

A Comparative Study of the Image "Superfluous Person" in Chinese and Russian Literature

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Abstract: *The image "superfluous person" is typical in world literature. It first appeared in Russia in the first half of the 19th century, then came into China with many translations of Russian literature, and was localized in China as time went by. The "superfluous person" images in Chinese and Russian literature have many differences due to the different social and historical conditions, but their spiritual core is basically the same. This paper makes a systematic and comparative study of the images of "superfluous person" in Chinese and Russian literature and finds that they are highly similar in their background, education and temperament. At the same time, based on this, the study also explores the significance of literary history, realistic significance and value enlightenment of the comparative analysis.*

Keywords: Chinese literature; Russian literature; superfluous person; comparative literature.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the treasure-house of world literature, there is a typical character image—"superfluous person". The image appeared in the first half of the 19th century in Russia, which is a typical aristocratic intellectual depicted in 19th-century Russian literature. The "superfluous persons" are primarily of noble origin and well-educated. They have noble ideals but are far from the people; they are dissatisfied with reality but lack actual actions. Later, in China, with the outbreak of the May Fourth Movement and a large number of translated Russian literature, this image gradually entered the world of Chinese. After many intellectuals as well as writers related to the image with China's reality at that time, the image also had its position in Chinese literature. In the turbulent historical period, under the impact of new and old ideas, they struggled to survive in the crevice. Still, they were ultimately unable to withstand and had to dissociate from society in the end. Under different social and historical conditions, the images of "superfluous persons" in Chinese and Russian literature show their unique characteristics under the influence of their own national characters and historical culture. However, they are also closely related. Seeking common ground while reserving differences is the essence of literary exchange and development in today's world. Therefore, this paper intends to make a systematic and comparative study of the images of "superfluous persons" in Chinese and Russian literature, and try to explore the literary, practical and value implications behind them.

2. THE IMAGE "SUPERFLUOUS PERSON" IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE

2.1 Image Source

The word "superfluous person" first appeared in Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev's novella *The Diary of a Superfluous Man* which was published in 1850. The year after the novella's publication, Aleksander Herzen used the term "superfluous person" in his essay *On the Development of Russian Revolutionary Thought* to comment on Aleksandr Sergeyevich Pushkin's Eugene Onegin. "Onegin is an idle man because he never has anything to do," he said. "He is a superfluous person in the environment in which he has settled, and he does not have the necessary strength of character to extricate himself from it." [1]

Later, Russian literary circles and literary critics began to use "superfluous person" to refer to those persons who are dissatisfied with reality, but cannot stand up against it, and those who want to make a career, but there is no actual action, and eventually become redundant and useless people in society. Since then, the "superfluous person", a part of the noble intellectuals with similar character and historical fate to Onegin, has become the classic image in Russian literature.

2.2 Developing Course

Although the literary term "superfluous person" was not formally proposed until Turgenev's *The Diary of a Superfluous Man* in 1850, the literary image of the "superfluous person" had already appeared in previous works, and has been constantly elucidated in the subsequent literary works.

2.2.1 The first generation of "Superfluous person"

The first generation of "superfluous person" in Russian literature mainly refers to the aristocratic young intellectuals who were active in the 1920s and 1930s. It includes Aleje in Aleksandr Sergeyevich Pushkin's *Gypsy* (1824), Onegin in the author's *Eugene Onegin* (1831), and Picolin in Mikhail Yuryevich Lermontov's *Hero of Our Own Times* (1840).

Gypsy is the last of a series of long romantic poems written by Alexander Pushkin. It tells the story of a Russian nobility named Aleje, who, full of dreams, abandons the prosperous city for the nomadic people of gypsy. At first, Aleje and a gypsy girl met and fell in love. However, the good times did not last long. Two years later, the gypsy girl fell in love with another young man. So, with a grudge, Aleje kills his wife and her lover. Finally, the gypsies left, leaving Aleje alone in the "ominous wilderness". Aleje was "disappointed by social phenomena such as chasing money, selling his soul and cheating each other" [2], so he chose to return to nature, but the outcome was still disappointing. It is obvious that Aleje has the characteristic of "superfluous person" and is a romantic figure, but this kind of person is not suitable for living in the real world.

