommon and strictly controlled. However, after *the Time of Troubles* and the founding of the Romanov dynasty in 1613, however, the country was relatively peaceful, wealthier and more open than it had been previously.

A great variety of books from Western Europe began to enter the Russian land from Western Europe, and by the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century many foreigners, Germans in particular, were in Russia. Foreigners were confined to designated sections of particular cities and their freedom to associate with the native population was still limited. In spite of this, their numbers were growing, their restrictions on them were being reduced, and enforcement of these restrictions was lax. The foreigners who came to Russia were often educated people, and missed the literary and artistic culture of their native lands. They tried to recreate that culture in Russia by bringing books of poetry and establishing theaters in the "foreign quarter."

When Peter the Great came to the throne at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century it was his intent to bring Russia up to the level of the other European powers. However, he realized that this was possible through a process of Europeanizing his country. Although not very interested personally in literary culture, his overall policy allowed western models of literature to come into Russia and encouraged their adaptation to the conditions in Russia.

The authors who appeared in 18<sup>th</sup> century Russia were responsible to a large degree for the creation of a written language and literature. During Peter the Great's reign the written Russian language was greatly modified, with the result of facilitating translations from western European languages. In addition, education and the development of the printing industry in Russia were promoted by Peter the. The final result of all these efforts was the emergence of secular Russian literature.

While writers of this period imitated French patterns they were also searching for their own themes, language and style. Throughout the entire period writers attempted to give their literature a unique national character; for example, the satirist A.D. Kantemir combined European neoclassicism with depictions of Russian life. In addition to his panegyrics of Peter's reforms, he also initiated a long-running debate on proper syllabic versification in the Russian language. Only later would V.K. Trediakovsky and M.V. Lomonosov create the accepted theory of the proper patterns of Russian versification. Finally, the founder of Russian drama, A.V. Sumorokov, combined European forms and Russian themes in both his fables and in his plays.

In the literature produced during the reign of Catherine II the influence of the European Enlightenment is evident. In her own dramas Catherine combined both classical style and a satirical tone, as is seen in the journals of N. I. Novikov and G. R. Derzhavin's odes. Satire was combined with realistic motifs in the plays of D. I. Fonvizin, and in the fables of I. I. Khemnitser. Towards the end of the century A. N. Radishchev merged political radicalism with Rousseauian sentimentalism. The development of sentimentality is also seen in the dramas of V. A. Ozerov, as well as in the prose of N. M. Karamzin, the pioneer of the Russian short story.

The reign of Catherine the Great is also noteworthy for the expansion and support given to secular literature. The debates over the function and form of literature in relation to the Russian language in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, influenced by Peter I's reforms, established the precedent for writers in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century during Catherine the Great's reign. However, in comparison to earlier writers, the writers of this era dealt with themes that were considerably more controversial and political.

The import of Western European culture was accompanied by the influx of western ideas, such as liberal democracy and freedom, which the Russian government found itself unable to halt. Such ideas were clearly contrary to the authoritarian tsarist system in place in Russia, and the results of this clash were entirely predictable: when the concepts of freedom and self-rule became associated with first the American, and then the French Revolution, the Russian government responded by attempting to stop the flow of foreign ideas into Russia.

As an example, the depictions of socio-economic conditions, the condition and treatment of the serfs, and local governmental corruption in "A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow" by A. N. Radishchev, shocked the Russian public. Catherine the Great was displeased by his depictions of the situation in her realm and had

Radishchev arrested. He was originally sentenced to death, but his sentence was later commuted to exile in Siberia.

It was only during the reign of Alexander II that Russian writers were able, for the first time, to experience the satisfaction of independent, creative work which was national in both its spirit and its style. Poetry above all was regarded as a spiritual exploit and a worthy vocation.

Poetry, in particular flourished in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Romantic Movement, during what is generally regarded as the "Golden Era" of Russian literature. Two of the most prominent poets in this period were V. A. Zhukovsky and A. S. Pushkin.

The romantic idealism of Europe was first brought into Russian poetry by V.A. Zhukovsky. The stories of I.A. Krylov display an interest in national characteristics; the Napoleonic wars would only deepen this interest. A. S. Pushkin, often regarded as the greatest Russian poet, developed a realistic, nationally conscious modern Russian style, influenced to a degree by romanticism and European poetry in the 1820s. Following Pushkin, the poetry of M. Y. Lermontov was able to maintain such stylistic excellence for a while.

It was in the 1830s that a cultural divide between Slavophiles and Westernizers became apparent. V. G. Belinsky, the main Westernizer proponent, emphasized the connection between national life and literature, and advanced the development of realism in Russian literature. Likewise, N.V. Gogol, the main initiator of realistic prose, also demonstrated romantic qualities in his satirical and humanitarian tales. In the mid-19th century, I. A. Goncharov developed a harsh realism, tinged with humor; A. N. Ostrovsky, the first depict the merchant world in Russian literary works, wrote numerous plays, although most of them are no longer performed. F. I. Tyutchev's poetry endowed everyday events with philosophic significance, and N. A. Nekrasov penned verses with social purpose.

The prose works of Russia's literary golden age were written in the context of a strong tsarist autocracy. While generally composed within a realist framework, the masterpieces of this period are also characterized by mysticism, brooding introspection, and melodrama. I. S. Turgenev became internationally renowned for his complex novels which were also extremely critical of Russian society. The moral and religious idealism found in F. M. Dostoyevsky's works earned him both critical and popular acclaim, as did the novels of L. N. Tolstoy. These two writers remain even today among the giants of world literature. A. P. Chekhov closed the golden age with his sensitive plays and stories, and the following period is better known for its poetic works.

Symbolism, most popular between the 1890s and 1910, emerged as a reaction against realism and can be seen in the works of F. Sologub, V. K. Brynssov, I. F. Annensky, A. Bely, A. A. Blok, K. D. Balmont, and A. M. Remizov. The religious and philosophical works of V. S. Solovyev and the historical novels of D. S. Merezhkovsky also show the influence of symbolism.

A new movement, the Acmeist school led by N. S. Gumilev and S. M. Gorodetsky, in 1912 promoted a return to more concrete poetic imagery. Among the followers of this movement were O. E. Mandelstam and A. A. Akhmatova. Among the major figures in the field of fiction were V. M. Garshin and V. G. Korolenko. In the years before the 1917 revolution M. Gorky was the dominant figure in fictional literature. Gorky's realistic style was also seen in the stories and dramas of his admirer Leonid Andreyev. Another of Gorky's literary colleagues, Ivan Bunin, likewise wrote in a realistic style, but more conservatively.

Following the Bolsheviks' victory in the Russian Revolution (1917), many writers emigrated and continued writing abroad, among them Bunin, Kuprin, Merezhkovsky, Aldanov, and Nabokov. Others stayed in Russia but no longer published, some became Communists, while others found a niche for themselves in the new system, writing but remaining above its official doctrines. Initially, literature in the Bolshevik regime was little different from that current in Western Europe. Up until 1921 poetry continued to thrive, the major writers being the symbolist Blok, the imagist S. A. Yesenin, and the iconoclast V. V. Mayakovsky. Boris Pilnyak, an older novelist, documented the new society, and Isaac Babel wrote vivid short stories. Between 1922-1928, the era of the New Economic Policy, literary dictatorship was a much discussed subject; one group, known as "On Guard" supported it and the group around Mayakovsky was against it. Another group that included K. A. Fedin, M. M. Zoshchenko, V.V. Ivanov, V. A. Kaverin, Y.I. Zamyatin, and L.N. Lunts, and known as The Serapion Brothers voiced their support for artistic independence, while the formalists stressed poetic structure over poetic content. The novel was once again a major literary form, as seen in Ilya Ilf and Y. P. Petrov's satirical works, and in L. M. Leonov, Y.K. Olesha, and Kaverin's psychological and romantic novels. M. A. Sholokhov wrote epic novels on the subject of the revolution and Gorky had a large audience in 1928.

