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**ANALYSING THE IMAGE OF A GREEK IN RUSSIA LITERATURE
DURING THE XIX-XX CENTURIES AND TRANSLATION IN CLASSES
IN GREEK UNIVERSITIES: EXAMPLES FROM A. I. KUPRIN'S ESSA
«LAESTRYGONIANS»**

**АНАЛИЗ ОБРАЗА ГРЕКА В РОССИЙСКОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЕ В ПЕРИОД
XIX-XX ВЕКИ И ПЕРЕВОД НА ЗАНЯТИЯХ В ГРЕЧЕСКИХ
УНИВЕРСИТЕТАХ: ПРИМЕРЫ ИЗ ОЧЕРКА А.И. КУПРИНА
«ЛЕСТРИГОНЫ»**

Abstract:

In this article the image of the Greek in literary works at the lessons for literature and translation in Greek universities is examined by the example of the work of Alexander Ivanovich Kuprin «Laestrygonians». The scope of our work is to analyze the image of the Greek in the essay of A. I. Kuprin «Laestrygonians», namely: (i) to identify the natural and mysterious originality of the Greek people, which contains the secret of the national character, (ii) to discuss the main elements that characterize the Greeks, to understand who is, as whom is presented by A. I. Kuprin, and (iii) to acquaint with interpretation, which helps to most accurately recreate the color of the description of the era of that time, its history and culture.

Keywords: Literary works, the image of Greek, Greek philology students, intercultural communication, national culture

Аннотация:

В данной статье рассматривается образ грека в российских литературных произведениях на уроках перевода и литературы в греческих вузах на примере произведения Александра Ивановича Куприна «Лестригонцы». Предметом нашей исследования является анализ образа грека в очерке А. И. Куприна «Лестригоны», а именно: (i) выявить природное и таинственное своеобразие греческого народа, заключающее в себе тайну национального характера, (ii) обсудить основные элементы, характеризующие греков, понять, кто есть, как и кого представляет А. И. Куприн, (iii) ознакомиться с толкованием, помогающим наиболее точно воссоздать колорит описания эпохи того времени, его историю и культуру.

Ключевые слова: литературные произведения, образ грека, студенты-грекофилы, межкультурная коммуникация, национальная культура.

Introduction

Reading literary texts is a significant and necessary element in the system of teaching Russian as a foreign language, as they «stimulate the mental activity of students, influencing emotions and aesthetic taste» [1, p. 55]. Literary text is one of the most accessible and effective means that bring foreigners as close as possible to the natural linguistic and cultural environment, provide an opportunity to study Russian culture, and encourage reflection. The purpose of reading literary texts is to expand socio-cultural knowledge, increase the vocabulary of students.

Each literary text is a separate model of national culture, containing information about national personal characteristics and lifestyle, about phenomena and actions that are approved or condemned in the context of the culture under study. The communicative behavior of the characters is a positive or negative component of the national culture.

Theory

Artistic works always have been and will be an important means of promoting intercultural communication. At present, classes at philological faculties in Greek universities are actively used not only adapted texts and authentic texts, but also works of fiction.

In the main program of a compulsory subject both in literature and in translation of the Faculty of Philology of the Department of Languages, Literature and Culture of the countries of the Black Sea Countries of the Democritus University of Thrace in the city of Komotini, includes literary works of Russian writers. Here, Greek philology students immerse themselves in non-adapted artistic literature, studying and analyzing them in detail, working on their own translations.

The purpose of our work is to trace how the Greeks of Russia of the 19th-20th centuries are seen by Russian writers, based on the example of the work of A. I. Kuprin «Leastrigonians».

To begin with, the Greek philology students were asked to make their own translation of the work, since even though this work belongs to the work of a famous Russian writer, there is no translation into Greek. Further, we tried to trace and analyze the images, customs, and traditions of the Greeks, since each ethnic group is individual, has only its own inherent qualities, its own special «stereotype of behavior».

Methods

In our work, we use the method of national paintings and the method of structural analysis of a literary text, based on national stereotypes and myths.

Results and Discussion

The events take place at the beginning of the 20th century at the coast of the Black Sea, at the small, by the sea town of Balaclava, where the Greek presence is known to have a long story. The Greeks of diaspora settled at Balaclava and the nearby villages, and formed the basis of the Greek

infantry battalion, which was distinguished during the Crimean war. The warriors and fishermen, viticulturists and pilgrims have created their own, unique way of life in Balaclava. The history of the Balaclava Greeks ended with their deportation after the liberation of Crimea in 1944. However, despite this crime of the Soviet regime, their memory is still alive in Russia, Ukraine, Greece, where their descendants live [5, p. 189].

