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Постромантизм (вторая половина XIX века). Ареал позитивизма

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Аннотация. Данный очерк завершает рассмотрение Классической эпохи обращением к последнему периоду в ее рамках – Постромантизму (вторая половина XIX века). Хотя весь XIX век называют веком Романтизма, именно во второй его половине произошло смещение акцентов в сторону реализма: объективность, сдержанность и гармоничность стали приоритетными в художественном творчестве. Не исчезнув полностью, романтическая настроенность и образность приобрели смягченный, эпизодический характер, воспринимаясь теперь скорее как своего рода аномалия, а не норма, как это было типично для предыдущего периода. В очерке выделяются важнейшие черты, характеризовавшие художественный процесс Постромантизма: самоутверждение новых сил, борьба за обновление мироустройства; реализм, требующий идейности, содержательности, точности в изображении человека и мира; распространение критического реализма (в частности, в России) – обличение социального зла, боль за народ, внимание к обыденной жизни, самоанализ нации; «золотой век» русской литературы, живописи, музыки; демократизация искусства – обращение к жизни широких слоев общества, особенно низовой народной жизни; прозаизация литературы, отход поэзии на второй план; появление новых жанров и форм: историзм в живописи, симфонии-романы и концерты-романы в музыке, расцвет большого романа; в архитектуре – обращение к различным стилям (готика, ренессанс, барокко, классицизм), смешение стилей – эклектизм; обращение к традициям национального зодчества; формирование своего рода «фасада», развитие парадно-репрезентативных сторон художественного творчества (импозантность архитектурных сооружений, парадный портрет), а также воспевание радостей и легкости жизни, красоты в обыденном, приятного досуга (импрессионизм, изображение светской жизни в романах, расцвет балета и оперетты, вальса).

EN

Post-Romanticism (the second half of the 19th century).
The area of positivism

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Abstract. This essay concludes the examination of the Classical Era by addressing its final period – Post-Romanticism (the second half of the 19th century). Although the entire 19th century is often called the Age of Romanticism, it was in the second half that the emphasis shifted towards realism: objectivity, restraint, and harmony became priorities in artistic creation. Without disappearing completely, Romantic sentiment and imagery took on a softened, episodic character, now perceived more as an anomaly than the norm, as had been typical of the previous period. The essay highlights the most important features that characterized the artistic process during Post-Romanticism: the self-affirmation of new forces, the struggle for the renewal of the world order; realism demanding ideational content, accuracy in depicting man and the world; the spread of critical realism (particularly in Russia) – denunciation of social evil, pain for the people, attention to everyday life, national self-analysis; the “Golden Age” of Russian literature, painting, and music; the democratization of art – turning to the life of broad segments of society, especially lower-class folk life; the prosaicization of literature, the retreat of poetry to the background; the emergence of new genres and forms: historicism in painting, symphonies-romances and concertos-romances in music, and the flourishing of the great novel; in architecture – the return to various styles (Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Classicism), a mixing of styles – eclecticism; a return to the traditions of national architecture; the formation of a kind of “façade”, the development of ceremonial and representational aspects of artistic creation (imposing architectural structures, formal portraits), as well as the celebration of the joys and lightness of life, beauty in the mundane, and pleasant leisure (Impressionism, the depiction of secular life in novels, the flourishing of ballet and operetta, and the waltz).

The whole 19th century is often called the century of Romanticism. Indeed, this is true to some extent. Its second half directly followed the traditions of the first half of the century. However, at that time, there was a shift in emphasis towards what is usually called *realism* in art. The impersonal and common things came to the fore, and in general, everything in artistic creativity became more restrained and balanced, clarified and harmonious.

Pushed to the periphery of the artistic process, the romantic way of thinking continued to exist but most often transformed into various kinds of *romance* as a softened expression of a romantic mood (let us imagine, for example, the adventure novels of such authors as *Jules Verne* and *Mark Twain*) or in the form of separate, episodic flashes of romantic imagery.

Let us immediately give a very typical example. *Johannes Brahms* (1833-1897), the greatest German composer of his time, at the beginning of his creative career received ardent support and the “blessing” of the outstanding Romanticist of the first half of the 19th century, Robert Schumann, and actively developed his tradition in new historical conditions but transforming it in terms of a more objective artistic expression.

The features of high expression and purely subjective emotionality similar to Schumann’s music only occasionally appeared in his works. But even in such cases, one can easily hear that his predecessor could not have written something like this – despite the external similarity, the internal “coordinates” of the means and forms of embodiment changed significantly. *The Rhapsody for Piano in G minor (op. 79, No. 2)* can be taken as a completely typical example.

Perhaps the most important change was the following: if in the first half of the 19th century the Romantic features were perceived as widespread, typical, then now, in the second half of the century, they looked more like local, specific, sometimes acquiring the character of an anomaly, that is, a kind of deviation from the norm.

Let us turn from this point of view to the novel *Crime and Punishment* (1866) by *Fyodor Dostoevsky* (1821-1881). The protagonist, Raskolnikov, sometimes behaves like a person on the verge of pathology. His manifestations are characterized by morbid extremes. He is a very contradictory and complex character, in whom there is *so much spiteful contempt*.

Even while reading a heartfelt letter from his loving mother, when at first “*his face was wet with tears*,” he was gradually passing into a different state, so that near the end his face “*was pale and distorted, and a bitter, wrathful and malignant smile was on his lips*” (Dostoevsky, 1914).

He is completely uncommunicative, arrogant, puts himself above others.

Indeed, Raskolnikov is fully aware of his exclusivity, is keen on the morality of the “extraordinary man,” and, in order to convince himself of the possibility of neglecting the laws for everyone, he commits the murder of an old moneylender.

But it is only one side of the case. And on the other side, this misanthrope has surges of philanthropy; he is characterized by ardent sympathy for the disadvantaged, a readiness to support them in their grief, to stand up for them.

The paradox of his nature is that he can greatly offend the closest person, hate him or her but he feels some kind of painful affection to orphans and ill favored. The confirmation of this view comes from Raskolnikov’s words about the girl he intended to marry but could not because of her death: “*If she had been lame or hunchback, I believe I should have liked her better still*” (Dostoevsky, 1914).

Of course, this was the sphere of romantic manifestations but they were completely different in comparison with those of the early 19th century. That is, romantic forms of artistic expression acquired the features that were simply unimaginable before.

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We find absolutely obvious evidence of this in the visual arts. Let us start with landscape painting, to which we will return many times, since it had never before acquired such significance and experienced its highest flourishing at that time. The determining reason for that flourishing was the desire of artists of the late 19th century to create a *real* environment of a *real* person. But there were also purely romantic perspectives on this environment.

Arkhip Kuindzhi (1841-1910) put forward a completely new and special type of ideas about the natural world in his landscapes. It was as if he set himself the goal of showing something unexpected and exceptional in things familiar to the eye of his compatriot. And he managed to amaze his contemporaries. His art amazes even today. Although, unfortunately, the colors on Kuindzhi’s canvases faded greatly.

For example, let us turn to the painting *Moonlit Night on the Dnieper* (1880), which depicts simply a river and ordinary mazanka houses on its bank (a mazanka is a Ukrainian whitewashed hut), simply the sky and the moon.

But at the same time, “simple” is not so simple as it may seem. What a huge, high sky! What a gap in the clouds the moon is floating in! What a dazzling expanse of a spreading water surface! What fires blaze on the illuminated walls of the huts!

Of course, the choice of the situation itself is romantic: night, moonlight. But especially romantic is the interpretation of the chosen pictorial subject: the face of the moon and a sharply defined strip of light on the river surface among the darkness surrounding them, as well as the extraordinary boundless space, the immensity of the expanses, which gives the impression of an almost cosmic scale.

Kuindzhi became famous mainly for his Ukrainian landscapes but he was able to highlight something special, unusual in the nature of central Russia. He achieved this, as always, through the use of exceedingly bright colors, sharp color contrasts and exceptionally intense lighting effects (from this point of view, one of the artist’s paintings received a very indicative title – “*Winter. Light Spots on the Roofs of the Huts*”).

In the purely Russian canvas **Birch Grove** (1879), the main thing is, perhaps, the sharply presented contrast of light and shadow. The dazzling light of the central section of the painting is adjacent to its extremely shaded surroundings so that there is an impression of a simultaneous combination of midday and midnight. The Romantic originality is also clearly felt in the outline of the trees, including the unexpected diagonal tilt of the birch in the center.