Between 1929 and 1932 the various literary groups were dissolved, and the political mobilization of writers became a noticeable trend. Stalin's purges of the intelligentsia during the 1930s only accelerated this, and socialist realism became the guiding principle of all literary output. As an art form supported by the state and widely used as a means of propaganda, drama after the revolution was associated with a number of eminent figures, among them Y. L. Schvartz, N. R. Erdman, M. A. Bulgakov, S. M. Tretyakov, V. P. Katayev, V. M. Kirshon, A. N. Afinogenov, and A. N. Arbuzov. The prominent poets of this period were B. L. Pasternak and N. S. Tikhonov, while N. A. Ostrovsky, A. N. Tolstoy, and I. G. Ehrenburg were among the most widely read novelists. V. B. Shklovski became a very influential critic.

Stalin's death in 1953 ushered in a new period for a number of writers; some who had previously been publicly disgraced, returned to official favor; other living writers were once again allowed to publish. *Thaw*, a famous novel by Ehrenburg, described the desperation of writers who had no choice but to write according to the party line. Extraordinarily, cultural exchange with foreign countries was encouraged and, in contrast to official party propaganda, literature which criticized aspects of Soviet society was permitted, at least for a while. The nonconformist poetry of A. A. Voznesensky and Y. A. Yevtushenko was immensely popular. Voznesensky's innovative form and use of language was singled out for particular praise

However, this period of relative literary tolerance came to an end in 1963 when both the government and the Union of Soviet Writers severely reprimanded these and other dissident writers. *Doctor Zhivago*, published outside the Soviet Union and widely praised throughout the West, was not allowed to be published in the USSR, and state pressure compelled Pasternak to decline the Nobel Prize for literature.

The effort to free Soviet writing from official control increased after Khrushchev was removed from power in 1964. Public calls for an end to political censorship came from well-known writers such as Voznesensky and A. I. Solzhenitsyn. For publishing works outside the USSR which criticized the Soviet regime under pseudonyms A. D. Sinyavsky and Y. M. Daniel served prison sentences. *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, the first novel written by Solzhenitsyn, described prison-camp life; when published in 1962 its anti-Stalinist tone was politically acceptable. Solzhenitsyn's later works resulted in his 1974 exile from Russia.

In the 1980s the stories of T. N. Tolstaya were one example of the religious, even mystical, trends in literature. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Solzhenitsyn returned from exile in 1994, twenty years after he had left. Censored during the Soviet period, the playwright M. Shatrov wrote scathing works on Stalin and pre-glasnost Russia.

In the new world of post-Communist Russia younger writers echoed this new context by utilizing more personal and less political themes in their literary production.

#### *Reading Assignments:*

- 1- Lewit, The Obviousness of the Truth in Eighteenth Century Russian Thought, <http://www-bcf.usc.edu/~levitt/publications/documents/obviousness.pdf>
- 2- *Dictionary of Literary Biography*. Volume 150: "Early Modern Russian Writers, Late Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries." Edited by Marcus C. Levitt. Detroit: Gale Research, 1995.
- 3- Leatherbarrow, W., & Offord, D., *A History of Russian Thought*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, Ch. 3, p. 47-51.
- 4- Leatherbarrow, W., & Offord, D., *A History of Russian Thought*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, Ch. 3, p. 51-56.
- 5- Leatherbarrow, W., & Offord, D., *A History of Russian Thought*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, Ch.4, p. 73-94.
- 6- Leatherbarrow, W., & Offord, D., *A History of Russian Thought*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, Ch. 5. 95-115.

#### *Questions:*

- 1- Discuss Europeanization and the Russian intelligentsia.
- 2- How did the Enlightenment influence Russian literature?
- 3- Talk about the Age of Revolutions and discuss how the Russians were affected.
- 4- Talk about Russian literary realism.

## Early 18<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature - Neoclassicism

### *Introduction:*

18<sup>th</sup> century Russian literature is noted for being a century which borrowed the forms, themes, and expertise of the West, initially from Protestant Europe and later from France. In contrast to the present, which prizes originality, in the 18th century borrowing, translating, or imitating another culture's works was not considered mere imitation as reason and human nature were assumed to be universal. Neoclassic poetry, predominant across Europe, was based on an idealized imitation of ancient Greek and Roman forms. However, by the middle of the 18th century the search for national identity was emerging as a value in Russian upper-class culture. This was partly due to the fact that major historical events of the previous two centuries in Western Europe, events such as the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Counter-Reformation, had bypassed Russia, a state on the distant borders of Europe. Russia would have to show how her history and culture reflected universality, if she were to enter what was regarded as civilized history in the West.

Western influence in Russia first becomes noticeable in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, both by the numerous translations made from western European languages and in the establishment in 1662 of Russia's first theater. This process of westernization increased pace during the reign of Peter I the Great; it was accompanied by a revision of the Russian alphabet and the publication of Russian works in the spoken language. This increasing familiarity with European culture initiated a century of applying of Western literary forms to Russian works.

The poet Prince A. D. Kantemir combined European neoclassicism with his depictions of Russian life and utilized the syllabic system then common to French and Polish poetry. On the other hand, V. K. Tredyakovsky wrote poetry in a manner more suitable to Russian, by using tonic form. Poetry of this type was perfected by the poet M. V. Lomonosov. The founder of Russian drama, A. P. Sumarokov, wrote fables and stage plays which blended European forms with Russian themes. Among Sumarokov's other works are the "Letters to Writers", in which he elucidates the principles of Classicism. Sumarokov was the first Russian writer who, due to his personality and style, was able to attract a group of followers around him who viewed themselves as pupils of a famous teacher. The Classicism espoused by Sumarokov's was like that in western Europe, namely: literature was a form of communication, a craft that could be learned through effort and practice; imitation of the proper models (and the best models were the works written by classical authors) would ensure success; and that intellect and moral clarity were the most important characteristics of any composition.

Literature written in the time of Catherine II clearly shows the influence of the European Enlightenment. The combination of satire and classical style is found in a number of works, among them the odes of G.R. Derzavhin, N.I. Novikov's journals and the dramas penned by Catherine. D. I. Fonvizin, the author of Russia's first truly national drama *The Minor*, wrote plays which combined satire and realistic motifs, as do the fables of I. I. Khemnitser.