It is worth noting that Greek fishermen of Balaclava in Kuprin's «Laestrygonians» are not episodic at all, but the main characters.

They complement each other because they have, in the first place, a common starting point.

«Among them you may notice many tall, strong, and self-confident figures, well-formed, noble faces, often blondes with blue eyes. People in Balaclava are not greedy nor helpful, they stand with dignity in the sea, brave, although without absurd risk, they are good comrades and tightly follow their promise... This is the special, exclusive race of the Greeks, which is preserved mainly because their ancestors were born, lived and died in this place for hundreds of generations, and they only married among fellow villagers».

In the essays, the author reveals the difficult, risky, but happy life of the Balaclava fishermen - the «Laestrygonians» - courageous, stubborn people who have maintained the millennial experience of their ancestors, naturalness and simplicity, companionship, loyalty, and mutual assistance.

Kuprin presents in poetic form the best features of the national character. He calls the Balaclava sailors descendants of the «hemostatic Homeric Laestrygonians», which means that, he boosts human courage in mythological proportions. As you may know, Homeric Laestrygonians are cannibals, robbers who thirst for blood. Kuprin retains only one nuance of the original meaning of this word: «Laestrygonians» are excellent, they differ from ordinary people. In their individual myth it means exclusivity, courage and endurance, patience and special skills that allow them to win the battle with the elements of the sea.

With admiration and warmth Kuprin writes: «Oh, dear ordinary people, courageous hearts, naive primitive souls, strong bodies, strengthened by the salty sea breeze, calloused hands, penetrating eyes, which many times stared at the face of death!»

Let's examine the images of the main characters of «Laestrygonians» and find out how the author mythologizes them in the world in which they live. All of them, as it is known, have real originals and bear their real names. It is worth noting that traditional Greek names and surnames predominate, Kuprin does not change the real names of the fishermen - the heroes of the dissertations: Vania Androutsaki, Theodor from Olezya, Kolya Konstandi, Christos Abarzakis, Gura Palatino. There is a remarkable loss of some traditional Greek suffixes, such as «-ος» Christos, for example, and in the essay all Greek names are pronounced as pronounced in Russia: Kolia - Nikolaos, Vania - Ioannis, Theodor - Theodoros, Goura - Giorgos.

The first method of fiction, which Kuprin uses when creating his legend for Kolia Konstantis or Gouras Palatino, is the choice of only mythological features in both appearance and characters of the heroes. It is important that, creating the image of the «real, salty Greek» of Kolia Konstantis, Kuprin did not consider that it was necessary to portray him, and the reason for this refusal was the extreme «simplistic» appearance of the fisherman, which was the original of the hero. «In Kolia's appearance, nothing betrayed a fearless fishing leader - he was a good, fat man with a big belly. Even the nickname fishermen gave him, the proudest of all - Suspenders (since he was the only fisherman who wore suspenders). Obviously, that's why Kuprin never painted a portrait of Kolia Konstantis» [3, p. 94].

The portrait of Goura Palatino, who in his life had a decent appearance of «Laestrygonians» (his image is the first in the list of «Laestrygonians» in the text), was painted by Kuprin in the most romantic colors. «Goura Palatino is not a German emperor, nor a famous bass, nor a modern writer, nor a performer in gypsy romances», nevertheless he is known in these places no less, as the «salted and paid with tar Greek» possesses rare courage and youth. Goura has «... a dark-complexioned

face, curly black hair, mustache, a square shaved chin, thin firm lips that actively fall to the corners of his face» [2, p. 281].

The author presents to the reader a description of his appearance and with a necessary mythological projection: he has a neck like a «buffalo's», an animal type of bend in the middle of his chin, which speaks for a «terrible will and great cruelty» [6, p. 104], that's how he ends up to an image of a human beast («A kind of beast! [6, 108] »), which embodies a fictional, elemental force and the power of the nature itself.

In his work, Kuprin uses an effective means of fictionalizing the images of the «Laestrygonians» - this includes exaggeration, a function which forms an aura of exclusivity around the hero. For example, immediately after the presentation of Goura's portrait, the author describes the unprecedented qualities of the hero, focusing on the reader's attention on his exclusivity, repeating synonymous negative constructions at the beginning of each sentence: «There is not a single person among the fishermen who is more agile, deceptive, stronger, and braver than Goura Palatino. No one has yet managed to drink more than Goura, and no one has seen him drunk. No one can be compared with the fate of Goura. To anyone has developed as strongly as in him, the apathy for the unjust blows of fate that characterizes sea fishing, which injustice is so highly valued by these salty people» [6, 104-105].