The art of the second half of the 19th century usually turned to the expressive sources of the Romantic sort precisely when it was necessary to depict something out of the ordinary: to portray a special type of character, to outline an extreme situation or to embody a certain symbolic idea.

From time to time, such a need arose among pure, absolute realists, which happened, for example, in the painting by Ilya Repin (1844-1930) **Ivan the Terrible and His Son Ivan** (1885).

The image of Ivan the Terrible, as one of the key figures in Russian history, was widely included in the art of the second half of the 19th century, whose representatives looked closely at the past in order to better understand the present (Lev Mei's drama "The Maid of Pskov", 1859, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's opera of the same name, 1862, Mark Antokolsky's sculpture, etc.).

Russia of the second half of the 19th century gave three titans who constituted the highest peaks in their types of art – Leo Tolstoy in literature, Ilya Repin in painting and Pyotr Tchaikovsky in music. The second of them is the central figure of *realistic* painting of that time. But occasionally he turned to *Romantic* features of depiction.

Thus, a completely exceptional situation is conveyed in the above-mentioned canvas, and the artist emphasizes the features of pathology in the personality of the tsar: having committed murder in a fit of madness, he is now full of mad despair.

Realizing the horror of the irreparability of his deed (among other things, he had deprived himself of an heir), convulsively clutching the body of the dying tsarevich, Ivan the Terrible literally screams with the madness of his bulging eyes (his gaze into the void indicates a state of complete life impasse). The extreme sharpness of expression is enhanced by the burning color of the stream of blood flooding the center of the canvas. We will recall the expressiveness of this technique of a colorful spot in the center of a painting when we talk about Repin's work "Arrest of a Propagandist".

The Apotheosis of War (1871) is perhaps the most famous painting by the most outstanding battle painter of the second half of the 19th century and, probably, of world painting as a whole, Vasily **Vereshchagin** (1842-1904). Due to the chosen path in art, he was forced to constantly observe consequences of wars, and he created their terrifying metaphor in this canvas – the countless number of human lives they take. The image is complemented by the gloomy irony of the title of the painting ("The Apotheosis of War").

The idea of the artistic solution is absolutely extraordinary but it is conveyed through a very specific, physically tangible objectivity (a terrible pyramid of grinning skulls, above which a flock of crows circles) and is based on a real historical fact: once, by order of Genghis Khan, mounds were set up from the severed heads of the defeated.

It goes without saying that this is one of the manifestations of symbolic imagery, the significance of which grew throughout the second half of the 19th century (especially noticeable in French poetry – Paul Verlaine, Stéphane Mallarmé, Arthur Rimbaud, etc.), preparing the flourishing of symbolism at the turn of the 20th century.

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Romantic or, more accurately, romanticized imagery occupied significant positions in the mid-19th century, since it contributed to a vivid expression of the atmosphere of increased vitality characteristic of that historical period. In the visual arts, this could be perfectly conveyed in metaphorical form, using the genres of landscape painting.

From this point of view, the title of the painting **The Gust of Wind** (c. 1865-1870) by the leading French landscape artist of the second half of the 19th century, Camille **Corot** (1796-1875), is indicative. The exaggeratedly depicted *gust of wind* is so strong that even a mighty tree (it occupies almost the entire canvas) bends under its hurricane pressure.

There is a remarkable detail: a small woman figure with a bundle of brushwood on her back – despite the raging elements, she steadily continues on her way. This has a very important semantic meaning, it highlights the realistic and optimistic mood of the time, and also, in its own way, serves to glorify the working man.

A similar motif can be found in a number of works by the outstanding Russian marine artist Ivan **Aivazovsky** (1817-1900). Incidentally, just as in the battle paintings of Vasily Vereshchagin, there is reason to believe that he was the greatest master of seascapes of all time.

In his **Rainbow** (1873), the situation is absolutely clear: the death of a sailing ship and the desire of people in a boat to reach the saving land. This situation is purely romantic – of course, a shipwreck does not happen every day. And the image of the raging elements is presented on a completely grandiose scale, and the colorful stripes and swirls in some ways already anticipate abstract painting.

The semantic convergence with the above-mentioned painting by Corot consists in the brightly major accent, so characteristic of the second half of the 19th century. Despite the catastrophic situation, the light that fills the canvas ("Rainbow"!) is remarkable – it inspires hope that everything will turn out well for these people.

The Ninth Wave (1850), perhaps the most famous work of this master, is in many ways similar to the previous one in its plot, theme and artistic idea: a man in a struggle with the deadly forces of nature, which is easily projected onto life as such. And again, we can see the blazing light of hope, marking, despite all the dramatic events, an unconditionally optimistic mood.

In parallel with what has been said, we can give the most famous example of music with a bright Romantic sound, which closely brings us to a conversation about the situation of the mid-19th century – **Manrico's stretta** from the opera **Il Trovatore** (The Troubadour) by the Italian composer **Giuseppe Verdi** (1813-1901).

After a series of preliminary experiments in the field of opera dating back to the 1840s, that is, to the time of Romanticism, the composer created three operatic masterpieces in a row in the 1850s, at the beginning of the second half of the 19th century: "Rigoletto" (1851), "Il Trovatore" (1853), and "La Traviata" (1853). They establish a new aesthetics that undoubtedly correlates with realistic aspirations. At the same time, some episodes of these works carry a clearly Romantic artistic vision and it is associated, as a rule, with the revelation of the energy of the most intense overcoming.

Thus, Manrico's stretta (in this case it is a rapid and dynamic conclusion to the corresponding act of the opera, and Manrico is the main character of the opera "Il Trovatore") gives an example of a brightly romanticized, raised in tone heroic bravura. The exceptional rise of forces, overcoming all the onslaught (the soloist is supported by energetic voices of the male choir) acquires here a radical, revolutionary-civic coloring.

So, the *middle of the 19th century*, that is, approximately from the end of the 1840s (just in 1848 a wave of revolutions swept across Europe), is the time of entering the sphere of Post-Romanticism, a time of increased activity, heroic overcoming, publicistic pathos, a time of stormy self-affirmation of new forces rising to the surface of life.

In the 1850s, this atmosphere was most impressively captured in the works of the Hungarian composer *Franz Liszt* (1811-1886). To imagine the contours of the heroic concept he embodied, one can turn to the starting point of his **Sonata in B minor** (1853) and the conclusion of his symphonic poem **Preludes** (1854) – two works created one after the other. The semantic course characteristic of many works of those years is outlined here with complete clarity: from the powerful tension of overcoming efforts, accompanied by withdrawals into intellectual reflection, to the apotheosis of a victorious march with a hymnic affirmation at the end.

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The main battles for the establishment of a renewed world order took place in the 1860s. The main generation of art creators of the late 19th century came to the fore (they began to be called *the sixties*) as well as those who came from the previous decades finally established themselves in a new aesthetic quality (one way or another, the entire movement is often called *the sixties*).

And this concerned not only Russia, which experienced a stage of radical social reform and where the above-mentioned terminology arose (representatives of the *Mighty Five*, *Pyotr Tchaikovsky* – here and further on, the names of the most significant composers are given as an artistic parallel). In Western Europe, similar events took place in many ways: the Risorgimento movement in Italy and the liberation campaigns of Garibaldi (*Verdi*, who was awarded the title of *maestro of the Italian revolution*), the democratic movement in the Czech Republic (*Smetana*, *Dvořák*), revolutionary discontent in France culminating in the Paris Commune (*Gounod*, *Bizet*), the unification of Germany (*Wagner*, *Brahms*).

The process of renewal of the world order was complex, contradictory, which was most clearly reflected in the state of Russian culture – the main and often painful thing for our country was to overcome the patriarchal, serfdom way of life and the transition to accelerated capitalization. This contradiction naturally gave rise to a sharply expressed critical attitude.

That is why *critical realism* became so widespread, that is, realism aimed at a critical assessment and exposure of social evil. Let us recall the classical lines of one of the leading exponents of critical attitude in Russian literature: *Nikolay Nekrasov* (1821-1877/78) and his poem "**Musings by the Front Door**" (1858): "*Volga! Volga!.. In the spring your torrents // Cannot flood the fields as much // As our people's awful pain // Floods our land...*" (Nekrasov, 2003).

Deep, sincere grief for the people was the leitmotif of Russian literature of that time. Another leitmotif was the angry denunciation of the high-ranking tyrants, bullies and tsarist oprichniks, who were least of all concerned with the fate of the working lower classes.