### Reading Assignments:

- 1- Kantemir, "Satire I: To My Mind". <http://www.rvb.ru/18vek/kantemir/toc.htm>  
Wiener, L., *Anthology of Russian Literature, From the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, The Knickerbocker Press, New York, 1902, p. 224.
- 2- Trediakovskii, "Solemn Ode on the Surrender of the City of Danzig".  
<http://www.klassika.ru/stihi/trediakovskij/>  
Wiener, L., *Anthology of Russian Literature, From the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, The Knickerbocker Press, New York, 1902, p. 230.
- 3- Lomonosov, "Ode to the Seizure of Khotin", "Ode on the Ascension of Elizabeth Petrovna".  
<http://max.mmlc.northwestern.edu/~mdenner/Demo/poetpage/lomonosov.htm>  
Wiener, L., *Anthology of Russian Literature, From the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, The Knickerbocker Press, New York, 1902, p.246.
- 4- Lomonosov, "Evening Meditation on the Majesty of God," "Morning Meditation on the Majesty of God," "Letter on the Use of Glass". <http://max.mmlc.northwestern.edu/~mdenner/Demo/poetpage/lomonosov.htm>  
Wiener, L., *Anthology of Russian Literature, From the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, The Knickerbocker Press, New York, 1902, p. 252, 253.
- 5- Sumarokov, "The False Dimitrii"  
<http://archive.org/details/demetriusimposto00sumarich>
- 6- Fonvizin, "Brigadier". <http://www.klassika.ru/proza/fonvizin/>
- 7- Fonvizin, "The Minor". <http://www.klassika.ru/proza/fonvizin/>
- 8- Derzhavin, "On the Death of Prince Meshcherskii".  
<http://www.klassika.ru/stihi/derzhavin/>
- 9- Derzhavin, "Ode to Princess Felitsa". <http://www.klassika.ru/stihi/derzhavin/>
- 10- Derzhavin, "Invitation to Dinner". <http://www.klassika.ru/stihi/derzhavin/>
- 11- Derzhavin, "Country Life". <http://www.klassika.ru/stihi/derzhavin/>  
Wiener, L., *Anthology of Russian Literature, From the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, The Knickerbocker Press, New York, 1902, p. 255.
- 12- Wachtel, M., *The Cambridge Introduction to Russian Poetry*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, Ch.2.
- 13- Leatherborrow, W., & Offord, D., *A History of Russian Thought*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, Ch. 4, p. 73-83.
- 14- *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, Edited by Charles A. Moser, 1992, Ch.2.
- 15- *The Routledge Companion to Russian Literature*, Edited by Neil Cornwell, 2001, Ch. 3.
- 16- Wachtel, A.B. & Vinitsky, I., *Russian Literature*, Polity Press, 2009, Ch. 2.
- 17- *Handbook of Russian literature*. Edited by Victor Terras. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1985, articles on Neoclassicism, Sentimentalism, and Karamzin.
- 18- Segel, B. H., *The literature of eighteenth-century Russia; an anthology of Russian literary materials of the age of classicism and the Enlightenment from the reign of Peter the Great, 1689-1725, to the reign of Alexander I, 1801-1825*, New York, Dutton, 1967.
- 19- Wiener, L., *Anthology of Russian Literature, From the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, The Knickerbocker Press, New York, 1902.

### Questions:

- 1-Talk about the period of Peter the Great and Western influence in Russian Literature. How was the Russian language affected?
- 2- Read Kantemir's "Satire I. To My Mind" and Trediakovskiy's "Solemn Ode on the Surrender of the City of Danzig". In his satires what does he criticize and why?
- 3- Read Lomonosov's "Evening Meditation on the Majesty of God," "Morning Meditation on the Majesty of God," "Letter on the Use of Glass". Talk about Lomonosov's role in Russian history and culture.
- 4- Read Fonvizin's "The Minor". Why does it have an important place in 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian Literature?

## Late 18<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature – Sentimentalism

### *Introduction:*

Although Catherine II had originally been quite open to Enlightenment ideas, had corresponded with some of the most important Enlightenment thinkers such as Voltaire and Diderot, and had made efforts at internal reform, the violence which emerged in the French Revolution made her reject these earlier inclinations. At one point, she even entertained the idea of restoring the French monarchy by sending an army to France.

During Catherine's reign, more works were published in Russia than ever before and the contemporary Russian language was used in place of the much older "Church Slavonic". This period also saw the founding of Moscow University, and Catherine was known for encouraging the construction of elementary and intermediate schools in Russia.

Like Frederick the Great and Joseph II of Austria, considered Enlightened monarchs, Catherine was willing to allow a degree of reform to take place, primarily in the areas of civic and social life, as long as it did not affect her power. In fact, a number of trends that could hardly be considered enlightened occurred during her reign: serfdom expanded and became more rigid; and the publication of books criticizing either her reign or the autocratic system was prohibited. This rationale behind this censorship was that the "intellectual elite" were able to read Western philosophies and political works. Many in the elite were attracted by republican ideals, seeing them as an alternative to the autocratic controls found in Russia. Some even imported printing technology as a means to spread these new political ideas. Catherine approved the first official board of censors prior to her death in 1796.

Earlier Catherine had authored a work entitled *Nakaz*, based on the ideas of Montesquieu and Beccaria. It was considered so liberal that *Nakaz* was banned by the censors in France. However, the Pugachev rebellion cooled Catherine's enthusiasm for liberalism, and by the end of her reign, in light of the course of events in the French Revolution, she abandoned all pretense of being a liberal and became an outright reactionary.

Catherine was considered by her detractors as a "Tsar-slayer, usurper, and whore", in part due to her scandalous private life and tendency towards self-promotion. Voltaire only changed his skeptical views about Catherine due to her persistent correspondence. He later declared her work *Nakaz* "the finest monument of the age". While her role in Russian history and political acumen had long been recognized, Catherine's literary talents and status as a figure of the Enlightenment were disregarded. For example, K. Waliszewski, G. A. Gukovskii, and others claimed that as a ruler Catherine was a reactionary conservative, and a mediocre amateur as an author. Specifically, Gukovskii pointed out that Catherine's spoken Russian was excellent, but in print required extensive editing to be considered acceptable. Critics in the west tended to be more interested in her literary patronage, and were only interested in her own works as reflections of European trends and her attempts to import Enlightenment ideas into Russia.

Despite having initiated the publication of satirical journals in Russia in 1769, Catherine ended their publication four years later when these journals became too independent for her liking and too critical of the political and social conditions in Russia at that time. Arrest and exile to east Siberia was the eventual fate of critical writers such as N. I. Novikov and A. N. Radishchev.

Toward the end of the 18th century the works of Radishchev expressed the beginning of political radicalism was given expression combined with Rousseauian sentimentalism. In drama, V.A. Ozerov employed Sentimentality, and was best seen in *Poor Liza* by N. M. Karamzin.

The beginnings of the literary movement of Sentimentalism appeared only in the last years of Catherine's reign. Reform of the literary Russian language was a continuation of Peter the Great and Lomonosov's reforms. However, the gap between the written and the spoken language, between the educated classes and the ordinary people, between the new and the old Russia was increased by Karamzin's language reform. On the other hand, his language reforms would also help to usher in an age of classical poetry.

