

**CONTRAST BETWEEN ONEGIN AND LENSKY IN THE NOVEL BY A.S. PUSHKIN'S
"EUGENE ONEGIN"**

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Abstract: Lensky, the hero of the novel "Eugene Onegin," reflects two concepts of Schiller's perception in Russian culture of the 1820s: the "sublime," freedom-loving, idealistic (as the figure of "Storm und Drang") and the "pseudo-romantic," elegiac, harking back to Zhukovsky's translations of his elegies and ballads. However, Pushkin himself, in "Eugene Onegin," clearly does not fully share these concepts, emphasizing one or the other when necessary. The projection of both in the novel ranges from ironic debasement to sympathetic acceptance, which, along with their latent conflict, creates a dialectical tension in the image. Lensky. It is precisely Schiller's motifs that give the image depth. In the rough drafts of the exposition of Lensky's image, the expressiveness and passion of his nature, his rebelliousness and political engagement are much more strongly emphasized. But the author, while working on the text, "shifts" Lensky's image towards a dreamy elegiac, while maintaining a recognizable Schillerian image. The description of Lensky's ideals entirely moves in line with Schiller's philosophy and work. In this regard, the article for the first time examines possible reminiscences of the image of Lensky from Schiller's poems "Hope", "Dreams", "Friendship", "The Triumph of Love", "The Secret of Memory (to Laura)", "Artists", "Happiness", "Ideals and Life", and "The Fugitive". Having parodied the tradition of the "sad" elegy using the example of Lensky's dying poems, the author unexpectedly includes two similar elegies as lyrical digressions. Despite the prevalence of Byronic elements in the novel in the ideological and artistic context and Pushkin's apparent irony in relation to the Schillerian tradition, he saw it as a possible reference point for the development of Russian literature.

Keywords: Pushkin, "Eugene Onegin," Vladimir Lensky, Romanticism, elegy genre, idealism, Lensky's image, lyrical digressions, poet.

INTRODUCTION

Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin is rightfully considered the founder of modern Russian literature. His work reflected the era in which national culture was being formed, and for the first time, man was shown not as a typical representative of a class, but as an individual with his own internal contradictions and spiritual quest.

The novel in verse "Eugene Onegin" (1823–1831) occupies a special place in Pushkin's oeuvre. The author himself called it "the fruit of a mind of cold observations and a heart of sorrowful notes." In this work, Pushkin created an entire gallery of images representing various types of the Russian intelligentsia of his time. The central figures of the novel are Eugene Onegin and Vladimir Lensky—two young men opposed to each other in worldview, character, and life principles.

The purpose of this work is to examine the nature of the opposition between Onegin and Lensky, how Pushkin, through these two characters, demonstrated the clash of realism and romanticism, and also reflected the generational crisis of the early 19th century.

The Character of Eugene Onegin

Eugene Onegin is a representative of the capital's nobility, a well-mannered, intelligent, and educated man, but weary of life. Onegin grew up in an atmosphere of high society entertainment

and superficial pleasures. Already in the first chapters of the novel, the author ironically notes his habit of "feeling the weariness of life early":

"His feelings cooled early,
He grew weary of the world's noise..."

Onegin is a typical "superfluous man," characterized by feelings of boredom, dissatisfaction, and inner emptiness. He seeks meaning, life, but finds it neither in love, nor in society, nor in friendship. His mind is analytical, but cold; he sees the world without illusions, and therefore is incapable of sincere feelings.

His attitude toward people is tinged with irony and detachment. Even in love, Onegin shows no true passion: "Onegin, my good friend, was born on the banks of the Neva..." The author sympathizes with the hero, but simultaneously exposes his coldness and selfishness.

The Image of Vladimir Lensky

Vladimir Lensky is the complete opposite of Onegin. A young poet raised in Germany, he brings the ideals of Romanticism to Russia: faith in lofty feelings, friendship, honor, and love. Lensky is a dreamer, an idealist, a man of the heart, not of the mind.

Pushkin describes Lensky with a touch of irony:

"From the cold depravity of the world
Having yet known nothing..."

Lensky lives in a world of poetic dreams. He idealizes love, worships Tatyana, writes poetry, and admires nature. Unlike Onegin, he is incapable of cold calculation. His life is dominated by feeling and inspiration.

However, it is precisely his naivety and idealism that lead to tragedy. He takes the world too seriously and is unable to forgive. When Onegin jokingly begins to court Olga, Lensky perceives this as betrayal and challenges his friend to a duel.

The Contrast of Onegin and Lensky

The main difference between Onegin and Lensky lies in their worldviews. Onegin is a realist, a skeptic, a man of experience; Lensky is a romantic, an idealist, a man of dreams. This is a clash of two eras: fading romanticism and emerging realism.

Difference in Life Principles

Onegin is guided by reason, Lensky by emotion. The former does not believe in ideals, the latter lives by them. For Onegin, love is a game, for Lensky, it is the meaning of existence.

Difference in Attitudes to Society

Onegin has become disillusioned with social life, considering it empty and meaningless. Lensky, on the other hand, has not yet experienced the bitterness of disillusionment—he sees the world in romantic terms. Onegin flees society, while Lensky strives to be useful to it.

The Duel as a Symbol of the Clash of Worlds

The duel between Onegin and Lensky is the novel's climax. It is not just a casual quarrel, but a symbolic clash of two worldviews. Lensky goes to the duel for honor, Onegin out of pride and boredom. Ultimately, Onegin wins, but his victory is a defeat for the soul: after his friend's death, he feels guilt and emptiness.

"And he is killed—and his gaze fades..."

Thus, Lensky's tragedy becomes a moral judgment of Onegin.

The Author's Attitude to the Characters

Pushkin does not clearly favor either character. He sympathizes with Lensky for his purity and sincerity, but understands his naivety. The author criticizes Onegin for his coldness and inactivity, but at the same time sees him as a representative of a new generation that has recognized the emptiness of old ideals.

The author seems to unite both heroes: one lives without reason (Lensky), the other without heart (Onegin). Only their harmony could produce the "ideal" person. But in reality, each is doomed to their own tragedy.

CONCLUSION

The juxtaposition of Onegin and Lensky is one of Pushkin's central artistic discoveries. Through these characters, the poet depicted the spiritual crisis of the 19th-century Russian nobility, the clash of old romantic ideals with a new reality.

Onegin is a symbol of reason without faith, Lensky is a symbol of faith without reason. Both find happiness because the world around them is not ready for harmony.

Pushkin warns the reader: a person must strive for inner unity, for the union of mind and heart. This is the main lesson of the novel "Eugene Onegin," which remains relevant today.

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