Eugene Onegin tells the story of Onegin, a young aristocrat in Petersburg, who, tired of high society, goes to the Russian countryside. There, he met the eldest daughter of the landowner Lalin, Dageyana. Dageyana fell in love with Onegin at first sight and, after a fierce internal struggle, expressed her love for Onegin. Onegin, on the other hand, could not understand her sincerity. A few years later, Onegin met Dageyana again at a social meeting in Petersburg. Out of vanity, Onegin pursued Dageyana with all his might, but Dageyana turned him down in good faith. Onegin was influenced by progressive thought, but he failed to break out of his narrow circle of aristocratic youth's ideological outlook and tragic fate. He is a typical "superfluous person" in Russian literature.

Hero of Our Own Times focuses on the hero Picolin's series of adventures. In chronological order of events, the aristocratic young man, fed up with high society, serves in the southern Caucasus, passing through the small city of Taman, where he makes fun of a smuggler girl called "the water demon" for no reason. As a result, his finances were stolen and he was almost pushed into the sea by the smuggler girl and lost his life. He robbed the local patriarch's daughter, Bella, and when she fell in love with him, he abandoned her out of disgust, causing Bella to be killed. He even gambled with his life to see if life and death were destined. *Hero of Our Own Times* is Lermontov's masterpiece, in which the hero Picolin has long become a conventional social "superfluous person" in the history of Russian literature and literary critics [3].

In the early 19th century, Aleje, Onegin and Picolin were the first aristocratic young intellectuals to be influenced by Western progressive ideas. Because of the baptism of Western progressive thought, the three have made progress and changes in thought, but they are giants in thought and dwarfs in action. Since they are still members of the aristocratic class and live the same life as the rest of its members, they cannot transcend the limitations that this life sets for themselves [4]. At the same time, the three are all egoists who are pretty indifferent to the affairs of their own country and have no real sense of social responsibility [5].

2.2.2 The Second Generation Of "Superfluous Person"

The second generation of "superfluous persons" in Russian literature was mainly active in the 1840s. Typical examples include Beritov in Aleksander Herzen's *Whose Guilt* (1846), Churkatulin in Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev's *The Diary of a Superfluous Man* (1850), and Rudin in the same author's *Rudin* (1856).

Whose Guilt tells an ordinary story that happened between the 1930s and 1940s in Russia. The hero, Beritov, was born into a noble family and received an idealistic education since childhood, but after stepping into society, he hit a wall everywhere and got nothing in the officialdom for more than ten years. He befriended a husband and wife, Lyubonica and Kreuzefurski. However, he fell in love with Lyubonica and was unable to change the situation. The end of this love triangle is that Beritov went away, the wife Lyubonica died of depression, and her husband Krutzefelski spent all day drinking throughout his life.

The Diary of a Superfluous Man is about a young man, Churkatulin, who has nothing to show for his life—his love is frustrated, his illness is terrible, and his death is approaching, so he can only indulge in the self-talk in the diary. Churkatulin indulged all day in his inner world to escape the cruel but real world. In fact, he is a man who is far from the actual life, becoming a "superfluous man" in the world.

Rudin, the protagonist of the novel *Rudin*, comes from a poor aristocratic family. He has received a university education and has traveled abroad for some time. Rudin loves freedom, is a good speaker, and dreams of pursuing an ideal life, career and love. But though he tried many times, he failed and achieved nothing. The young man won the pure and kind girl Natalia's heart, but gave in to Natalia's mother's will and gave up happiness. He went on to set up various businesses, all of which ended in failure. Since then, he has been living a life of poverty and vagrancy. In 1860, the author added to *Rudin*, who was later killed in a street fight in Paris in 1848.

