Russia

[Name of the Writer]

[Name of the Institution]

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**Introduction**

Russian classical literature is known for its distinctive representation of reality. Russian literature is rich in history and occupies a vast place in the evolution of Russian people. It reflects accurately on the crude and realist aspects of human experience. Russian literature depicts an honest inclusion of honesty and truthfulness to the culture, politics, linguistics and time and circumstances. Before the 19th century, the Russian scope of literature only included poems, folk tales and historical biographies of the saints or historical figures, later it developed a considerable depth of the literary subjects like novels, poems and short stories all comprehensively include the portrayal of reality although through different lenses of work. Russian Literature consolidates the history, the tragedy, ideology, and values altogether. It absorbs the essence of social norms, culture, and life as it is. It is extremely self-reflexive. The golden era of Russian Soviet Literature highlighted Romanticism in the literary works especially the poems. Russia produced one of the best writers by furnishing their works through themes of deceit, social criticism, and hope. Alexander Pushkin has been regarded as refining the Russian language in the literary works. While the work of Gogol took one into a fictional sketch of circumstances those which seemed very real by creating the most unlikely out of the events while Tolstoy also excessively reached zeniths by his work by compiling multiple themes such as romance, politics, social statuses and describing these intricate details at lengths. Russian literary evidently encompasses the power and authority, family relations, gender roles and many other themes in their books, novels short stories and books.

**Thesis Statement**

I have read the ‘The Queen Of Spades’ by Alexander Pushkin, ‘The Overcoat’ by Nikolai Gogol and ‘After the Dance’ by Leo Tolstoy. The three stories highlight the genre of tragedy and moral evils committed by the characters.

 **The Queen Of Spades**

The queen of spades is an interesting classic short story authored by Alexander Pushkin. It was published in 1834. The story revolves around the greed of a German soldier named Hermann who observes the gambling settings. Hermann has heard about the grandmother of a fellow soldier who knew a trick of three cards which was so reliable that she had earned her lost fortune back with it. He becomes greedy and sets on to know this trick from the old lady who happens to be a countess. He makes advances to get her attention by writing love letters to her ward Lizavyata and persuades her to let him in to talk with the countess. Once he sees the countess he confronts her to tell him the secret by pointing a gun at her, however, the Countess dies of the fear. Hermann manages to escapes successfully. Later after the funeral of the old woman, she appears in Hermann’s dream telling the secret of three cards as being three, seven and ace respectively and to marry Lizavyeta. The next day he rushes with all his longing to the Chekalinksys salons where the rich gambled for with higher returns. He used the trick the first night and won and did the same the second night, however, the third night he picked the queen of Spades instead of the Ace and lost everything. Ironically when he looks at the card it appears to resemble the old countess and who winks at him. Pushkin reflects upon his state of terror which later brought him to madness and eventually meeting a tragic end.

The story is set at in a time where the Soviet Union empire was involved in imperialist surges and the wars in the 1830s. Making soldiers weary and tired of their rigid lifestyles status.

The common men surge to rise and upgrade his social status and class. Alexander Pushkin undertakes a man from the working class's agreed to move up the ladder and escape from the status quo by defining ends to justify means. On the other hand the existence of aristocracy and their riches that fascinated the common people. The author tries to instill the spirit of realism combined with romanticism. Moreover, the story comprehends the Russian stereotype against the Germans as being cold and greedy for wealth. Moreover, the role of the Countess has been portrayed as that of a strong woman who lives in pride lavishly. The aristocratic culture in Russia in the story has been highlighted, the women's freedom to hold statuses that had power, and the freedom to exercise their rights and choices only if they adhered to these statuses. The distinction between gender roles and their rights have significantly changed with the rights and responsibilities rendered by Lizavyeta. The irony uttered by Alexander Pushkin suggests the regretful and tragic end of those who fall in the trap of greed for more. The queen of spades is a classic example of black humor where tragedy descends upon the main character in the end.

 **The Overcoat**

The Overcoat is a short story penned by Nikolai Gogol, published in 1842. Nikolai Gogal portrays human sensitivity, the honesty of thought and the distorted reality of society. He convincingly apprehends the realism and the materialist approaches which change human behavior. The overcoat is a narrative account of a story set on the melancholic life of a government clerk named Akaky. Akaky is a hard worker and displays loyalty towards his work. In spite of all this the younger clerks teased him particularly by making fun of his old overcoat. The story moves forward as the overcoat becomes frayed and Akaky finally decides to replace it. However, the new overcoat is beyond the Akaky affordability due to his low income. Akaky budgets and saves for the new overcoat. He then very enthusiastically plans and sets for buying the new coat with his tailor Petrovich. The new coat is finally possible with the holiday bonus. The new overcoat was well stitched and looked fine in appearance. The seniors at office arrange for a celebration in the honor of Akakys new coat. It rose Akakys self-esteem and made him feel better. However, on his way back he is robbed and the robbers take his overcoat leaving him bare in the snow. Akaky sought help to recover his coat back however, he found himself in no luck. He goes to the Police Chief who could manage to recover his Overcoat through his authority, on advice from his a fellow. The Police Chief asks him why he has brought such a trivial matter to his concern, to which Akaky replies that the subordinates would only respond to a harsh order and scolding from a senior. The turn of events leads to Akaky falling ill. With his death near he curses the Police Chief for not helping him. However, after his death, he returns to St. Petersburg as a ghost who takes away overcoats from the people. Finally, Gogal ends the story when Akakys ghost meets Police Chief terrifying him by taking his overcoat.