Effectively, in our opinion, Kuprin uses in his mythology also archetypal features, creating the images of the characters. Thus, except for the «salty chiefs», who incorporate the elements of nature or, using the adjective that Kuprin loves: «beasty» power, the image of Sasha, in which the characteristics of a real evil scammer are clearly expressed, is built with interest. «This young man - a handsome blue-eyed man with a solid antique profile - is actually the first lazy, rogue and clown on the entire coast» [6, p. 13].

Kuprin describes with obvious pleasure those «tricks» with which Saska deceives the unsuspecting tourists during the festive season, either by selling them pieces of an ordinary stove as fragments of an ancient Greek vase, or by pretending that she can stay under the water for a quarter of an hour, while he was sitting in a nearby bathroom [6, 132]. «Although...it is not the greed for money that guides Saska in his tricks, but the boyish, crazy, cute evil», which turns the swindler Saska into a perfect rascal, bringing the spirit of the carnival to life.

Kuprin repeatedly emphasizes such characteristics among fishermen - friendship, solidarity. No one could sleep when Vania Androutsaki disappeared, everyone was actively involved in the search: elderly, young, women and children. «The village woke up, the ancient, the eternal bond between people, a feeling of blood solidarity, which was so little felt in everyday life. For thousands of years voices spoke to their souls, grandparents who, long before the time of Odysseus, together defended themselves from the storm the same days and the same nights. Nobody was sleeping. At night, a huge fire was set at the top of the mountain, and everyone was walking along the shore with lights, like it was Easter. But no one was laughing, no one was singing, and all the cafes were empty» [2, p. 299].

Modesty is another important characteristic of Kuprin's fishermen, they did not brag about their victories, about their victories at sea, the fishermen «narrated in fragments, reluctantly, without will» [2, p. 299].

The «heroic» moments were not unfamiliar for the fishermen during the siege of Sevastopol. «Until now, the Greeks of Balaclava are convinced that only thanks to the stability of their own battalion did Sevastopol last for so long. Yes! From ancient times, ironed and proud people lived in Balaclava» [2, p. 301].

Curiosity is a characteristic of Greeks, to which the author turns his gaze: «the children brought the news that a passage had turned from the sea and went to the bay. In a couple of minutes, the entire local male population was on the embankment. It is known that a Greek is always a Greek and, therefore, it's strange at first. We must admit that the Greek colonialists left their souls with the most

characteristic acquaintance, which they distinguished even in the time of Pericles»- curiosity and passion for the news.

Kuprin's «Laestrygonians» experience a painful and natural work. And this is their most impressive event. Spirituality and subtlety are unfamiliar to them. Views for the world of ordinary fishermen are limited and monotonous. To the children of nature, Kuprin emphasizes not intelligence, nor intellectuality, but images of vision, a gravity to a legend that inspires nature itself. To create a mythological plan for the reality of Balaclava, many appeals for ancient legends, omens, beliefs are important, which are still served as models of value and behavior for fishermen. The leader of the fishing boat, Kolia Konstantis, teaches the hero-narrator the customs and superstitions during fishing. He is the one who tells the occult legend about the «fish of God», which symbolically reproduces his name from the ancient mythology where it is called the «Fish of Zeus». He also talks about the Dutchman who flies, the sea snake with «one mile long». This way, he reveals the power of the emotions of a mediocre, simple person.

The mythological and poetic features in «Laestrygonians» are also expressed with interests through the characters' speech features. Thus, a significant part of their speech is occupied by God and offensive words, which, as you know, belong to ritual forms of speech and, therefore, reflect the ritual and mythological principle in everyday life.

Let's look at some examples. One of the main characters in «Laestrygonians», Gura Pratino, «inserts» in the text a remark that contains a curse: «And there he goes, to hell! » [6, p. 105] - so that these words become, as his business card is, testifying to both his courage and his composure when he used to face difficult situations this curse is Goura's only reaction to the news that «the long boat, full to the brim top with expensive fish, flooded with water and sank to the bottom».

But the point here is that this observation reveals «the special, maritime indifference of fishermen to the unjust blows of fate, which is so much appreciated by these salty people» [6, p. 104-105].

One mythological episode of the «initiation» of the young captain Vania Androutsakis, his initial "privity" into real fishermen, which deserves special consideration, is also accompanied by an oath. The young fisherman Vania Androutsaki assembles his team for the first time, although the experienced fishermen believe that he still needs «two years to be a simple rower and another year to spend as a leader's assistant». (Let's pay attention immediately to the appearance of sanctuary number three here - Vanya must prepare himself for three years to become a leader). Vania's first independent outing to the sea is depicted as a classic «obscene» action: «he shouted strictly ... at his ... old mother, belittled the grumpy elder neighbors with obscene words and went out to sea while he was drunk, with his drunk crew» [6, p. 114]. Moreover, he did that in such weather conditions when fishermen do not usually go out in the sea. The reward for this urge was luck - Vania returned safely and with an almost fantastic amount of large sturgeon.