Beritov, Churkatulin and Rudin, who were active in the 1840s, were clearly more progressive in their thinking than Aleje, Onegin and Picolin. Although Russian society at that time was still under feudal autocratic rule, new social forces were rising day by day with the initial development of industry. Their criticism of aristocratic society has taken on a philosophical tinge. They have a certain sense of social responsibility, which guides them to act, yet in action, they remain indecisive and fearful.

2.2.3 The Third Generation Of "Superfluous Person"

The third generation of "superfluous persons" in Russian literature mainly lived in Russia from the 1840s to the 1850s. The "superfluous person" in this period, with the "Oblomov character", is actually a new development of the image "superfluous person" in the new period. The prominent figures are Lavretskiy in *The House of Nobility* by Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev (1859), Oblomov in *Oblomov* by Ivan Alexandrovich Goncharov (1859), and Raiski in *Cliff* by the same author (1869).

The House of Nobility tells the story of Lavretskiy, a young aristocrat who falls in love with the beautiful Varvara, the daughter of a retired Moscow major general, and marries her recklessly. Later, Lavretskiy found out that his wife had been unfaithful and left their house. Later, he met Liza and fell in love with her. It is a coincidence that his wife's death was reported at the time, and he and Liza were committed to each other. Later, however, he found out that the news of his wife's death was false. Happiness evaporated, Liza went to a monastery, and Lavretskiy lived alone for the rest of his life, although he stayed married at his wife's pleas. *The House of Nobility* vividly depicts the rise and fall of the Russian aristocracy. Lavretskiy, though ambitious, was too cowardly to know what to do and even hoped for guidance and salvation from an aristocratic girl.

Oblomov was a nobleman who was kind, simple, and meek. In order to live a quiet and carefree life, he resigned from public office, renounced travel and stayed at home all day. He lay in bed or on the sofa every day, so by thirty-two or three, he was already too fat for his age. His friend Hitolz didn't want Oblomov to stay at home all day doing nothing, so he dragged him to all sorts of social events, but it didn't work out. In the end, Oblomov lay motionless for years under the care of his wife and eventually died of a stroke from being too fat.

Raiski, the protagonist of *Cliff*, is intelligent and educated and loves art, but has no will to persist. He had come from Petersburg to Malinowka, a cliff-edge estate where his two lovely cousins lived. Raiski first fell in love with the innocent Marfenka, but Marfenka fell in love with the young Vikentyev. So, then, he fell in love with his older cousin, Vera, who was cold and charming, pursuing freedom, but she only regarded him as her brother and best friend. She fell in love with Mark, an exile full of new ideas and wild thoughts. Later, Raiski went abroad to study sculpture and wandered in the art hall, sublimating his body and mind. However, he always felt the call of his relatives in his hometown and was determined to return to Russia.

Lavretskiy, Oblomov and Raiski are all typical figures with "Oblomov character". Different from the intense conflict of the previous generations of "superfluous persons", they have formed a self-satisfied lifestyle and behavior, showing a tendency to return to the native cultural tradition. "They are all superfluous persons lost in the struggle of the times, and their characters are characterized by lazy literati and literati idlers" [6]. At the same time, they shed the heroic color of "superfluous person", lacking the enthusiasm to explore, intervene in and transform life. They have become out-of-date characters, unloved by the heroine, and have had to give way to the people of the new era.

2.2.4 The Contemporary "Superfluous Person"

Russia, in the 20th century, stepped into a new historical stage. At that period, Russia had always been in turmoil and a high-pressure political vortex. The "superfluous persons" in Russian literature of this period include Leva in Russian postmodernism writer Andrea Bytoff's *Pushkin's House*, Petrovichi in Vladimir Semyonovich Makanin's *The Underground Man* and Rizaven in Mark Kharitonov's *Milasevic's Little Box*.