*Reading Assignments:*

- 1- The Literature of 18th Century Russia, Karamzin, *Poor Lisa*,  
<http://www1.umn.edu/lol-russ/hpgary/Russ3421/Karamzin.pdf>  
<http://www.klassika.ru/proza/karamzin/>
- 2- Karamzin, "Letters of a Russian Traveler".  
[http://az.lib.ru/k/karamzin\\_n\\_m/text\\_0320.shtml](http://az.lib.ru/k/karamzin_n_m/text_0320.shtml)
- 3- Karamzin, "A Few Words About Russian Literature," "On Love for the Fatherland and National Pride," "On the Book Trade and the Love for Reading in Russia," "Why Are There So Few Talented Authors in Russia?"  
[http://az.lib.ru/k/karamzin\\_n\\_m/text\\_0300.shtml](http://az.lib.ru/k/karamzin_n_m/text_0300.shtml)  
[http://az.lib.ru/k/karamzin\\_n\\_m/text\\_0950.shtml](http://az.lib.ru/k/karamzin_n_m/text_0950.shtml)  
<http://www.karamzin.net.ru/>
- 4- Radishchev, "A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow"  
<https://www2.stetson.edu/secure/history/hy10302/radishchev.html>
- 5- Leatherbarrow, W., & Offord, D., *A History of Russian Thought*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, Ch. 4, p. 83-94
- 6- Leatherbarrow, W., & Offord, D., *A History of Russian Thought*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, Ch. 5, p. 95-115.
- 7- Catherine the Great [http://departments.kings.edu/womens\\_history/catherine2.html](http://departments.kings.edu/womens_history/catherine2.html)
- 8- *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, Edited by Charles A. Moser, 1992, Ch.3.
- 9- Emerson, C., *The Cambridge Introduction to Russian Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2008, Ch.4.
- 10- *The Routledge Companion to Russian Literature*, Edited by Neil Cornwell, 2001, Ch. 5.
- 11- Cross, A.G., *N.M. Karamzin's Messenger of Europe*,  
<http://www.heraldofeurope.co.uk/Article.aspx?ArticleID=2092212088>
- 12- Cizevski, D., *History of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature, The Romantic Period*, Vol.1, 1974, Ch. 2.

*Questions:*

- 1-Discuss the intelligentsia in Russia in the Age of Enlightenment.
- 2-Discuss Catherine the Great as an empress and a woman of letters.
- 3-To what extent did Catherine accept the progress and reform associated with Enlightenment belief?
- 4-Discuss the beginnings of Russian literary criticism.
- 5-Discuss the effects of the European literary movement 'sentimentalism' on 18th century Russian literature.
- 6- Why did Catherine the Great considered Radishchev a threat to the state and pronounce him a rebel worse than Pugachev? Read his "A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow" and explain why he was very critical about Russian life.
- 7-Discuss why Karamzin's "Poor Liza" is considered the best example of Sentimentalism.
- 8- Discuss Karamzin's journalism experience.



## Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature - Romanticism

### *Introduction:*

Alexander I's era was a period of creativity when Russian literature produced independent, original and authentically national works. It was a period in which literature moved from neoclassicism to Romanticism and from the writing of imitative works to ones which would be the basis of a national cultural model.

Known as the Golden Age of Russian literature, the first forty years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the literature of this period was the outcome of two developments in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. One was the creation of a literary language that acted as a bridge between the daily speech of educated Russians and the official Church Slavonic. The other was the solution in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century of technical issues of poetic form. One noticeable trend of the Golden Age was the abandonment of literary genres serving the state and patron, such as the ode.

A new literary movement, Romanticism, emerged in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. A reaction to Neoclassicism, which had dominated art and literature in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, Romanticism spread throughout Europe in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Romanticism is not seen in Russia until the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and only became a major movement in Russian literature from 1810 to 1840. Russia soon adopted the main Romantic prose genres: the society-tale, novel-in-letters, travel notes, memoirs and historical romance. Although Russian romanticism was initially seen in poetry, it shifted to prose in the course of its development.

A.S. Pushkin was one of the first proponents of this new literary style, which was both realistic and nationally conscious. The poetic works of M. Y. Lermontov's were able, briefly, to maintain this level of stylistic excellence.

Poetry remained the dominant literary form until Lermontov's death in 1841. However, the displacement of poetry by prose began at the end of the 1820s, and by 1830 prose was clearly becoming the dominant form.

Although unsuccessful as a poet, N. V. Gogol did become a successful prose writer. Regarded as the pioneer of realistic prose, Gogol's stories contained elements of romantic and the grotesque.

Romantic literature often extolled the extraordinary man who somehow rose above society, seeing such a person representing the individual spirit.

Writers in the romantic era came to see their normal position in society as one in opposition to the existing order, but also came to see writing as a profession. Previously writers had not expected to earn their livelihood from writing, but in the 19<sup>th</sup> century literature became more commercialized. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century writers were either landowning aristocrats, or had some form of government support. However, writers increasingly relied on the reading public to earn their living as the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed.

In 1848 the view that Europe was degenerating was driven home to the Russian government, as revolutions convulsed most of continental Europe, with the notable exception of Russia. Tsar Nicholas I responded to this revolutionary turmoil by harshly suppressing all forms of free expression in Russia. The period from 1848 until Nicholas I's death in 1855 came to be known as the gloomy seven years, and constituted a bleak period in Russian literature and culture. In 1849 F. M. Dostoevsky, M. Saltykov-Shchedrin, I. S. Turgenev and A. N. Ostrovsky, all members of the Petrashevsky circle, were arrested and put on trial.

*Reading Assignments:*

- 1- Pushkin, Eugene *Onegin*  
<http://archive.org/details/eugeneoneguineon23997gut>  
*The Captain's Daughter or the Daughter of a Commandant*  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/13511>  
<http://www.online-literature.com/alexander-pushkin/daughter-of-the-commandant/>
- 2- Lermontov, *A Hero of Our Time*  
<http://www.eldritchpress.org/myl/hero.htm>  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/913>
- 3- Gogol, *Dead Souls* <http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/gogol/deadsouls.pdf>
- 4- *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, Edited by Charles A. Moser, 1992, Ch.4.
- 5- Emerson, C., *The Cambridge Introduction to Russian Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2008, Ch.5.
- 6- *The Routledge Companion to Russian Literature*, Edited by Neil Cornwell, 2001, Ch. 7.
- 7- *The Routledge Companion to Russian Literature*, Edited by Neil Cornwell, 2001, Ch. 8.
- 8- Wachtel, A.B. & Vinitsky, I., *Russian Literature*, Polity Press, 2009, Ch. 3.
- 9- Lunacharsky, A., *Pushkin as Critic*,  
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/lunachar/works/puskin.htm>
- 10- *The Cambridge Companion to Classic Russian Novels*, Edited by Malcolm V. Jones and Robin Feuer Miller, Cambridge University Press, 1998, Ch. 8.
- 11- *The Cambridge Companion to Classic Russian Novels*, Edited by Malcolm V. Jones and Robin Feuer Miller, Cambridge University Press, 1998, Ch. 9.
- 12- Fencher, N., *Pushkin's Politics*  
<http://it.stlawu.edu/~rkreuzer/pfancher/Pushkin%20Final%20webpage.doc>
- 13- Driver, S., *Pushkin: Literature and Social Ideas*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1989.
- 14- Debreczeny, P., *The Other Pushkin: A Study of Alexander Pushkin's Prose Fiction*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1983.

*Questions:*

- 1- Talk about the Age of Revolutions and discuss how the Russians were affected.
- 2- As you read the reading assignments for this class, consider in what respect the beliefs of the Romantics are reflected in their works.
- 3- Read Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* and talk about Pushkin's concepts of poets and style of writing.
- 4- Read Pushkin's "The Captain's Daughter" and discuss how cultural diversity is reflected in the novel.
- 5- Read Pushkin's "Ode to Liberty" and discuss why Pushkin was exiled from St. Petersburg by Alexander I. Talk about his political views.
- 6- Read Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time* and discuss the concept of the superfluous man in 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian literature. Can you say that Pechorin fits the description of the superfluous man? How?
- 7- Read Gogol's *Overcoat* and *Dead Souls* and discuss how Gogol portrays his time.

## Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature – Realism

### *Introduction:*

Russian realism flourished between 1855 – 1880, a period which coincided with the reign of Alexander II, a period of reforms which came to be known as the Age of Realism.