More than anyone else, *Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin* (1826-1889) developed this theme comprehensively and mercilessly. When speaking about him, they usually first mean **The History of a Town** as a generalization of the administrative "experience" of the Russian autocracy, as a deadly parody of it. An open and sharp satirical tendency is revealed here already in the toponymic designation of the "object": the town of Glupov (Foolsville) is, of course, Russia, and its successive mayors are, of course, the "pillars" of sovereign power.

Critical realism with its accusatory pathos grew in Russia on the basis of indifference, grief for the country. It was aimed at eradicating vices and social evil, helping people to reach a decent life. This was an expression not of weakness but of the strength of a nation boldly analyzing its real state. Russia could afford the harshest self-criticism, since at that time it became the leading world power, achieved its maximum territorial expansion (the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Baltics, and in addition, Poland and Finland were parts of the Russian Empire at that time).

A vivid testimony to the power of the country was the "Golden Age" of Russian culture, which became the leader in the world artistic process. Suffice it to say that the art of the second half of the 19th century in other countries could not put forward such great personalities as Leo Tolstoy in literature, Ilya Repin in painting, Pyotr Tchaikovsky in music.

The idea of Russia as a mighty power, the positive aspects of its statehood are perhaps best revealed in the musical epic of *Alexander Borodin* (1833-1887). First of all, these are all of his symphonies and the opera **Prince Igor**. For example, in the opening part of his Symphony No. 2, the sovereign face of great Russia of the second half of the 19th century is completely tangibly captured in sounds. This is conveyed in the epic-heroic contours inherent in the national tradition with its characteristic heavy cadence and bell-like sounds. Along with the sublimely idealized features, which are especially noticeable in the lyric-epic theme of the secondary part, there is also a stamp of menacing, even frightening power, in which one can feel echoes of imperial dictate.

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Now we will consider the just noted lines of artistic creativity using examples of fine art. First of all, let us take the phenomena of *critical realism*, which not just exposed the ulcers of the social world order but also turned to the everyday side of existence, noticing human weaknesses, revealing the true nature of everyday life. The founder of this branch of critical realism was **Pavel Fedotov** (1815-1852). His paintings from the late 1840s opened the direction that was to develop comprehensively in Russian painting in the second half of the 19th century.

The works like **Breakfast of an Aristocrat** (1850) showed the turn of realistically minded artists of the mid-19th century to purely ordinary, everyday life, in connection with which *genre art* flourished (it was especially widely developed in Russian painting). Fedotov appears here as a master of vividly characteristic presentation of material. Moreover, it is introduced in the form of an action-packed scene. In this regard, the active influence of literature is clearly noticeable, which certainly became the leading form of artistic creativity at that time (by the way, its influence on musical art, which will be discussed later, is also quite obvious).

In this case, behind the literary centrism and plot construction we can see the subtext that is also recorded in Ivan Goncharov's novel "Oblomov" (it was written around the same time): the impoverishment and fading of the hereditary nobility, which was replaced by people of action and with practical approach to life. The artist presents this situation in a comedic way – the character, outwardly still living in grand style, hides his miserable food when somebody is knocking on the door, that is, we can see a well-kept lack of means of subsistence.

The turn to realism in general and critical realism in particular that took place in the mid-19th century was continued and consolidated in the 1860s in the works of **Vasily Perov** (1833/34-1882). Moreover, the intensification of accusatory pathos is brought to the conceivable limit, which in a certain sense makes him "Nekrasov in painting".

Thus, according to the plot of the painting **Drinking Tea in Mytishchi** (1862), a disabled soldier is forced to beg for alms from those for whom he has recently risked his life, and they indifferently turn away from him. Here, with exceptional acuity, the blatant contrast between the poor cripple and the utterly fat church ministers is revealed, evoking a feeling of almost physical disgust.

The subtitle of the painting **Troika** (1866) explains the situation: "*Apprentice craftsmen are carrying water.*" The socially accusatory pathos so characteristic of Perov reaches painful threshold here. The canvas turns into a tragic dissonance: deprived children, harnessed to a cart instead of cattle in the bitter cold and suffering from unbearable strain. Through such images, the Russian people cried out with a mournful cry about its servitude and poverty, about the crime being committed against life.

This strong incentive of social criticism and deep compassion for the "*humiliated and insulted*" was brought by the so-called *raznochinets* – people from *different ranks*, that is, estates (clergy, merchants, bourgeoisie, lower-ranking officials), engaged in intellectual pursuits and formed the main body of the Russian democratic intelligentsia of the late 19th century.

If we wanted to imagine the typical appearance of a commoner, we would turn to the **Self-portrait** of the young **Ivan Kramskoi** (1837-1887). It must be admitted that in comparison with the previous hero of the Russian portrait genre, the nobility of appearance had been lost to a certain extent. But the features of thoughtfulness, seeking nature are undeniable, as well as that critical, distrustful look of inspection, which involuntarily evokes associations with the image of Bazarov from the novel "Fathers and Sons" by Ivan Turgenev. We can see a type that personified that layer of society, which pushed aside the noble elite in the spiritual life of Russia. Let us recall the defeat of Pavel Petrovich in his spiritual duel with Bazarov from the just-mentioned Turgenev's novel.

It was Kramskoi who was destined to become the leader of the *Peredvizhniki* (or the Wanderers) movement, which turned out to be the most striking outburst of artistic radicalism and democracy in the 1860s, which over time grew into the most significant movement in Russian fine art.

Peredvizhniki recreated the entire panorama of life in Russia, including the *revolutionary sentiments* that found their most obvious expression in the populist (Narodnik) movement (a movement of the *raznochinets* intelligentsia of the second half of the 19th century that opposed to serfdom and called for the overthrow of the autocracy). And what courage one had to have in order to paint a vivid picture of these supporters of the idea in those conditions!

Ilya Repin did have such courage (we have already encountered it in his painting about the murderous tsar). And perhaps the authorities were forced to turn a blind eye to this courage, since they realized that they were dealing not only with the leading representative of the Wanderers but also with the most important figure in Russian and world painting of that time.

The plot of his painting **They Did Not Expect Him** (1884-1888) is easy to read: a political prisoner returns from exile to his home. The house is quite wealthy, well-kept, his family lives a peaceful life, and he is in a prisoner's overcoat, unshaven, with the burning eyes of a fanatic. This contrast of incompatibility generally captures the state of the country in the era of populism: the prevailing norm of human existence and those who did not fall in line with this norm.

Repin created a whole series of paintings of similar content (one of the most characteristic is **Before Confession**, 1875-1885). He portrayed those who can be called outcasts, who voluntarily despised what the majority lived by (from that sort of people similar to Rakhmetov in the novel "What Is to Be Done?" by Nikolai Chernyshevsky).

The work **Arrest of a Propagandist** (1880-1889) reveals approximately the same idea as the painting "They Did Not Expect Him" but expressed in a much more emphasized manner, in a sharply dramatized contrast of opposing entities. The "norm of life" are the people around the arrested person. This is the ordinary, "true-believing" majority with its diligence and trifling cares. The one who falls outside the "norm of life" is in the center of the canvas.

The essence of his life purpose is indicated in his burning eyes and in the burning spot of his red shirt (as in the painting “Ivan the Terrible and His Son Ivan”, this spot is brought to the very center of the canvas).

As has already been said, despite the power of opposition sentiments, the affirmation of positive values was no less significant for Russian art in the second half of the 19th century (for example, the above-mentioned music of Alexander Borodin). This also concerned the image of Russia, which was then acquiring the status of a leading world power.

The Monument to the Millennium of Russia (1862) was erected in the Novgorod Kremlin, since it was believed that Great Russia, or Velikorossiya (as opposed to Little Russia, Malorossiya, that is, Ukraine, and White Russia – Belarus), came from Novgorod, which is known from the chronicles since 859, while Kiev – since 860. This is the result of collective work: the monument, based on a sketch by the artist and draftsman **Mikhail Mikeshein** (1835-1896), was made by a whole group of sculptors (later, a monument to Catherine II in St. Petersburg was erected in the same way).

The complex and at the same time very clear in its configuration composition is intended to revive in the memory of descendants the main milestones of national history and to glorify the image of Russia. This is done on a bell-shaped pedestal and under the auspices of the official doctrine of the trinity “*Orthodoxy, autocracy, nationality*”, which was then in circulation, to which the three tiers of figures correspond:

- the lower and most “crowded” bas-relief represents scenes of glorious battles and peaceful life of the people;
- the middle tier of the monument represents outstanding men of the country from different times;
- the upper one crowns this entire pyramid rising upwards with the figure of an angel with a cross.