Leva received a formal school education since childhood, lacking independent thought and personality. His father also avoided letting him see the dirt and ugliness of society when he was young and only taught him empty idealism. Due to the appearance of his grandfather, the spiritual aristocracy and intellectual elite in Russia in the early 20th century, Leva tried to abandon his fantasy and pursue his true self. However, the vast contrast between the ideal and the reality overwhelmed Leva. He became afraid of thinking, avoiding, giving up, and slowly lost himself and became a "superfluous person". "While the fantastical Leva may live in a world of hypocrisy and illusion, the thinking and awaking Leva sees the truth of life, becomes more afraid of thinking, and cannot even integrate into society for a while" [7].

Petrovichi is a talented writer who lives a difficult life because his works are not recognized and cannot be published. To make a living and to keep himself sober-minded, he shunned all formal work. He worked as a janitor in a tube building, but after the privatization of the housing, he was expelled from the tube building and sent to a mental hospital. In fact, if he were just a little vulgar, he might be able to become a famous writer and live a life that everyone admires. But he refused to compromise with the surrounding environment and stubbornly maintained a distance from the real world as a marginalized person. Perhaps this is also why *The Underground Man* is also called *Hero of Our Own Times*.

Rizaven is a teacher, upright and kind, but also sentimental, full of compassion and a sense of justice. But life has not been kind to him out of his virtues. His father died of depression after being criticized for his involvement in a political event; his mother died of grief over his father's death; and he was misunderstood for saving a homeless woman at a train station. However, he did not give in, and he continued his research, thinking about life and the meaning of life. However, in the end, under a series of heavy blows, he muddled all day, losing his enthusiasm for life.

It can be seen that Leva, Petrovichi and Rizaven all carry the shadow of "superfluous person" who is out of tune with the world. But they, the "superfluous persons" in Russian postmodern works, have a more diversified color of post-modernity. They either struggle with the ideal and reality, strive to integrate into the world to make themselves not so "superfluous", or retreat to the edge of the world as a spectator, putting their spiritual freedom first.

3. THE IMAGE "SUPERFLUOUS PERSON" IN CHINESE LITERATURE

3.1 Image Source

At the beginning of the 20th century, Russian literature began to be translated into China. It is also worth noting that the first Russian literary work translated into Chinese was Alexander Pushkin's [8]. Mao Dun once said that after the outbreak of the May Fourth Movement, Russian literature attracted great attention and interest among young Chinese intellectuals, and the study of Russian literature became a movement among young writers and artists [9]. At the beginning of the 20th century, China was in the midst of a highly turbulent period of history—the 1911 revolution, which did not fully accomplish its task of fighting imperialism and feudalism, and the May Fourth Movement, when the Chinese proletariat began to rise to the political stage. During this period, China was in urgent need of foreign advanced ideas. Therefore, under the influence of Russian literature and in the specific historical period at that time, the image "superfluous person" with Chinese characteristics came into being. It is the fruit of the regional characteristics of the Chinese nation in the May Fourth period after the trend of romanticism was introduced into China [8].

3.2 Developing Course

The emergence of the image "superfluous person" in Chinese literary works is deeply influenced by Russian literature. Therefore, strictly speaking, the image in Chinese literature should be born later in the early 20th century.

However, some scholars believe that many works in ancient China also contain some "superfluous persons" [10-13]. Moreover, after the 20th century, "superfluous person" is still appearing in Chinese literary works.