The emergence of Russian realistic literary works in latter half of 19<sup>th</sup> century took place in the context of the political unrest which had begun during the reign of Nicolai I in the 1840s. Writers, under the influence of the literary critic V. G. Belinsky, came to view themselves as social critics and took a realistic approach to social problems in Russia such as serfdom. In the 1860s the critics N. G. Chernyshevsky and N. A. Dobrolyubov carried on Belinsky's activity. However, these reformers were among the Westerners, those who held that Russia should develop in the manner Western European civilization. Opposing them were the Slavophiles, a group committed to old Russian traditions – Orthodoxy and imperial autocracy.

Of the numerous novelists from this period the three most important figures are I. S. Turgenev, F. M. Dostoyevsky and L. N. Tolstoy. Another lesser, but still important figure is I. A. Goncharov, the author of *Oblomov*.

Through the first half and into the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Russia was increasingly tense as it underwent dramatic political, economical, and social changes. Vast inequalities in wealth and the formation of new social classes which transformed the old aristocratic power system into a plutocratic one were two results of industrialization. Urban growth was accompanied by the decimation of traditional agrarian lifestyle. In addition, an unexpected result of Russian participation in the effort to defeat Napoleon was the introduction of into Russia of western ideas on constitutions, representative government. In 1825, following the death of Tsar Alexander I, a regiment of soldiers refused to swear allegiance to the Tsar, calling instead for the establishment of a Russian constitution. Although these soldiers, who came to be known as the 'Decembrists', were finally suppressed, the possibility of great social change was in the air throughout the century.

Taken together, these events prepared the way for the appearance Nihilism. Russian monarchs in this period found themselves facing a terrible dilemma. They realized that serfdom and the existing social structure could not be sustainable and would likely result in a violent rebellion. There was a pressing need to carry out reforms that were effective and politically realistic. However, by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century resolving these problems was almost impossible due to a combination of state repression combined with the length of time that these problems had been allowed to fester. For many Russians, Nihilism presented the only reasonable answer to their situation. In addition, Russia was in the position of having to carry out reform following its defeat in the Crimean war, a factor which the Nihilism movement even more urgent. Finally, although Russia had in many ways become a brutal and violent police-state, still it was unable to effectively hinder the Nihilists and other dedicated revolutionaries, with the result that the Nihilism movement began to spread in Russia.

A number of realist novels show the influence of the Nihilism movement, among them *Notes from the Underground*, *Crime and Punishment*, and *The Devils* by Dostoevsky; *Fathers and Sons* by Ivan Turgenev; *War and Peace* by Tolstoy; and *What is to be done?* by Chernyshevsky. In particular, Bazarov's depiction of the tension between generations in *Fathers and Sons* as the rejection of both the romantic and idealistic movements made him an icon of the Nihilist movement; the Nihilism movement even took its name from this novel. The publication of Chernyshevsky's *What is to be Done?* practically became the guidebook of the movement. It provided a portrayal of Nihilism's socialist values, showed how to live and keep one's radical values intact, and even showed how Nihilist non-monogamy worked. As a result, the Russian novel took on new religious and philosophical significance by incorporating both the Nihilists' sense of cultural crisis and the desire for new, absolute societal values. In addition, in the same way that many Russian literary works from this period were influenced by Russia's social condition, these works, in turn, had a great impact on Russian society and culture. For example, it has been claimed that Tsar Alexander's emancipation of serfs was, at least partially, a reaction to the depiction of peasant life found in Ivan Turgenev's collection of *Sportsman's Sketches*.

In the 1860s Dostoevsky's became convinced that Western civilization had an unhealthy, narrow focus on the ego or self, and that this pathological condition threatened Russia. He viewed this Western egoism as a direct result of the Westernization of Russia, and believed that it constituted a grave danger to his country. This opinion was only confirmed by a tour of Europe that Dostoevsky made in 1862.

In contrast to Dostoevsky, Chernyshevsky's novel *What Is to Be Done?*, published in 1863, heartily approved of egoism, and viewed it as not only a model of desirable individual behavior, but absolutely necessary for harmonious social relations. In the novel, Chernyshevsky's principal characters view themselves as complete egoists, and claim that their behavior is guided solely by informed calculations of their own interests. However, while doing so they benefit others and generally behave quite virtuously, demonstrating the benign effects of "enlightened" or "rational" egoism. For Dostoevsky this was an extreme, gross distortion of the reality he saw in Russia. Chernyshevsky's fictional character were just that – fictional, and not the real-life egoists Dostoevsky feared. As Dostoevsky saw it, the doctrine put forth in Rational Egoism was dangerous; by glorifying the self over others it had the potential to divert the minds of impressionable young people from true values and turn them toward a true, immoral, and destructive egoism.

Nonetheless, despite Dostoevsky's reservations, Chernyshevsky and the movement that crystalized around his work *What Is to Be Done?*, would also come to play a major role in popularizing utilitarian ideas among the intelligentsia in Russia.

Utilitarianism can lead an ordinary man into thinking that he is extraordinary, not bound by the same constraints as ordinary men, and it can justify murder and the subjugation of others through simple mathematics. This is precisely the situation that the main character in Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* finds himself in since he has adopted a utilitarian morality, acting under the presumption of personal grandeur and utilitarian responsibility. In the *Brothers Karamazov*, rather than satirize Chernyshevsky's utilitarianism Dostoevsky presents a tragedy depicting the suffering that awaits the Russian people should they adopt an alternative to the morality and worldview of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The main character in *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov, behaves according to utilitarian precepts. In his mind, the commission of what he regards as a simple crime he will be of great benefit to humanity as a whole. He is utterly convinced that he can be extraordinary, but if only he can act upon a mathematical equation of human happiness. Using an equation provided by a student and an officer, Raskolnikov will justify homicide. What Dostoevsky attempts to demonstrate in this novel is that this utilitarian morality can lead to the belief that one is extraordinary; as a result, life-and-death decisions can be made solely on the basis of their estimated mathematical impact on the population as a whole. However, these "extraordinary" men and women are nothing more than criminals, unable to cope with the consequences of their espoused morality. In the end, *Crime and Punishment's* Raskolnikov is far from being an extraordinary individual; rather he appears to be a self-deluded utilitarian who believed he was extraordinary.