Illustration 01. *The Monument to the Millennium of Russia (Mikhail Mikeshein, artist). 1862. Bronze. Height 15.7 m. Novgorod Kremlin, Russia*

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Realism, as the dominant trend in artistic creativity of the second half of the 19th century, appeared to be very multifaceted. First of all, we note that there are reasons to call it classical. And not only because it belongs to the Classical era. As was noted in relation to *classical Romanticism* of the first half of the 19th century and the term *romanticism*, the concept of *realism* first entered the lexicon of art in the second half of that century. It was then that the standards of the corresponding aesthetic direction were created.

In the most general sense, the realism of that time implied the trueness of vision of the man and the world around him, unconditional knowledge of life, which required exceptional observation from the creators of art, deep insight into all the details and circumstances of what was happening around.

The credibility of the depiction of life was often called fidelity to *nature* in those days. Hence the prevalence of the corresponding terminology in the designation of literary trends:

- the *natural school* in Russian literature after Nikolai Gogol (Fyodor Dostoevsky, Ivan Turgenev and others);
- *naturalism* in France led by Emile Zola;
- *verismo* in Italy (from Italian *vero* – true).

Fidelity to nature often meant exact correspondence to the world of reality, which sometimes led to direct true-to-life depiction, that is, as in life – in forms adequate to life itself.

One of the aspects of such “natural” realism was associated with an appeal to the most ordinary, familiar, everyday aspects of life. The Russian school, which was then leading in world painting, had a special inclination towards such motifs.

Let us take for example the painting **Moscow Courtyard** (1878) by **Vasily Polenov** (1844-1927). The depicted cozy corner is Moscow. This is not “golden-domed” Moscow or “capital city” but “a large village” as they sometimes call it. Everything is done very simply, without the slightest embellishment, with an outline of a completely ordinary environment, well known to the Russian national life. This environment includes attributes of a semi-rural way

of life (a horse with a cart, a fair-haired boy in homespun clothes), which is complemented by a subtle contrast (it is noted as if in passing, by the way) of a wealthy life and poverty (two buildings located nearby). All the noted attributes are conveyed very realistically, ordinary and at the same time poetically in their own way – there is a lot of light and air in the picture, which highlights the ineradicable joy of life.

From the same point of view, one can also examine two pure landscape works by **Alexei Savrasov** (1830-1897).

The Rooks Have Returned (1871) is perhaps, the most famous painting by the artist. It tells about the inescapable poverty and misery of existence for unpretentious Russia without any tendentious character. In the gloomy colors of early spring, one can see the gray fences, squat wooden buildings and a church with a bell tower typical of a provincial town. Nevertheless, spring, indicated by noisy birds, means hope for a better future. In any case, this simple subject carries in itself the sign of something deeply national, native for a Russian person.

Another characteristic example from the work of this artist is **Rainbow** (1875). It would seem that the amazing natural phenomenon noted in the title of the painting should have brought to life an exceptionally bright palette, rich colors (let us recall the above-mentioned canvas of the same name by Ivan Aivazovsky, painted almost at the same time, in 1873). But contrary to expectations, the realist artist keeps his character. Despite all the freshness of the coloring (the greenery washed by rain), he is most interested in the ordinary, familiar things in life. Therefore, the rainbow is only outlined by a barely discernible strip and the focus is on the meadow, the road climbing the hill and the unsightly peasant houses. Behind the typical appearance of an abandoned village, one can read the idea of the modest, subtle beauty of the Russian land and the quiet joys of life.

So, we are talking about the fact that the realism of the second half of the 19th century was connected with the appeal of art to real, vital needs, to ordinary, *everyday life* with its everyday concerns. That is why the so-called genre art became so widespread in painting, which can easily be modified into another concept – *genre painting* and already in this quality it can be applied to any other types of artistic creativity.

Alexander Dargomyzhsky (1813-1869) with his opera **Rusalka** (1855), based on Alexander Pushkin's dramatic poem, laid the foundation for Russian operatic realism. The certain aspects of this realism naturally encouraged the depiction of everyday situations and characters.

A specific example from the opera can be the **Miller's Aria**, in which the composer convincingly depicts the strong nature of the Russian peasant, a man of the people. At the same time, the portrait turns out to be quite voluminous: the Miller speaks with reproach but also with love, he is full of fatherly care for his daughter's future. It must also be admitted that the Miller is quite delicate, tries to instill his way of thinking in her but at the same time does not try to be authoritative. He is smart, provident, not scrupulous as to the means to achieve the goal but behind this is great life experience, a deep understanding of life, strong grit.

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With realism in general and genre painting in particular, the *prose of existence* widely entered art. As a result, the corresponding literary genres came to an unconditionally dominant position. They were prose and dramaturgy based on the prose text.

Poetry, which meant so much in the first half of the 19th century, recedes into the background. And the so-called *Nekrasov's movement*, which tended to prose in verse in its poetics, predominates in it. That is, the style is endowed with rhythm and rhyme but the character of explanation is similar to prose, so strong are the features of a concrete-descriptive, purely narrative manner in it. Let us recall the classical lines, "*I went out of woods, // Winter frost was severe*" (**Peasant Children**, 1861) (Nekrasov, 2020).

The prose of existence that entered art, sometimes turning into obvious prosaism, recorded the fact that the time had come for efficiency and practical needs. One of life changes is that people began to travel long distances not by carriage or stagecoach but by train. Isn't it symbolic that the life of the characters in **Leo Tolstoy's** novel **Anna Karenina** (1877) is somehow connected with the railway! The heroine first met Vronsky at the railway station, his explanation with her took place at a remote station, and after a whole chain of similar circumstances, Anna died, throwing herself in front of a train.

In architecture, practical structures came to the fore: railway stations, large stores, administrative buildings, factories and plants, apartment blocks. One of the main characters of **Ivan Turgenev's** novel **Fathers and Sons**, Bazarov, says: "*Nature is not a temple but a workshop, and man is a workman in it*" (Turgenev, 1948). Thus, he demonstrates a purely practical view of the world.

Business activity increased significantly. If we use the names of the characters of **Ivan Goncharov's** novel, the Oblomovs are pushed aside by the active, rational Stoltzes. There are many real vultures among these active natures – grabbers, money-makers, businessmen of various sizes. A whole gallery of such types is put forward in the novels of **Emile Zola** (one of his novels has a symptomatic title – **Money**) and in the plays of **Alexander Ostrovsky**. In his play **Without a Dowry** there is a characteristic detail about Paratov, an "*imposing gentleman*" in appearance and manners. The conversation is about his favorite steamship, that belongs to this character.

Knurov. *How is it, Sergey Sergeyich, that you don't feel sorry about selling the Swallow?*

Paratov. *I don't know what it means to "feel sorry": for me nothing is sacred; if it's to my advantage, I'll sell anything, no matter what* (Ostrovsky, 2020).

There is one more aspect of realism. It was primarily *democratic realism*, that is, realism addressed to the life of broad segments of society, including the life of the people. It essentially entered art for the first time in such a scale and in such a diverse depiction. Writers, artists, composers learned to masterfully convey its diversity and polyphony. For example, in relation to the paintings of Ilya Repin and Vasily Surikov, they often talk about "*choral*

sound". Of course, this is a metaphor but a similar characteristic can be directly attributed to the musical dramas **Boris Godunov** and **Khovanshchina** written by their contemporary **Modest Mussorgsky**.

It is important to emphasize that the above-mentioned was not limited to Russian art, which was most inclined to such imagery. One of the proofs is the opera **Carmen** (1874) by the French composer **Georges Bizet** (1838-1875), where the life of the people is depicted in a number of episodes in an unusually vivid, bright and colorful manner, with exceptional realistic fullness (as, for example, at the beginning of Act IV).

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In the previous presentation, the main attention was paid to realism as the leading artistic trend of the second half of the 19th century, what reasonably allows us to call this historical period Post-Romanticism. It should be emphasized that although the term *realism* entered the European lexicon only in the 1860s, it was so long-awaited for the aesthetic practice of that time that it immediately acquired the status of almost a law.

Ivan Kramskoi, the leader of the *Peredvizhniki*, insisted that *art must be ideological and meaningful and artistic realism should form its basis*. As we can see, these words declare not just the adherence to the realistic method but it is directly connected with the requirement of mandatory ideological and meaningful artistic creativity.

