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THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF IRONY IN RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH LITERATURE

Annotation: This article explores the similarities and differences in the use of irony in Russian and English literature. It examines how irony functions as a tool for critical commentary, depth, and subversion of expectations in both traditions. The article highlights the differences in tone, cultural context, and narrative function of irony in Russian and English literature, shedding light on the distinct ways in which writers from these traditions employ this powerful literary device.

Keywords: Irony, critical commentary, depth, subversion of expectations, cultural context, narrative function, tone.

Irony is a type of trope. Irony is an artistic technique for creating figurative and expressive speech based on identifying objects by contrast, and not by similarity of features, as in metaphor, or by contiguity, as in metonymy.

The Greek word „eironeia” literally means “pretense.” This trope is much less common than metaphors or metonymies. The speaker or the artist of the word uses irony to ridicule some phenomenon or event, while calling it not the word it deserves, but quite the opposite, a fool is called smart, something small and not worthy of attention is called big.

Irony, as a trope, is often used in fiction in the form of words and phrases with a positive meaning to negatively characterize a person, to create a satirical image. It can be argued that irony is hidden - condemnation under the guise of praise. It is most often revealed in context and is characterized by a bright emotional coloring.

The use of irony in literature serves to challenge readers' assumptions, highlight contradictions, and offer a deeper understanding of human nature. While the ways in which irony is employed may differ between Russian and English literature, its role as a powerful tool for social commentary and narrative enrichment remains consistent across both traditions.

In Russian literature, irony often serves as a means of reflecting the socio-political upheavals and cultural complexities that have shaped the country's history. Russian writers, such as Fyodor Dostoevsky and Anton Chekhov, frequently used irony to explore the darker aspects of the human psyche, challenge existing power structures, and critique the societal norms of their time. The use of irony in Russian literature can be seen as a way to illuminate the contradictions and complexities of Russian society, offering a nuanced portrayal of the human condition.

In English literature, irony is often employed with a focus on wit, humor, and satire. Writers like Jane Austen and Oscar Wilde used irony to highlight the absurdities of social conventions, expose the hypocrisy of the upper classes, and offer sharp social commentary. English literature often uses irony as a tool for humor and sarcasm, injecting a playful and light-hearted tone into works while still conveying deeper themes and ideas.

Despite these differences in tone and style, the role of irony in Russian and English literature remains consistent in its ability to challenge readers' perspectives, question established norms, and offer a window into the complexities of human behavior. Irony allows writers in both traditions to create

multi-layered narratives that invite readers to engage critically with the text, considering the nuances and contradictions that lie beneath the surface.

Furthermore, irony in both Russian and English literature serves as a means of highlighting the paradoxes and ambiguities of life, showcasing the inherent contradictions and complexity of the human experience. By using irony to subvert expectations, challenge assumptions, and create tension within the narrative, writers in both traditions are able to offer a more nuanced and layered exploration of the world in which their characters inhabit.

While there are similarities in how irony is employed in both literary traditions, there are also distinct differences that reflect the unique cultural and historical contexts in which these works were created.

Similarities:

1.Both Russian and English literature use irony as a means of critiquing society, politics, and human behavior. Writers in both traditions often employ irony to highlight hypocrisy, absurdity, and injustice, drawing attention to the flaws and contradictions inherent in human nature.

2.Irony is used in both Russian and English literature to explore the complexities of human psychology and relationships. Writers in both traditions employ irony to delve into characters' inner thoughts and motivations, revealing the hidden tensions and contradictions that define their personalities.

3.Both Russian and English literature use irony to challenge established norms and conventions, subverting traditional expectations and revealing the absurdity of social constructs. Irony allows writers in both traditions to disrupt common beliefs and assumptions, inviting readers to question their own preconceptions.

Differences:

1.Russian and English literature often exhibit differences in tone and style when employing irony. Russian literature is known for its dark humor, sardonic wit, and bleak portrayal of the human condition. English literature, on the other hand, tends to incorporate more playful and light-hearted irony, with a focus on wit, wordplay, and social satire.

2.The use of irony in Russian and English literature is influenced by the cultural and historical contexts in which these works were written. Russian literature often reflects the tumultuous political and social upheavals that have shaped the country's history, leading to a more biting and caustic form of irony. English literature, on the other hand, is informed by a different set of cultural norms and traditions, resulting in a more nuanced and subtle use of irony.

3.Russian literature tends to feature more complex and layered narratives, with irony woven into the fabric of the story in intricate ways. English literature, while also incorporating irony into its narratives, often relies on more straightforward and linear storytelling techniques. The use of irony in Russian literature can sometimes be more overt and central to the plot, whereas in English literature, irony may be more subtly integrated into the narrative.

In conclusion, the use of irony in Russian and English literature showcases the universal power of this literary device in conveying meaning, satire, and social critique. While there are similarities in how irony is employed in both traditions, the differences in tone, style, cultural context, and narrative structure highlight the unique characteristics of Russian and English literature. Regardless of these

distinctions, irony remains a vital and vibrant element in both literary traditions, offering readers a deeper understanding of the complexities of the human experience.

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