3.2.1 The Ancient "Superfluous Person"

In ancient Chinese literary works, researchers believe that the more typical "superfluous person" is Jia Baoyu in *A Dream in Red Mansions* by Cao Xueqin [10-11, 13]. Jia Baoyu, beloved by his Grandmother Jia since childhood, grew up in a gentle and wealthy home and loved being close to his sisters. He and Lin Daiyu were childhood friends. He likes poems and songs, hates The Four Books and The Five Classics, and criticizes Neo-Confucianism. But, in the end, the women he admired died and dispersed, and he married Xue Baochai in a muddleheaded manner arranged by his family, causing Lin Daiyu to cry and die. Finally, he left with a monk and a Taoist. People like Jia Baoyu, though influenced by some new ideas, are not yet radical revolutionaries [10]. At the same time, he excessively pursues emotional life, which leads to a sense of spiritual emptiness and loss when his emotions are frustrated [11]. Jia Baoyu was a rebel of the feudal family, but he was also a rich and noble idler, so he certainly would not stand on the side of the public. Therefore, he could only become a "superfluous person" who was not allowed by the secular society at that time [13].

In addition, some scholars have suggested that Kong Yiji in Lu Xun's work is also a kind of "superfluous person" [12]. Although Lu Xun was not an ancient Chinese, Kong Yiji was a victim of the imperial examination system in the Qing Dynasty. He exhausted his time in The Four Books and The Five Classics, falling to begging and refusing to take off the long gown symbolizing the identity of a scholar. He always emphasizes that he is a scholar. Even when being teased by others, he still boasts and admires himself. He had read books and was determined to climb higher, but he did not even pass an exam. The poisoning of feudal culture and feudal educational ideology on Kong Yiji led him to develop a bad habit of disdain for labor, being fond of drinking and being lazy [14]. Kong Yiji neither belongs to the upper class he aspires to nor is he ashamed to associate with the lower class. His life is a tragedy, as it floats in space, unable to find roots or homes, and often suffers from devastation and ridicule [12].

3.2.2 The Modern "Superfluous Person"

In modern Chinese literary works, there are also many images of "superfluous persons", such as the Madman, Wei Lianshu, Lv Weifu, and Juansheng in Lu Xun's works [15], or the lonely and depressed Y Jun in *Silver Gray Death*, Zhifu in *The Vast Night*, or Gao Juexin in *Home*. Typical examples include the protagonist "I" in Yu Dafu's *Sinking*, Fang Hongjian in Qian Zhongshu's *Fortress Besieged*, and Zhou Ping in Cao Yu's *Thunderstorm*.

Sinking tells the story of a young Chinese student studying in Japan who suffers from severe depression. His weak soul is tormented by extreme melancholy and pain, and the bitterness of adolescence cannot be relieved. He is unwilling to sink, but unable to extricate himself, and finally jumped into the sea to commit suicide. Although the novel has some anti-imperialist and anti-feudal significance, it is filled with a gloomy atmosphere. The "superfluous person" in *Sinking* is first and foremost a wanderer. He wanders around, but he is isolated from the world he wanders in. He is a bystander, an outsider, and for him, everything is open to him, but all of this is also highly indifferent to him [16].

The protagonist of *Fortress Besieged*, Fang Hongjian, is a young man who comes from a gentry family in southern China. During his study tour in Europe, Fang Hongjian was idle all day long. After returning to China, he was recommended by Zhao Xinmei to teach at Sanlu University in mainland China, along with several others, such as Zhao Xinmei and Sun Roujia. Due to weaknesses in Fang Hongjian's personality and other characteristics, he fell into complex interpersonal disputes. Later, he got engaged to Sun Roujia and left Sanlu University to return to Shanghai. With the help of Zhao Xinmei, Fang Hongjian worked at a newspaper office and married Sun Roujia. After marriage, the conflicts between Fang Hongjian, the Fang family, Sun Roujia, and Sun Roujia's family were exposed and intensified. Fang Hongjian resigned and quarreled with Sun Roujia, gradually losing hope for life. Fang Hongjian couldn't find his place in real life [17]. Although he received an advanced education, he couldn't take practical actions, so he could only idle away his time all day.