This was another important aspect of the realistic art of those decades – the art of great ideas and large-scale coverage of reality, purely conceptual art. In order to clearly imagine this *scale* and *conceptuality*, let us return to examples of Russian painting.

First of all, it should be noted that the *principle of historicism* was widely included in fine art. The ultimate meaning of this principle was to reveal the contradictions of life and dramatic collisions of modernity through the prism of similar events of the past. This determined the flourishing of the genre of *historical painting*. This genre received its most thorough development in the works of **Vasily Surikov** (1848-1916), the author of large-scale, crowded canvases full of intense action and open conflict.

The plot of his painting **The Morning of the Streltsy Execution** (1881) conveys a difficult situation from the time of Peter the Great's early reforms. However, the essence of the figurative world of the canvas is addressed to the always relevant theme of the confrontation between the authorities and the masses. The expression of this idea is concentrated in the openly hateful look of the Strelets on the left side of the canvas towards Peter (the figure of the young Tsar is highlighted by the fact that he is *the only* horseman). The author also emphasizes that the action takes place in the very heart of the country – Moscow, Red Square, near St. Basil's Cathedral.

The main character of such works is the masses – the "choral sound" characteristic of them was mentioned above. Moreover, the masses are shown not as a whole, in general but through many individually outlined types, so we should also talk about the *polyphony* of these crowded compositions.

The depicted event (an acute social conflict from the historical past, a diversely depicted image of the people, semantic polyphony) confirms the direct consonance of Surikov's paintings with Mussorgsky's musical dramas, which were created in the same years. This consonance is strengthened by plot echoes (for example, the eventful identity of Mussorgsky's "The Morning of the Streltsy Execution" and "Khovanshchina").

Another famous canvas by Surikov is **Boyarynya Morozova** (1887). In accordance with the history of the schism (Raskol), the artist recreates the face of one of those who fanatically defend the old faith (marked by the two-fingered gesture). And naturally, another parallel to Mussorgsky's opera "Khovanshchina" arises (the convergence of the images of Boyarynya Morozova and Dosifey). But despite the fact that the fervent image of the ascetic, conjuring in the name of heaven is in the center, the essence of the canvas becomes a collective portrait of the people, presented through the diversity of a motley crowd, reacting very differently to what is happening.

Among this diversity and this contradiction, God's fool, who is giving the boyar's wife parting words, clearly stands out. Like God's fool in Mussorgsky's opera "Boris Godunov", depicted here in a torn, shabby undershirt, he acts as the personification of the orphan, wretched Rus, doomed to poverty and misery. However, this image also highlights the idea of the eternal cross of the Russian people, who not only do not know how but also do not want to arrange their earthly life. They are drawn to spiritual insights, casting aside mortal attempts at satiety and well-being. Thus, through the historical genre, Surikov comes to large artistic generalizations concerning national life.

Ilya Repin preferred to comprehend the same problematics on contemporary material putting forward a special type of genre painting with its transformation into the plane of *social art*. Within its framework, a deep social analysis of reality was carried out through the display of domestic scenes.

In the picturesque epic **Religious Procession in Kursk Province** (1880-1883), we can see a ritual procession of a crowd with banners during a major church holiday. But behind this "procession" and behind this "province" the whole of Russia is presented – from youngest to oldest and in all its hierarchy (from the pillars of society to the last beggar). In comparison with Surikov's paintings, this is done with an even greater, absolutely grandiose scope. A huge mass of faces and figures is carefully painted, each of them in all its uniqueness. And through their many-faced kaleidoscope, a comprehensive portrait of the Russian people in its solemn and measured movement forward is given.

One can see similar things in another Repin's masterpiece, **Barge Haulers on the Volga** (1870-1873). It would seem that this is just a sketch – in this case, a sketch of hard work. Moreover, the painting depicts a seemingly very small group of people. But every face, every pose, every gesture are so significant and carry such a generalization that this canvas turns into a monumental personification of Rus, its eternal disorder and endless patience – reminiscent of Nekrasov's tragic lines in their ascent from the specific (*"It's the boatmen straining in their traces!..."*) to the general (*"Fashioning a song so like a moan..."*) (Nekrasov, 2003). And the thought that gnawed at the Russian intelligentsia of the second half of the 19th century is expressed: pain for the poverty and bondage of a huge mass of people, all of poor Russia. This is what made this picture one of the most classical examples of Russian painting.



Illustration 02. Ilya Repin. "Barge Haulers on the Volga". 1870-1873. Canvas, oil. 131,5 × 281 cm. State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia

People, nation, country, history – these concepts were associated with the most distinct expression of the aspirations of the second half of the 19th century for the art of great ideas and high problematic content. In their own way, and quite expressively, these aspirations were also reflected in the portrait genre – through the recreation of the image of a significant, thinking personality.

Russian painting of those decades captured a whole gallery of figures of national culture – a gallery, huge in number, exceptional in artistic merit. The highest flowering of the portrait genre was primarily associated with the depiction of the best representatives of the Russian intelligentsia.

In the **portrait of Pavel Tretyakov** (1876) by *Ivan Kramskoi*, as in other similar works, an emphatically realistic approach predominates. Its primary principles are unconditional authenticity, complete naturalness of life manifestations, lack of any exclusivity. At the same time, the deep spirituality of the depicted is completely obvious to us, and the artist's desire to highlight the beauty of the character's inner world in every possible way, the sublimity of his thoughts and deeds is equally undoubted.

And it must be admitted that Pavel Tretyakov (1832-1898) was worthy of it. After all, like many of his entourage, he could have boosted his large fortune or, on the contrary, squandered it but he made every effort to collect the best in Russian painting. As we know, Tretyakov founded a private collection of paintings in 1856 and later donated it to the state. Having become a national treasure, this collection turned into the largest museum in the world, named after its founder – the *Tretyakov Gallery*.

Russian realist artists had an amazing ability. They conveyed not only a person's appearance but also his inner world on their canvases. Their works brought to life the images of powerful personalities who were born in the era of social change in the 1860s – those who made up the cream of the Russian intelligentsia.

The portrait of **Leo Tolstoy** (1884) by *Nikolai Ge* (1831-1894) depicts the great writer at the moment of the creative process, in a state of complete concentration on the main, enormous work of his life. He is entirely immersed in his work, what is indicated through the movement of the pen. We do not even see his eyes, so withdrawn is Tolstoy. The painter was able to capture the most precious thing in his existence, showing visible evidence of the high tension that Tolstoy experienced, for example, in his work on the novel *War and Peace*, to which he devoted, according to his own words, seven years of *incessant, painful and joyful labor*. It is also worth noting that Lev Nikolayevich worked carefully on the text, personally rewriting four large volumes that make up the famous epic seven times.

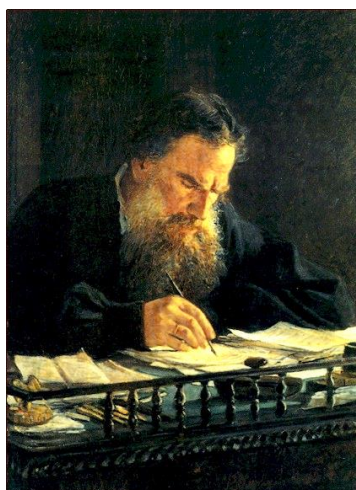


Illustration 03. Nikolai Ge. "Leo Tolstoy". 1884. Canvas, oil. 96 × 71 cm. State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia

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Moving on to the portraits of personalities, created by means of musical art, we will note that, due to its specificity, it emphasized not so much the meditative-intellectual as the emotional characteristics, drawing a meticulous image of a thoughtful and deeply feeling human nature.

A great portraitist in music was *Giuseppe Verdi*. For example, let us turn to the **aria of Philip II** from the opera **Don Carlos** (1867), where we find a combination of all sorts of aspects. On the one hand, we can see the imperious posture of a sovereign ruler, courage and unshakable firmness of character, on the other hand, the psychologism of painful suspicions, excruciating torments and the vengeful ardor of a malicious jealous person. In the image of the gloomy ruler of Spain, something completely unexpected appears – lamentative complaints about a rejected feeling, the deep suffering of a person, in a tearful plea calling for pity and sympathy. But then there follows a dramatic realization of a “shamefully” permitted spiritual weakness and a desire to overcome it. Thus, in the comparison of diverse emotions, a voluminous, expressive portrait of a large and contradictory personality is formed.