*Reading Assignments:*

- 1- Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/t/turgenev/ivan/index.html>  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/30723>
- 2- Dostoyevsky's *Notes from the Underground*  
<http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/DosNote.html>  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/600>  
*Crime and Punishment* <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2554>
- 3- Tolstoy's "Resurrection" or "The Awakening" <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/17352>
- 4- Goncharov's "Oblomov" <http://www.eldritchpress.org/iag/oblomov.htm>  
<http://archive.org/details/oblomovivan00goncuoft>
- 5- Chernyshevsky's *What Is to Be Done?*  
<http://archive.org/details/whatstobedonerom00cher>
- 6- *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, Edited by Charles A. Moser, 1992, Ch.5.
- 7- *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, Edited by Charles A. Moser, 1992, Ch.6.
- 8- *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, Edited by Charles A. Moser, 1992, Ch.7.
- 9- Emerson, C., *The Cambridge Introduction to Russian Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2008, Ch.6.
- 10- *The Routledge Companion to Russian Literature*, Edited by Neil Cornwell, 2001, Ch. 9.
- 11- Wachtel, A.B. & Vinitsky, I., *Russian Literature*, Polity Press, 2009, Ch. 4.
- 12- Wachtel, A.B. & Vinitsky, I., *Russian Literature*, Polity Press, 2009, Ch. 5.
- 13- *The Cambridge Companion to Dostoevskii*, Edited by Leatherbarrow, W.J., Cambridge University Press, 2002, Ch.7.
- 14- *The Cambridge Companion to Dostoevskii*, Edited by Leatherbarrow, W.J., Cambridge University Press, 2002, Ch.8.
- 15- *The Cambridge Companion to Dostoevskii*, Edited by Leatherbarrow, W.J., Cambridge University Press, 2002, Ch.6.
- 16- *The Cambridge Companion to Classic Russian Novels*, Edited by Malcolm V. Jones and Robin Feuer Miller, Cambridge University Press, 1998, Ch.10.
- 17- Medzhibovskaya, I., *Tolstoy and the Religious Culture of His Time*, Lexington Books, 2008.
- 18- Young, S., Russian thought lecture 4: Nihilism and the birth of Russian radicalism: from science to art.  
<http://sarahjyoung.com/site/tag/crystal-palace/>
- 19- Venturi, F., *Roots of Revolution, A History of the Populist and Socialist Movements in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Russia*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960, p. 316.
- 20- Cizevski, D., *History of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature, The Age of Realism*, Vol.2, 1974, Ch. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6.
- 21- Bortnes, J., "The Poetry of Prose", *Readings in Russian Literature*, Bergen, 2007. Ch. 9.
- 22- Hamren, K., *The Eternal Stranger: The Superfluous Man in Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature*, Thesis, 2011.  
[http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1182&context=masters&sei-redir=1&referer=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com.tr%2Furl%3Fsa%3Dt%26rct%3Dj%26q%3Dbakhtin%2520superfluous%2520man%26source%3Dweb%26cd%3D17%26ved%3D0CFcQFjAGOAo%26url%3Dhttp%253A%252F%252Fdigitalcommons.liberty.edu%252Fcgi%252Fviewcontent.cgi%253Farticle%253D1182%2526context%253Dmasters%26ei%3D0GLQUNvLAc3c4QS7p4CYAQ%26usq%3DAFQjCNGW1s0qzrnDzI-0bL2EG\\_9PgpKpaA#search=%22bakhtin%20superfluous%20man%22](http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1182&context=masters&sei-redir=1&referer=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com.tr%2Furl%3Fsa%3Dt%26rct%3Dj%26q%3Dbakhtin%2520superfluous%2520man%26source%3Dweb%26cd%3D17%26ved%3D0CFcQFjAGOAo%26url%3Dhttp%253A%252F%252Fdigitalcommons.liberty.edu%252Fcgi%252Fviewcontent.cgi%253Farticle%253D1182%2526context%253Dmasters%26ei%3D0GLQUNvLAc3c4QS7p4CYAQ%26usq%3DAFQjCNGW1s0qzrnDzI-0bL2EG_9PgpKpaA#search=%22bakhtin%20superfluous%20man%22)

*Questions:*

- 1- Discuss the Russian intelligentsia (Westerners and Slavophiles) in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 2- Read Dostoyevsky's novel *The Notes from Underground* and compare the underground man with the unhappy 19<sup>th</sup> century intelligentsia. What are the differences between them?
- 3- Explain how Dostoyevsky treated the Russian intelligentsia in his works, and why Dostoyevsky was against Westerners. Discuss why Dostoevsky was critical of utopian socialists.
- 4- What are his major objections to living in a perfect world? Why does he criticize the Crystal Palace?
- 5- Discuss rational egoism and utilitarianism.
- 6- Discuss what makes the main character, the underground man Nihilist.
- 7- Dostoyevsky's was said to be a devout Christian. Can you find any evidence for his religious beliefs in this novel?
- 8- Read Tolstoy's *The Brothers Karamazov* and talk about the religious motifs in the novel.
- 9- Read Goncharov's *Oblomov* and compare the novel's main character Oblomov with the main character the underground man from the novel *Notes from Underground*. Are they stereotypical characters in nineteenth-century Russian literature. Why?

## Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature – Symbolism, Acmeism, Futurism

### *Introduction:*

The period known as the Silver Age of Russian Literature lasted from the 1890s to 1917. The Silver Age is distinguished by the poetic works of V. Y. Bryusov, I. F. Annensky, and K. D. Balmont among others. The term Silver Age was first suggested by the renowned philosopher N. A. Berdyaev.

1915 marks the pinnacle of the Silver Age, which was characterized by a deep crisis in the government, and an unsettled, turbulent political atmosphere which called for radical change in the country. In the same way that Russian society desperately sought new paths to social order, writers and poets likewise struggled to master new artistic forms and ways of expression, to put forward bold, new ideas. Mere realistic portrayal of life was no longer satisfactory, and new literary movements, such as symbolism, acmeism and futurism emerged from their criticisms of 19th century literature.

Theorists of symbolism stated that an artist should create new art by means of symbolical images that would allow the poet to express his feelings, sensations and thoughts in a subtler and more general way than before. The symbolist movement united a number of diverse poets, among them K. D. Balmont, V. Y. Bryusov, A. Bely, and A. A. Blok.

Symbolic poets succeeded in depicting their era with all its instability, fluctuations and transitivity.

In the same way that symbolism emerged from the discontent with realism, a new literary movement – acmeism – emerged from the debate over symbolism. It was characterized by rejection of the symbolists' inclination towards the unknown, as well as their focus on one's one soul.

Acmeism did not aim at attaining the unknown; rather it focused on things that could be perceived, i.e. reality, and attempted to fully comprehend the world's diversity. Through such an approach the acmeist poet, in contrast to the symbolists, participated in the world rhythms, while at the same time considering the phenomena he was describing. The most prominent acmeist poets were N. S. Gumilev, A. Akhmatova, and O. E. Mandelstam.

Typical of acmeism was total political indifference and disregard of important current issues. It is perhaps for this reason that acmeism gave way to futurism, characterized by revolutionary rebellion and opposition to bourgeois society, its morals and aesthetics, as well as the overall system of social links and relations. Some of the best known Russian Futurists were V. Khlebnikov, A. E. Kruchenykh and V. V. Mayakovsky.

Futurist poets attempted to combine poetry with political struggle, and poets such as Mayakovsky, Khlebnikov, V. V. Kamensky, etc. perceived a unique spiritual state for their era and tried to find new rhythms and images for poetic portrayals of revolutionary life.