In *Thunderstorm*, Zhou Ping is the eldest son of the Zhou family, who is nominally the eldest son of Zhou Puyuan, the chairman of a mining company, and his ex-wife. In fact, he is the illegitimate son of Zhou Puyuan and her maid Lu Shiping. Due to his particular background, he has never been liked by Zhou Puyuan. Whenever Zhou Puyuan faces him, it is like facing his past sins, so he was sent to the countryside at a very young age, spending his most beautiful youth alone in an environment without both his father's and mother's love. It wasn't until the age of 25

that he returned to Zhou Puyuan from the countryside. In his growth environment, his body gradually grew, but his spirit did not. He felt guilty about his past actions and had been trying to escape without being able to. Zhou Ping lives in reality, striving to surpass reality but never finding a way out [18].

Whether it is the Chinese youth studying in Japan in *Sinking*, the protagonist Fang Hongjian in *Fortress Besieged*, or Zhou Ping in *Thunderstorm*, all of them are typical "superfluous persons" who are not integrated with the entire society. In the era of social turmoil, intellectuals are filled with depression, loneliness, and hesitation. They emerged from tradition, accepted new ideas, and launched fierce attacks on feudal ethics and the dark society. However, after facing social difficulties, they fell into a deep predicament and ultimately reluctantly "sank" [19]. They awaken but have no direction, fight bravely but have no hope, and cry out in pain but powerless [20]. They bitterly repent and lament that they are just a few who cannot resist society, are born helpless to the world, and die harmless to others [8].

3.2.3 The Contemporary "Superfluous Person"

In contemporary Chinese literary works, the image "superfluous person" also has a new development, connotation, and expression. The prominent representatives include the "stubborn person" in Wang Shuo's *Stubborn Person*, the "last person" in Li Hangyu's *The Relics of Shazao*, and the "desolate person" in Ma Xiaoquan's *Desolate Person*. The main characters in the novel *Stubborn Person* are Ma Qing, Yu Guan and Yang Chong. Three young cooperated and founded a "Three T" company to worry, solve problems and bear blame for people. At the beginning of the company's foundation, business was booming, and customers were pouring in. But it didn't last long, and the company was quickly forced to close because of management flaws and customer complaints. However, ironically, when they left the closed company, they found a long queue at the door, all of whom needed help to solve life problems. Whether dealing with work or life, including sacred emotions such as love, the "stubborn persons" show an indifferent attitude. In the author's words, "there is no seriousness at all", "playing is just for a heartbeat", and "I am a hooligan, and I am afraid of no one" [21].

The "last person" in *The Relics of Shazao* actually refers to the last "painting house master" Yao Xin. Painting auspicious figures on new old-style houses is a traditional custom of Shazao. Yao Xin is the only and last "painting house master" in Shazao. He was determined to paint a house for himself, but his son insisted on building a two-story building. The last "painting house master" was furious and completely ignored the construction of the new building. After the building was completed, he refused to move into the new house. However, in the end, he still acquiesced to reality and advised Qingyuan, who intended to follow him in learning painting house, to switch to a new craft. However, he still planned to make money to build an old-style house and paint the house himself to fulfill his lifelong dream. The disappearance of the "painting house" legacy is the result of the fusion and collision of new and old cultures. Yao Xin persistently adheres to ancient customs, but at the same time, he has to compromise with reality, which is full of contradictions and struggles.

In *Desolate Person*, the narrator's identity is as an editor of a newspaper. After the age of thirty, he gradually loses interest in everything. Between depression and satire, he chooses to name himself a "desolate person". After encountering another female patient with "desolation", he discovered that there are many "desolate persons" hidden in his life. They included deputy directors, private entrepreneurs, bank executives, etc. The "desolate persons" began organizing spontaneous gatherings. Later, the party attracted the attention of the security department, but the police who came to investigate found a sense of belonging in the party. The novel *Desolate Person* explores a group of people who no longer have any expectations for life and career, as well as the emotional scarcity and occupational exhaustion they suffer from under the pressure of urban life [22].