Such statements by opera characters, conveying the life of the soul in many facets, could develop into a real novelistic narrative, behind which stood a whole life, as if compressed in time. Among such statements with their characteristic continuous vibration of psychological light and shade are aria of Marguerite from “Faust” (1859) by *Charles Gounod* (1818-1893), aria of Aida (the scene on the banks of the Nile) from the opera of the same name (1870) by *Giuseppe Verdi*, Tatyana’s letter scene from “Eugene Onegin” (1878) by *Pyotr Tchaikovsky* (1840-1893).

With complete justification we can speak about the forms of novelistic narrative in the expanded sound canvases of a large symphony of that time. Just as in musical theatre, in accordance with the dominant inclinations of Post-Romanticism, the leading genre became lyrical drama (first of all, we mean the operas of Verdi, the operas and ballets of Tchaikovsky), so the defining position in this genre was occupied by the lyric-dramatic symphony, represented mainly by the works of Brahms and Tchaikovsky.

Speaking about the substantive essence of these works, the key issue is the painfulness of the life path and the compassion for the man associated with it. The character of Brahms’s and Tchaikovsky’s symphonies seems to ask himself: where do so many hardships and worries come from in this world and why, instead of living, do we always have to fear something, overcome something, fight with someone and with something?

These are the questions that Tchaikovsky raises in his Symphonies No. 4 and 5. This is also the beginning of the most famous of *Johannes Brahms*’s symphonies – the **Fourth Symphony** (1885). Asking the questions that have just been named, this music also conveys the idea that is very characteristic of Brahms’s worldview: human destiny is to patiently endure the hardships of life, to comprehend the inevitability of life collisions, to maintain spiritual strength to trials, the ability to overcome them with courage. Let us note the important feature of this music – it seems to tell a story, a tale about life.

The point just noted brings us back to considerations that have already been made in relation to the visual arts. We are talking about the powerful influence of narrative literary genres on other forms of artistic creativity that emerged in the second half of the 19th century. Among these narrative genres, the novel played a particularly significant role, which at this stage became the leading form of understanding human existence. And if we turn again to music, then we can speak with sufficient justification, for example, about the implementation of novelistic narration techniques, including in instrumental genres.

Indeed, artistic narratives of this type acquired a special flexibility and plasticity of presentation in instrumental music of the second half of the 19th century, dialectically conveying in generalized forms the life process in its multi-phase development with different facets arising in the movement, evolution and struggle of diverse images, in their interweaving and interaction, in their various transformations, generating new shades of meaning. The result is a detailed, complete picture of the flow of life.

With certain reservations, it could be a symphony-novel or a concert-novel. And if we keep in mind the recently mentioned names, then we should add Brahms’s Violin Concerto and Tchaikovsky’s First Piano Concerto to the symphonies named as examples. Let us consider the First Piano Concerto as a specific example. Among other things, it will also serve as evidence that the art of that time persistently strengthened confidence in life, taking into consideration all the complexity and contradictions of life processes.

So, *Pyotr Tchaikovsky*’s **First Piano Concerto** (1875) is an example of a brightly life-affirming concept and an expanded novelistic narrative. In the three parts of this concert, all the essential manifestations of life are presented in sound images:

- the embodiment of active processes, volitional aspiration, intense overcoming;
- moments of contemplation, subjective reflection, and next to them there are tender lyrical outpourings conveying the joy of the soul, idyllic peace and romantic dreams;
- purely personal touches and the ways leading to the expanses of universal existence; joyous union with it is especially visible on the wave of festive moods;
- and all of this is framed by a wide arch of hymn proclamations in glory of life and the homeland (from the introductory section of Part I to the finishing apotheosis of the finale).

Thus, a complete picture of various facets characteristic of the worldview of a person in the second half of the 19th century is formed.

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We have just spoken about the reflecting of the features of the novel narrative in the musical art, and before that we have talked about the fact that painters of the second half of the 19th century often became similar to writers. Such parallels do not arise by chance – Post-Romanticism brought the genre of the *great novel* to the forefront. This most detailed narrative form suited best to the striving of many writers of that period – multidimensional coverage and careful analysis of reality with the identification of its comprehensive dialectic.

To confirm this, let us turn to *Leo Tolstoy's* works (1828-1910). When he began writing *Anna Karenina* (1873-1877), he intended to create a “*broad-breathing novel*” according to his own words. The definition is very remarkable, it characterizes the desire to create a large-scale narrative, which the author succeeded in fully. Outwardly, it would seem that this is a novel about private life but in essence it is endowed with enormous generalizing power, giving a vast panorama of Russian life at that time.

From the point of view of multidimensional coverage and careful analysis of reality with the identification of its comprehensive dialectic, another novel by *Tolstoy, War and Peace* (1863-1869), is extremely indicative. This is the most grandiose literary monument of the second half of the 19th century. It creates a comprehensive panorama of Russian and even pan-European life, covering all strata of the population – from the first persons of the social hierarchy (the emperors Alexander and Napoleon) to the last peasant and soldier.

Painting the picture of European reality, the writer strives to clearly show its driving forces, to reveal the internal mechanism of the events. He persistently pursues the concept of an objective pattern of historical development and asserts the idea that each person and any circumstance play a role in the course of this development. It is in the process of interaction of individual human wills, in the process of confluence of various kinds of circumstances that a certain result is formed.

As a specific example of the combination of circumstances and the influence of the most ordinary participant on the course of events, the novel cites a real fact from the chronicle of the Patriotic War of 1812. Once, while chasing a wounded hare, the Cossack Shapovalov came across the location of Murat's army. Kutuzov found out about it from the Cossack commanders, issued the order, and the Russian army, internally ready for an offensive, gave a battle that determined the turning point in the war and from which the expulsion of the French began. As we can see, the impetus for this series of events was the Cossack Shapovalov and moreover, a hare, and the accident on the appropriate ground naturally turned into a pattern.

War and Peace is an epic novel. And quite a lot in Post-Romantic art can lay claim to the definition of an *epic*. For example, in painting – the monumental canvases of Ilya Repin and Vasily Surikov. In music, such epics include the cycle of symphonies by the Austrian composer *Anton Bruckner* (1824-1896). There are nine of them, and they are notable for the global scale of the captured images – the author looks at everything as if from a bird's eye view and paints in sounds the life of Europe, even the planet as a whole.

Another and, perhaps, the most famous musical epic was the grandiose tetralogy of *Richard Wagner* (1813-1883) *The Ring of the Nibelung* (1854-1874). Tetralogy (from the Greek *four*) is a cycle of four operas: “*Das Rheingold*” (The Rhinegold), “*Die Walküre*” (The Valkyrie), “*Siegfried*”, “*Götterdämmerung*” (Twilight of the Gods). They are closely connected with each other in plot and thematic material, based on a carefully developed system of leitmotifs that permeate the music of the tetralogy and bind its parts together into a single whole. On this basis, a global concept of being is built. Modern times were presented here in mythologized outlines (through the legendary images of North European medieval epic) and therefore rather in the forms of philosophical abstraction.

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881) followed a completely different path in his musical epic. It consisted of the operas *Boris Godunov* (1869, the 2nd edition – 1872) and *Khovanshchina* (1880, completed by N. Rimsky-Korsakov in 1883). Using very specific material from national history and through specific human destinies, the composer sought to comprehend the essence of the Russian character and the Russian way of life. And like no one else, he managed to discover the deep meaning of these phenomena.

However, despite all the differences, Wagner and Mussorgsky were united by the fact that they both strove with all their might to reform opera on the way of its transformation into a musical drama. Moreover, they interpreted this genre not only in terms of the implementation of the most serious life problems and the drama of life as such but also from the point of view of maximum convergence with the realities of human manifestations.

Both composers sought such a convergence primarily through the musical interpretation of natural, living speech. They had an amazing sense of the word and the ability to organically transform it into a flexible, multi-colored intonation line. Let us try to feel the features inherent in these two outstanding artists of the word and music, using the specific material of famous examples.

Scene 4 of Act II of Wagner's *The Valkyrie* is a tense dialogue between Siegmund and Brünnhilde, the main characters of the second part of the tetralogy “*The Ring of the Nibelung*”. The result of their dramatic love is Siegfried, the main character of the next opera.

What is traditionally called recitative in opera develops here into an extremely dynamic musical speech, in the flow of which cantilena phrases appear from time to time. The vocal parts interact flexibly with a rich instrumental texture, which is most often based on clearly defined thematic “formulas”.