Nikolai Gogal grew up watching the harsh realities of life and enduring the distinction and disparities throughout the post czarist regime. The author implores the time in the 1800s in Russia when Czar Nicholas made significant changes in the bureaucratic model of Russia, hence suggesting the attitudes of those in position. It also embraces that status and class were evident in the active display of materials of individuals who owned and possessed. The author denounces the irony of class and status by toning words in a way that degrades the act of humanity between people. The story moves on from a mistreating and degrading work environment to the subject of poverty, where Akaky could not afford an overcoat in an urban city of St. Petersburgh, reflecting on his poor living standards. The social recognition of the main character when he gets a new coat represents the mocking of society and adherence to the material aspects of the world making it synonymous with respect. The attitudes of those in the power towards their responsibilities and subordinates within a workplace are also highlighted. Gogal, in the end, the last part of the story narrates the psychological harm, the irresponsibly arrogant and proud Police Chief had on him. That made him isolated and atomized by the society. Towards the end, the manufacturing of a ghost in the story ironically symbolizes the absence of justice in that particular time in Russia. The story is a comprehensive narration of how things like these still haunt mankind and affect our society.

**After the Dance**

Leo Tolstoy created an epic short story called After The Dance in 1903 which was published after his death in 1911. The story introduces its main character Ivan narrating a story to his friends, about a night in a ballroom where a beautiful girl named Varenka catches the eye of Ivan, while she beautifully dances with her father who is a Colonel. He is fascinated by the bond they share and admired her father for wearing self-made boots. taking the impression the colonel having good conduct was a good man. Still, under the spell of love and Varenka's beauty Ivan could not fall asleep. Staying awake all night due to the infatuation, Ivan plans to go for an early walk to divert himself from the thoughts of new love and happiness. Unaware, of the events that follow. On his way, while walking to the street the young man finds an unusual encounter with the Colonel. The colonel is involved in cruelty, beating an unfortunate runaway soldier while he is pleading for forgiveness and mercy. Watching the sequence events has a great impact on the young mind of Ivan, who decides to give up his life plans to join and serve in the military service after observing brutality and his love for Varenka dispels. Ivan realizes that the evil of propagation within the Government services and how he viewed them as good was all a perception.

Leo Tolstoy was born in a rich family and enjoyed wealth and riches, however, he eventually fell out of it and abandoned his aristocratic lifestyle and despised the rich and intentionally became poor. Leo hence featured this piece of writing in the 1900s where the strict regime of Czar Nicholas. The dressing of Varenka and the character of Colonel suggests that it was time just before the Russian revolution took place. The author narrates the idea of the controlled czarist regime, where the individuals were subject to violence and terrorized. The story opens with the idea that is good and bad in all however one acquires, to what constitutes to good or bad, being a prey to the environment. He is referring to the spread of propaganda which controls the behaviors of subjects of the state and marginalizes a few to torture and brutality. The regime was operating through propaganda. Moreover, Tolstoy identifies the not haves of Russian society by analyzing that a state is ruled by universally acknowledged rules which has a positive and benefiting effect on all. The story also states sometimes one's lives in a parallel reality and has a distorted view on the reality of events around them, hence when they are faced with the facts, it significantly alters the course of life for them. The themes in the story can still be relevant in today's world, there is still a dire need to increase kindness, mercy, and justice by eliminating cruelty.

**Russian Literature Is Different**

Russian Literature is founded on the fundamental themes of life. Russian literature identifies the depth for truthfulness in the society by portraying circumstances into indulging and product literature. There is no literature in the world which undertakes the concerns of the society like it does it looks at the society with utmost emotion and angst. Russian literature is more humanistic in its approach towards literature. The narrative technique used by most authors helps people relate to the content of the story better and understand the issues raised by the writer. Many suggest that Russian writers can commit their work to depressive facts and explore such themes which represent the distorted realities of the society. However, the Russian writers write, to raise the consciousness of gaps and evils persistent and continuously haunting the society. In spite of times when they were exiled or oppressed for their writings, they still did not halt to contribute to their cause. They intensely engage the reader in the fictional reality of the stories. Although it does not make Russian literature better, it can be said it uses different style towards its direction and technique which makes it popular.