### Reading Assignments:

- 1- Blok, "The Scythians", "The Twelve"  
[http://max.mmlc.northwestern.edu/~mdenner/Demo/texts/scythians\\_blok.html](http://max.mmlc.northwestern.edu/~mdenner/Demo/texts/scythians_blok.html)  
<http://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/isj/1961/no006/blok.htm>
- 2- Trotsky, L., Literature and Revolution, Ch. 3, Alexander Blok  
[http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1924/lit\\_revo/ch03.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1924/lit_revo/ch03.htm)
- 3- Gumilev, "The Word", "The Lost Tram", "The Giraffe", "The Street Car Gone Astray"  
<http://max.mmlc.northwestern.edu/~mdenner/Demo/poetpage/gumilev.html>  
<http://www.ualberta.ca/~lmalcolm/poetry/acmeists.html>
- 4- Mayakovsky, "At the Top of My Voice", "A Cloud in Trousers", "A Slap in the Face of Public Taste", "Our March", "Vladimir Ilyich Lenin"  
<http://www.marxists.org/subject/art/literature/mayakovsky/>  
<http://max.mmlc.northwestern.edu/~mdenner/Demo/poetpage/mayakovsky.html>  
<http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Mayakovsky.php>  
<http://www.ualberta.ca/~lmalcolm/poetry/futurists.html>  
<http://en.bookfi.org/s/?q=Mayakovsky+Vladimir+%3Flyich+Lenin&t=0>
- 5- *The Routledge Companion to Russian Literature*, Edited by Neil Cornwell, 2001, Ch.12.
- 6- Emerson, C., *The Cambridge Introduction to Russian Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2008, Ch. 7.
- 7- *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, Edited by Charles A. Moser, 1992, Ch.7.
- 8- *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, Edited by Charles A. Moser, 1992, Ch.8.
- 9- *The Silver age of Russian culture : an anthology* / edited by Carl Proffer & Ellendea Proffer
- 10- *The Cambridge Companion to Classic Russian Novel*, Edited by Malcolm V. Jones and Robin Feuer Miller, Cambridge University Press, 1998, Ch. 11.
- 11- Pyman, A., *A History of Russian Symbolism*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, Part 3, 5.
- 12- Trotsky, L., Futurism, [http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1924/lit\\_revo/ch04.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1924/lit_revo/ch04.htm)
- 13- Dadswell, S., Re-approaching Russian Futurism: The Inter-Revolutionary Years, 1908-1915  
<http://www.pitt.edu/~slavic/sisc/SISC4/dadswell.pdf>

### Questions:

- 1- Blok in his poem "The Scythians" was comparing Russians and Europeans. Discuss how.
- 2- Read Gumilev's "The Word" and discuss the religious symbolism in Gumilev's poems.
- 3- Read Mayakovsky's *At the Top of My Voice* and talk about Mayakovsky's thoughts on the Russian revolution.
- 4- Talk about Mayakovsky's views on Futurism. According to the Futurist Manifesto what were the goals of the Russian Futurists? What was LEF?
- 5- What is the difference between Cubo-Futurism and Ego- Futurism?

## Middle 20<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature – Socialist Realism

### Introduction:

Following the Bolsheviks' seizure of power in 1917 Russian literature witnessed radical changes. Although the 1920s remained comparatively open, literature soon became merely another form of state propaganda. Writers found themselves forbidden to create works that the Communist Party considered dissident or objective; they were also expected to obey the Party's orders when told to produce propaganda on specific, limited themes that were of interest to the Party at that time.

A number of avant-garde literature groups flourished during the first years of the Soviet regime. Of these groups, one of the most important was the *Oberiu* (Union of the Real Art) movement which counted N. A. Zabolotsky, A. I. Vvedensky, K. K. Vaginov and the most famous Russian absurdist D. I. Kharms among its followers. Other notable writers who experimented with language were the novelists A. Platonov and Y. K. Olesha and short story writers I. E. Babel and M. M. Zoshchenko.

Socialist realism became the dominant trend in Russian literature during the 1930s. The leading figure of this trend was M. Gorky, the forerunner of this style with his work *The Mother*. According to Gorky, socialist

realism was the realism of the people who were rebuilding the world. The main task of writers in Gorky's view was to aid in the development of the new man in socialist society.

The new proletarian literature is often considered to begin with Gorky's novel *The Mother*. This would be the literature of socialist realism, reflecting the assaults of and the rising struggle of the Russian proletariat.

Besides Gorky, other leading figures of socialist realism were the novelists M. A. Sholokhov, and A. N. Tolstoy; and the poets K. M. Simonov, A. T. Tvardovsky, A. Serafimovich, N. A. Ostrovsky, A. A. Fadeyev, and F. V. Gladkov.

A major example of socialist realism was N. A. Ostrovsky's novel *How the Steel Was Tempered*, a work depicting the struggle of the Soviet peoples for the victory during the course of the October Revolution.

Stalin's rise to power in the late 1920s ushered in a decade of unprecedented repression. The struggle to collectivize agriculture in the countryside resulted in the loss of more than 10 million lives, almost half from starvation. All independent literary groups were dissolved in 1932 and replaced by the Union of Soviet Writers, an institution without parallel in the West.

The Union of Soviet Writers became the means by which the state maintained control over literature; being expelled from the Union was tantamount to literary death. Socialist Realism was officially proclaimed the only acceptable form of writing in 1934. All literature would now be governed by official directives on the details of style and content to guarantee that each work presented a truthful depiction of reality in its revolutionary development. Soviet literature would now be party-minded and typical, depicting the triumph of heroes who were entirely positive.

Some writers directed their talents to writing that was less regulated, such as children's literature and translation. Others, such as V. P. Katayev, attempted to make official writing more interesting, as seen in his production novel *Time, Forward!* A. N. Tolstoy, a writer who returned to the Soviet Union from abroad, became a favorite of Stalin. He praised those tsars particularly admired by Stalin in his unfinished novel *Peter the Great* and his stage play *Ivan the Terrible*.

Very few Soviet writers before the Second World War would be published unless they closely adhered to the guidelines of Socialist realism.

Writers who held that authors had the right to write independently of political ideology, like those of Serapion Brothers group, were compelled by the authorities to renounce their views and accept the principles of Socialist realism. There were a few writers, among them M. A. Bulgakov with his novel *The Master and Margarita* and B. L. Pasternak with his novel *Doctor Zhivago*, who continued the classical tradition of Russian literature. However, these writers knew that there was almost no chance that these works would be published in the USSR at the time of their writing. Publication of their major works would not be possible until the Khrushchev Thaw, but even then Pasternak would be forced to decline his Nobel prize for literature.



*Reading Assignments:*

1- Gorky, *The Mother* <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/3783>

2- Ostrovsky, *How the Steel Was Tempered*

Book 1

<http://www.cpa.org.au/resources/cpa-presents/how-the-steel-was-tempered-book-1.pdf>

Book 2

[http://ciml.250x.com/archive/literature/english/ostrovsky\\_how\\_the\\_steel\\_was\\_tempered\\_2.pdf](http://ciml.250x.com/archive/literature/english/ostrovsky_how_the_steel_was_tempered_2.pdf)

3- Emerson, C., *The Cambridge Introduction to Russian Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2008, Ch. 8.

4- Wachtel, A.B. & Vinitzky, I., *Russian Literature*, Polity Press, 2009, Ch. 8.

5- *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, Edited by Charles A. Moser, 1992, Ch.9.

6- *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, Edited by Charles A. Moser, 1992, Ch.10.

7- *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, Edited by Charles A. Moser, 1992, Ch.11.

8- *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, Edited by Charles A. Moser, 1992, Ch.8.

9- *The Routledge Companion to Russian Literature*, Edited by Neil Cornwell, 2001, Ch. 15.

10- *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Russian Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2011, Ch. 3.

11- *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Russian Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2011, Ch. 4.

12- *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Russian Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2011, Ch. 5.

13- *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Russian Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2011, Ch. 6.

14- *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Russian Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2011, Ch. 7.

15- *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Russian Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2011, Ch. 8.

16- Clark, K., "Socialist Realism in Soviet Literature", *The Routledge Companion to Russian Literature*, Edited by Neil Cornwell, 2001, Ch. 15.

*Questions:*

1- Read Gorky's *The Mother* and discuss how the proletariat is depicted in the novel. Does the proletariat act according to socialist ideas?

2- Discuss Gorky's life. Can you see any reflections from his childhood in the novel?

3- Why did Gorky name his novel *The Mother*? Talk about women and their role in society as described in the novel.