In this scene, the entire presentation is permeated with an orchestral “theme of fate”. This is, perhaps, the leading leitmotif of the tetralogy, which includes over a hundred of them. It is thanks to them that the constructive connection of the word and sound is achieved, which is occasionally supplemented by the inclusion of conglomerations

of musical generalizing expressiveness in pictorial episodes (one of them constitutes the dramatic peak of this opera – this is the famous “The Ride of the Valkyries”).

Another illustrative example is **Dosifey’s Appeal to Old Believers** from Mussorgsky’s opera **Khovanshchina**. In this scene, before the approaching denouement of events, Dosifey, through his sermon, strengthens his followers in their decision to commit mass self-immolation in the name of faith (“*We will burn but we will not surrender*”). Such a dramatic moment naturally turns out to be the core part of the concept and the center of the most important qualities of the style of this work.

The core part of the concept is in the display of a fundamental, deeply Russian, original character (including the use of a “rich” bass timbre, which has become characteristic of the national opera since the time of Glinka’s “*Susanin*”). This character implies the drama of Russian life coming from inside and the strength of spirit with its inherent shade of fervor (parallels of this opera with the main character of V. Surikov’s painting “*Boyarynya Morozova*” have already been noted above).

The most important qualities of the style are concentrated, first of all, in the absolutely unique mastery of transforming human speech into chant, melos, which in general became, perhaps, Mussorgsky’s most significant artistic achievement and reached its heights precisely in “*Khovanshchina*”. This amazing natural manner of the musical word was the composer’s main means of overcoming the boundary between the conventional art of opera and real life.

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The active involvement of the resources of the musical word noted in Wagner and Mussorgsky was also characteristic of many other masters of the opera genre. In synthesis with the bright expressive power of the music itself, this circumstance contributed to the fact that in the field of theater, opera successfully competed with literary drama at that historical stage, clearly exceeding it in the final artistic results and by degree of impact on the audience. It achieved such significance for the first time, thereby marking its highest flowering. In addition to the above-mentioned Wagner and Mussorgsky, the names of Verdi, Gounod, Bizet, Tchaikovsky, Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov eloquently testify to this.

Perhaps, it was musical art that most clearly recorded an important fact of historical development: the intensive process of drawing a number of “peripheral” peoples and states into the orbit of the world community, which began in the first half of the 19th century. On this wave new national schools of composition emerged in the Czech Republic (Bedřich Smetana, Antonín Dvořák), Norway (Edvard Grieg) and Spain (Isaac Albéniz, Enrique Granados) in the second half of the century. Each of them brought its own fresh, original colors to the diverse tapestry of universal culture.

These colors were born in connection with the heightened sense of the native land, which was reflected in the extremely sensitive perception of its unique originality (this quality has already been noted above in the example of landscape painting of those decades). In this regard, it was very significant that the Czech composer **Bedřich Smetana** (1824–1884) created a large cycle of symphonic poems under the general title **My Fatherland** (1858–1879). One of them (“*Vltava*”) is dedicated to the main river of the Czech Republic, whose capital, Prague, stands on its banks.

Completely different feelings are created by the works of the classic of Norwegian music **Edvard Grieg** (1843–1907). As is known, along with the Norwegian playwright **Henrik Ibsen** (1828–1906), Grieg made an impressive declaration about the people and life of Scandinavia with his music. He often created pictures of his native nature in sounds.

If we turn to his **Piano Concerto** (1868) as an example, we will see a northern landscape. And the attitude towards it is unusually clearly emphasized: in overtones of tender admiration and high spiritual joy. This romanticism of innermost poetic contemplation is highlighted by the exquisite refinement of the sound palette.

The musical art of Russia had acquired special significance by the second half of the 19th century. After M. Glinka, who laid the foundation of Russian musical classics, and A. Dargomyzhsky and M. Balakirev, who followed him directly, it reached its highest peaks in the works of M. Mussorgsky, A. Borodin, N. Rimsky-Korsakov and P. Tchaikovsky, after whom a new generation of composers was already rising (starting with A. Lyadov, A. Glazunov and S. Taneyev).

The reality of a huge country located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia naturally brought to life a wide range of images of the East, and this, in addition to the native Russian tradition that had so strongly asserted itself, became a qualitatively new phenomenon for world art. One of the most significant works entirely devoted to an Eastern theme is the symphonic suite by **Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov** (1844–1908) **Scheherazade** (1888).

If we take the end of its finale, it would seem to be just an “Eastern fairy tale” (based on “One Thousand and One Nights”) and simply “Shakhriar’s theme” but this culminating point of the narrative shows how far the real sound of the music takes us beyond the stated program.

By means of brilliant decorative and pictorial orchestration, the visible outlines of the powerful swaying of not even the sea but a real ocean are recreated (parallels with the most impressive sea-pieces of I. Aivazovsky come to mind). And behind this, a grandiose picture of universal life arises, reminiscent of the “broad-breathing novel” and the genre of a large-scale artistic epic so characteristic of that historical period. No less remarkable is the fact that the thunderous boiling of the “world ocean” is replaced at the end by an oasis of calm, peace, silence. It means that optimistic worldview, through which the humane essence of art of the second half of the 19th century declared itself, prevails again and again.

* * *

To support the idea of the humane essence of Post-Romantic art, let us turn to Russian painting. A portrait-scene of historical content could also be considered in this semantic plane, as we find in **Vasily Surikov’s** painting **Menshikov in Beryozovo** (1883). Alexander Menshikov, “the darling of fortune” according to A. Pushkin, the son of a groom, who became Peter’s prime favorite, who got the most out of life (His Serene Highness, Generalissimo, the de facto ruler of the state during the reign of Catherine I), having fallen into disgrace, was banished to the Siberian wilderness.

Surikov chooses this situation to tell about the hardships of life and the strokes of fate, against which a person is helpless. The artist conveys with deep sympathy the image of a historical figure in the difficult, dark hours of his life. The measure of this sympathy is especially great because the image of Menshikov's youngest daughter is in the center of the painting. Among these three people, who reveal the essence of the indigenous national character in different ways, she represents a very special aspect. This is Rus the Sorrowful – hence the emphasized noble pallor of the face, the deeply sunken eyes, the beauty of quiet suffering and infinite sadness.



Illustration 04. Vasily Surikov. "Menshikov in Beryozovo". 1883. Canvas, oil. 169 × 204 cm. State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia

Approximately the same motifs could be conveyed through landscape, if a painter endowed it with a heartfelt sincerity and a clear involvement with the man. Among Russian artists, perhaps **Fyodor Vasilyev** (1850-1873) was especially successful in this. Having lived a very short life and worked with the easel for only a few years, he managed to etch his name into the history of Russian art.

The plot of his painting **Thaw** (1871), which depicts two human figures wandering through the spring thaw, gives rise to a feeling of everlasting sadness and sorrow, so characteristic of the Russian worldview. However, the subtlest nuances of the color scheme bring a cathartic feeling of enchanting poetry to the image, and light colors of the canvas create a premonition that sooner or later spring will come and "everything will be fine." Moreover, the invisible radiance that permeates the painting carries with it a special light of spirituality, signifying a deep faith in the high destiny of Russia.

Humanism in the art of the second half of the 19th century was most often connected with a life-affirming mood in one way or another. **Ivan Shishkin** (1832-1898) embodied this mood in his landscape painting more vividly and definitely than anyone else. He usually conveyed the beauty and joy of the world through the endless variability of landscape views of the Russian forest – in his "specialization" he turned out to be akin to I. Aivazovsky, who painted almost only the sea.

The artist was especially attracted to pine forests. The focus of his creative interest were the pine trees with their warmth and golden hue in the rays of the sun. This combination received its complete verbal description in the title of the study **Pine Trees Lit Up by the Sun** (1886). Shishkin could vary such duality endlessly (see the paintings "A Pine Forest", "Morning in a Pine Forest", etc.). It is also present in the painting **Rye** (1878).

The gold of a grain field, the emerald green of the roadside grass, and the pine trees freely rising among the endless expanses – all of this is in the bright colors of a sunny afternoon. Could anyone else convey more accurately and convincingly the idea of luminous nature of Russia through a landscape?! An image of Russia of no less generalizing power was noted above in I. Repin's painting "Barge Haulers on the Volga" but here a completely different aspect of this image is presented – the inexhaustible riches of the native land, its radiant beauty and the generosity of the Russian soul behind all this.