The curse becomes an integral part of the ceremony of combating the elements of nature, through which Vania passes during his first sturgeon catch. When a huge fish tries to drag his long boat in the depth, he accompanies his orders to the team with curses: «He shouted to the fishermen «Taban!». After that, follows the obligatory bloodshed for each initiation: The bronze hook is pushed into Vanya's hand, so that the future captain will shed the blood of the sacrifice, and this moment is also accompanied by a curse (Vanya swore with a boring surprise: the bronze hook sank into the flesh of his palm from a swing under the little finger and sat there in the full depth of the twist» [6, p. 106]. Moreover, the ritual and mythological basis of the described scene is almost exposed in the narrative. Kuprin underlines the original nature of what is happening, describing his hero's actions as corresponding to the title of «real salty fisherman»).

Vanya's accidental injury turns into a real «sacrifice»: «And then Vanya showed that he was a real fisherman with salt. Wrapping a string around the fingers of the injured hand, he delayed running the rope for a second, and with his other hand pulled out a knife and cut the thread. He then, held the

hook tightly in his hand with his sting, but Vania pulled it out with the flesh and threw it into the sea. And although both his hands and the line of the bridge were completely stained with blood and the side of the boat and the water in the launch turned red from his blood, he nevertheless completed his work and gave the first amazing blow with a hammer on the stubborn fish's head» [6, p. 116].

The reward for this sacrifice is the victory over the monstrous fish and, most importantly, Vania's transition to a new value: gaining a higher social status, as should be the result of a successful initiation: «From that day, Vania Andrusaki became a famous real salt leader» [6, p. 117].

The mythological context of the narrative is supported by continuous references or detailed stories about the many signs of fishing and superstitions that accompany literally every moment of their lives, so that in the minds of both the fishermen themselves and the author who entered their circle, retain the feeling of the presence of certain mystical forces in life, a fate that can be «intimidated» or «become stupid», but that can't be ignored. Incidentally, this kind of fatalism, which is found in the ways and customs of fishermen, is related to the idea of fate, which, as the researchers note, has always played an important role in Kuprin's artistic world. Thus, V. Ya. Grechnev notes that Kuprin is characterized by an appeal to matters of fate, to fatal forces, which «on the eve of the ages ... become relevant to many poets and novelists - both realists and symbolists» [4, p. 208]

Next, let's find out how the author presents the image of the Greek women of Balaclava in «Laestrygonians»: «Near the stone wells, where the water is constantly running and ringing forming a thin stream, for a long time, for hours the slim, with tanned faces, with big eyes and long noses, Greek women gossip about their family affairs...». Kuprin uses such adjectives in his descriptions as «slim, sun-tanned, dark faces».

The family way of life is distinguished by conservatism, respect for tradition: Husbands and wives in Balaclava follow a closed and pure way of life, allowing themselves only innocent ways of entertainment: gossiping with neighbors in the fountain, even men themselves somehow avoid visiting their families, but prefer to see each other in a cafe or at the pier... An indirect proof of the conservatism of the Greeks is the fact that most of the characters in the play are Greek men.

Another way to create a mythological aura around the images of the inhabitants of Balaclava and their world are the ancient and biblical allusions... That way, Greek women of Balaclava «look strangely and movingly with the image of the Virgin Mary in the ancient Byzantine icons». The men crush the grapes «probably in the same primitive ways as our ancestor Noah or the clever Odysseus did». «On these mountains three, four and maybe five thousand years ago, under the same high blue sky and under the same sweet red sun, the popular feast of Bacchus was celebrated» [6, 142].

Extracts show that, on the one hand, the Greeks retained many of their national customs and traditions, and on the other hand, there is a vulnerability to some assimilation, for example, such a tradition that we now know as «Russian tradition», such as «soak and drink for a new acquisition» presents the author as an element inherent in the Greeks.

Conclusion

In this way, the literary text appears in the methodology of teaching Russian as a foreign language as a means of forming intercultural competence. Translation, analysis and evaluation of original works of art, as well as comparative and cultural-linguistic analysis of existing translations, aimed not only at understanding the general meaning, but also at analyzing the image of the main characters. Fact that will allow students to significantly expand their horizons, knowledge background in the field of literature, history, and culture, to bring them closer to understanding the mentality of native Russian speakers, as well as to expand the existing passive vocabulary.

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