4 - Read Ostrovsky's *How the Steel Was Tempered* and discuss why it is called a true dedication to revolution. Talk about the Stalin era and Stalin's approaches to the novel.

## Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature – Anti-Soviet Ideology

### Introduction:

Emigration of Russian writers began as early as the 16th century when Prince Andrei Kurbsky escaped Ivan the Terrible's regime. It continued through the 19th century, especially under the repressive regime of Nicholas I. For instance, A. I. Herzen established a Russian press abroad, in London, and from there he smuggled his journal *The Bell (Kolokol)* into Russia.

Emigration of writers who opposed the Soviet regime increased dramatically after the Bolshevik Revolution. Among the prominent writers who fled to the West were I. A. Bunin, V.V. Nabokov, M. I. Tsvetaeva, V. F. Khodasevich, J. A. Brodsky, B. L. Pasternak, A. D. Sinyavsky and A. I. Solzhenitsyn.

All Soviet artists and writers were required to follow the party line in their works, and failure to do so could result in severe persecution. Between 1946 and Stalin's death in 1953, in a period known as *Zhdanovism* (a cultural doctrine developed by the secretary of Andrei Zhdanov in 1946), Soviet writers and artists endured severe repression.

Dissident writers were unable to publish their works in the Soviet Union until the 1960s. There was also a campaign against older literary styles which was led by the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers who vehemently criticized O. E. Mandelshtam, B. L. Pasternak, and V. V. Mayakovsky. For this reason, Pasternak's novel *Doctor Zhivago* was surreptitiously taken out of the Soviet Union and published in Milan, Italy in 1957. Despite winning the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1958 for *Doctor Zhivago*, Pasternak was forced by the Soviet government to decline the prize.

From Stalin's death until Khrushchev's removal from office in 1964 several *thaws* in official restrictions on artists and writers occurred. The term *thaw* was applied to literature following the publication of I. G. Erenburg's novel *The Thaw*. Used to describe a period of relative liberalism during Khrushchev's time, it did not survive his political career by long. By the 1970s, some famous writers had been prohibited from publishing, and others were even put on trial for alleged anti-Soviet propaganda.

During the Brezhnev era, writers of the Soviet *underground* whose works are distributed by hand (*Samizdat* was the name given to *underground* literature. *Samizdat* writers works were secretly written and distributed within the Soviet Union by dissidents. *Underground* literature lasted until the fall of the the Soviet Union), among them prominent writer A. D. Sinyavsky, were arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned. After having served a 7-year camp sentence, he was released from prison. In 1973 Sinyavsky immigrated to France and there he published his critical essays *Walks with Pushkin* and *In the Shadow of Gogol*, and his camp memoirs *A Voice from the Chorus*.

There were also other underground writers who were trying to publish anti-Soviet propaganda abroad (*Tamizdat*). A number of writers were arrested and expelled from the Soviet Union during the Brezhnev era like A. I. Solzhenitsyn.

Solzhenitsyn, some of whose works described life in prisons (*One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*) and conditions in the Gulag camps (*The Gulag Archipelago*), was among the *underground* writers with the courage to oppose the Soviet regime. After winning a Nobel prize for literature in 1970 Solzhenitsyn became the subject of official persecution. The KGB even tried to kill him with poison, and in 1974 Solzhenitsyn was expelled from the Soviet Union and came to the West, settling in the United States in 1976.

In the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, new satirical and prose writers emerged. These were F. A. Iskander, V. N. Voinovich, Y. P. Kazakov, Y. A. Yevtushenko, A. A. Voznesenskiy and J. A. Brodsky. These writers struggled against government restrictions on artistic expression, sometimes at great personal cost. For example, in 1964 Brodsky was arrested on charges of *social parasitism* and exiled within Russia for refusing to have a state job. He was sentenced to five years labor on a farm in the north of the country, but released after serving only 18 months in 1965. He returned to Leningrad and continued to write poetry, but his increasing fame as a poet did not save him from being forced to leave the Soviet Union in 1972. Brodsky emigrated to the United States. While living abroad he received the 1987 Nobel Prize for Literature.

*Reading Assignments:*

- 1- Pasternak, “[Doctor Zhivago](http://en.bookfi.org/s/?q=pasternak+doctor+zhivago&t=0)” <http://en.bookfi.org/s/?q=pasternak+doctor+zhivago&t=0>  
<http://gen.lib.rus.ec/search?req=boris+pasternak&nametype=orig&column%5B%5D=title&column%5B%5D=author&column%5B%5D=series&column%5B%5D=periodical&column%5B%5D=publisher&column%5B%5D=year>
- 2- Solzhenitsyn, “The Gulag Archipelago”  
<http://en.bookfi.org/s/?q=Solzhenitsyn%2C+%E2%80%9CThe+Gulag+Archipelago&t=0>  
“[One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich](http://gen.lib.rus.ec/search?req=solzhenitsyn&nametype=orig&column%5B%5D=title&column%5B%5D=author&column%5B%5D=series&column%5B%5D=periodical&column%5B%5D=publisher&column%5B%5D=year)”  
<http://gen.lib.rus.ec/search?req=solzhenitsyn&nametype=orig&column%5B%5D=title&column%5B%5D=author&column%5B%5D=series&column%5B%5D=periodical&column%5B%5D=publisher&column%5B%5D=year>
- 3-Emerson, C., *The Cambridge Introduction to Russian Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2008, Ch. 9.
- 4- Lanin, B., *Experiment and Emigration: Russian Literature, 1917-1953*, The Routledge Companion to Russian Literature, Edited by Neil Cornwell, 2001, Ch.16.
- 5-*The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Russian Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2011, Ch. 10.
- 6-*The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Russian Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2011, Ch. 11.
- 7- Brown, D., *Soviet Russian Literature since Stalin*, Cambridge University Press, 1978, Ch. 11.
- 8- Wakamiya, L.R., *Locating Exiled Writers in Contemporary Russian Literature*, Palgrave, MacMillan, 2009, Ch. 3.
- 9- Dmitriyev, A., *European Exile for Russian Westernizers: The Logos Circle, The Limits of Exile*, *Journal of the Interdisciplinary Crossroads*, Vol. 3, No.1, 2006, p.79-95.
- 10- *Russia and Western Civilization*, Edited by Russell Bova, ME Sharpe, New York, 2003, Ch. II, Sect. 4.

*Questions:*

- 1- Discuss the response of émigré Russian writers to being exiled and living abroad as reflected in their works.
- 2- Read Pasternak’s “Doctor Zhivago”. Can we consider Dr. Zhivago as a “Superfluous Man” in his time? Compare him with the main character, the Underground Man in Dostoyevsky’s “Notes from the Underground”. Determine the differences between them.
- 3- Read Solzhenitsyn’s “The Gulag Archipelago” and “One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich”  
Explain what the main concepts are in “The Gulag Archipelago”. Do we see the same ideas in “One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich”? How can you characterize them?
- 4- What is the difference between Russian Classical literature and the literature of socialist realism? How can we characterize Solzhenitsyn’s novels? Can we trace both traditions in his novels?
- 5- Read Dostoyevsky’s “Crime and Punishment” “The Brothers Karamazov” and “The Notes from Underground”. Talk about the ideological contents of the novels.  
Explain the literary concept of the “Superfluous man”. What other literary works in the history of Russian literature provide characters describing superfluous men? (Please answer the questions by providing examples from works) Why are they called “superfluous men”? Can we say that they are a by-product of the system they live in? Explain why.