Illustration 05. Ivan Shishkin. "Rye". 1878. Canvas, oil. 107 × 187 cm. State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia

Moving on to *architecture*, it is worth recalling that in this area of artistic creativity, the previous era, that is, the era of Romanticism, did not create its own style, basing itself mainly on what came from classicism as the main trend of the Enlightenment.

This situation continued at the stage of Post-Romanticism, but now it was in the field of architecture that a new trend emerged with the greatest clarity. It consisted in the fact that, approaching the end of the 19th century, this period increasingly began to perceive itself as the heir and finisher not only of the Classical era but also of a huge period of time up to the Renaissance, that is, the entire modern European culture (what in historical studies is sometimes noted as the *modern era*).

In this regard, architectural practice increasingly included references to various styles that had emerged over the past six centuries (the main of them are Gothic, the Renaissance, the Baroque and classicism). And since the impression of stylistic diversity sometimes arose, this trend began to be called *eclecticism*, implying the mechanical, arbitrary combination of heterogeneous style elements that sometimes took place. Nevertheless, in its artistically acceptable versions, eclecticism gave quite interesting creative solutions. In this case, in order to cancel the low aesthetic appreciation, the concept of *historical styles* has been increasingly used in recent times.

In its most concentrated form, this trend is represented in **Vienna**, where the **Ringstrasse** was specially built at that time – a semi-ring of boulevards, decorated with buildings designed in various historical styles and in combination of these styles. As examples of the so-called *Ringstrasse style*, two buildings can be named, one of which gives an example of Neo-Gothic (a combination of Gothic and Baroque features), and the other combines the principles of ancient architecture with the features of the Renaissance and classicism of the Enlightenment. The first example is the **Vienna City Hall** (1872-1883, architect *Friedrich von Schmidt*), the second is the **Parliament** (1873-1883, architect *Theophil Hansen*).

Mainly on the basis of eclecticism, the construction of opera houses began in many capitals and other large cities in the second half of the 19th century, including in Russia (the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, the excellent opera house in Odessa, and opera houses in a number of other cities). Of the newly opened European opera houses, the National Theatre in Prague, the magnificent theatre in Monte Carlo, and especially *Opéra Garnier* (Garnier Palace) in Paris stood out – the last two were built according to the designs of the French architect *Charles Garnier* (1825-1898).

The style of his opera house (1861-1875) is sometimes quite critically defined as hypertrophied bravura eclecticism. However, it must be acknowledged that the combination of elements of various architectural styles with the use of the richest decor in this case produced the desired effect – a luxurious building, designed to amaze with its lush splendor, and its representative, ceremonial appearance corresponded in everything to the main task of turning Paris into the “capital of the world” (the center of France at that time was being completely reconstructed under the auspices of such an ambitious aspiration). And again, the following fact is no coincidence: the impression made by this building was so great that *Opéra Garnier* gave rise to numerous imitations in a number of capitals of Europe and America.



Illustration 06. *Opéra Garnier* (*Charles Garnier*, architect). 1861-1875. Height 73.6 m. Paris, France

* * *

Russian architecture of that time, going through a similar historical and stylistic stage, widely turned to the traditions of national architecture. The most indicative examples can be considered two buildings in Moscow, which were erected according to the designs of *Vladimir Sherwood* (1833-1897) and *Konstantin Thon* (1794-1881).

The **State Historical Museum** (1875-1881), built according to the design of the first of them, quite organically fits into the ensemble of the Red Square, completing it. It is made in the so-called *Russian style* (a kind of Russian Neo-Gothic), directly resonating with the contours and color of the Moscow Kremlin, since the outlines of the towers resemble the Kremlin towers, and dark red brick was used as the material.

As for Konstantin Thon, it was he who contributed to the revival of architectural antiquity in Russia and is rightfully considered the creator of the so-called *Russian-Byzantine style*. Besides the Grand Kremlin Palace (1839-1849), the Cathedral of Christ the Savior (1837-1883, restored in 1994-1997) and the Kremlin Armoury in Moscow (1844-1851) were built according to his designs.

The **Hall of the Order of St. George** gives an idea of the magnificence and ceremonial solemnity of the **Grand Kremlin Palace**. Its grandeur and majestic splendor represent a generalized character of Russian temple and palace architecture.

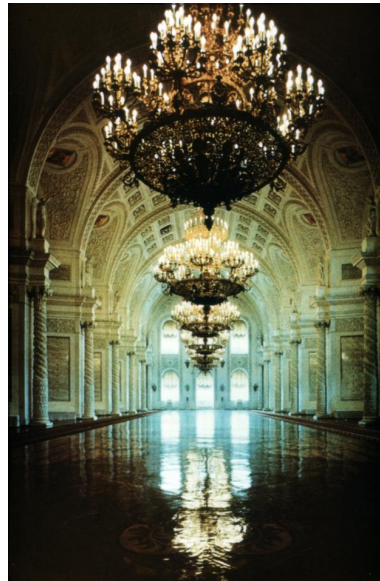


Illustration 07. *The Hall of the Order of St. George (Konstantin Thon, architect). 1838-1849. 61 meters long, 20.5 meters wide, and 17.5 meters high. Grand Kremlin Palace, Moscow, Russia*

Among utilitarian-prosaic, “practical” buildings that dominated in the cities of the second half of the 19th century (railway stations, banks, commercial and residential buildings, administrative and industrial buildings), the above mentioned and similar architectural structures stood out with their magnificent solemnity. Whatever the case, the era cared about presentable and imposing appearance, energetically forming, so to speak, its facade. In accordance with this direction, a certain development in painting was also achieved by the ceremonial portrait – a genre that presented the “facade” of the era in faces.

One of the most striking examples of this genre is the portrait of **Anton Rubinstein** (1888) by **Ilya Repin**. The outstanding musician, the founder of professional music education in Russia, is depicted at the conductor’s desk, in a concert tailcoat. The artistry of the musician is matched by the brilliant artistic accomplishment.

Speaking about the ceremonial and representative aspects of artistic creativity, which developed along with the art of great ideas, large-scale and deeply conceptual art, we can conclude that the era led a completely full existence, had the taste for life and knew how to enjoy it.

This attraction of life and its seductions were most remarkably expressed in visual forms by *impressionism* – the leading trend in French painting of the second half of the 19th century. In its subject matter, it was aimed mainly at glorifying the joy of life, finding beauty in the ordinary manifestations of modern life, leisure but poeticizing these ordinary things in a special way, capturing the incredible charm and uniqueness of evanescent, elusive moments.

Each impressionist had his own favorite, “sacred” theme in art. **Pierre-Auguste Renoir** (1841-1919), as if in parallel with the prose of **Guy de Maupassant** (1850-1893) conveyed the fascination of contemporary Parisian women in his characteristic light, elegant coloration and with purely French charm, admiring their grace and sensual seductiveness. One of the best examples is his **La Loge** (The Theater Box) (1874). The atmosphere of social life captured in this work attracted even the greatest representatives of artistic creativity (it is enough to remember how many pages Leo Tolstoy devoted to it in his novels “War and Peace” and “Anna Karenina”).



Illustration 08. *Pierre-Auguste Renoir. “La Loge”. 1874. Canvas, oil. 80 × 63,5 cm. Courtauld Institute of Art, London, United Kingdom*

It was very widely reflected in musical art, especially in such genres as ballet and operetta. Ballet, which dates back to the Renaissance, acquired its fully classical appearance in the second half of the 19th century (primarily in the scores of *Leo Delibes* and *Pyotr Tchaikovsky*). Operetta, as a genre, was generally formed at that historical stage. Later the works created in those decades began to be called *classical operetta*.

It was presented in two main versions: French or Parisian (its leader was *Jacques Offenbach*, 1819-1880) and Austrian or Viennese (*Johann Strauss the Son*, 1825-1899). They had one thing in common: a tendency to capture the joyful, problem-free aspects of life, and this led primarily to the sphere of the so-called *light music*.

This kind of music, in turn, was often imbued with the rhythms of waltz. The waltz, as the main dance genre of the 19th century in general and the second half of the century in particular, meant so much for that time that one can find the definition of the *waltz century* in relation to it (in this regard, an iconic figure was Johann Strauss the Son, who was called “*The Waltz King*”).

It goes without saying that musical art, as well as the era that gave birth to it, did not strive for a careless sliding on the surface of life. Although it represented the “facade” of its time showing a passion for light, ease and brilliant artistry, it maintained internal meaningfulness and significance.

One of the “cult” works of the French composer *Camille Saint-Saëns* (1835-1921) – *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso for Violin and Orchestra* (1863) – testifies to this.

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