It can be seen that the "stubborn person" like Ma Qing, Yu Guan, and Yang Chong, the last "painting house master" Yao Xin, and the "desolate person" in *Desolate Person* are all "superfluous persons" in the new era. They have their thoughts or even ideals in their minds and hearts, but the wheels of history always roll forward, and the ruthless reality constantly hits them. Gradually, they become numb, afraid to take action, and can only be trapped in their spiritual world, becoming a "superfluous person" who is abandoned by society.

4. THE SIMILARITIES OF "SUPERFLUOUS PERSON" IN CHINESE AND RUSSIAN LITERATURE

4.1 The Similarity of Causes

The "superfluous persons" in Chinese and Russian literature are primarily produced in the turbulent period of history. In the Chinese and Russian literary works, the early or typical "superfluous persons" are all in the historical union belt when the feudal society was vanishing, and the capitalist society was rising, so they share a common "emotion", "consciousness", or a "common disease" [8]. To be more precise, they are all in a turbulent historical stage, with the old and the new forces competing fiercely, making people nervous and restless. When traditional values collapse and inherent culture is in crisis, there will be doubt, ridicule and revalue of the value, culture, and life itself [23]. Like Onegin, Picolin and Rudin, they all lived in the period when the feudal serfdom gradually disintegrated and the capitalist relations of production began to take shape. Fang Hongjian, Zhou Ping and Gao Juexin were also at a historical stage when China was gradually becoming a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, and the people pursued national independence and national rejuvenation. The "superfluous persons" in the new era are mainly at the turn of the century, and they are full of confusion and worry about future success. Under the impact of the cultural wave of modernity, the conflicts between traditional culture and modern civilization, secular spirit and humanistic spirit, rural culture and urban culture result in the crisis of self-identity of "superfluous person" [24]. Petrovichi, Rizaven, Ma Qing and Yao Xin are among those who have stepped one foot into modern civilization with the other foot in the world of traditional culture.

4.2 The Similarity of Educational Background

The "superfluous persons" are generally well-educated, with old and new ideas colliding violently in their minds, such as the first and second generations of "superfluous persons" in Russian literature. They often come from the aristocracy, having received a good education, and some even study abroad for years. The latter two generations of "superfluous persons", although not all are aristocrats, are all intellectuals (writers, teachers, etc.). Onegin, for example, was born into a noble family in Petersburg. He grew up with a typical aristocratic education, was intelligent and erudite, and was deeply influenced by Western ideas and culture as well. However, he could not find a purpose in life and could not see the meaning of life [25]. The same was true of the "superfluous person" in Chinese literature, Jia Baoyu and Kong Yiji, to say nothing of the later Fang Hongjian, Zhou Ping, Ma Qing, Yu Guan and Yang Chong. Jia Baoyu had a prominent family, and the education he received and the ideas he listened to were the most advanced at that time. Fang Hongjian studied in Europe. Although he was idle all day, he was still influenced by Western ideas in some way. Zhou Ping is the young master of the Zhou family. Although he is not favored, it is impossible not to have a formal education. It is precisely because of the excellent education that their thoughts have become more profound, seeing many things that they could not see before, and also feeling depression that they have never had. Old and new ideas pull them together, leaving them at a loss.

4.3 The Similarity in Temperament

Firstly, they were "idle" all day long, which is most evident in the first and second generations of "superfluous persons" in Russian literature. They both belong to the noble class with no need to engage in productive labor. And there is no pressure for them to survive. In Chinese literature, such as the ancient "superfluous person" Jia Baoyu and Kong Yiji, they also do not produce. The thoughts in their minds are always romantic and passionate and sometimes even dreamy and unrealistic. Their activities all day were no more than patrolling their territory, fighting for an inheritance, participating in various parties, and pursuing love, fame and wealth. Although some of them have tried to take action to improve the lives of the general public or to jump out of their class limitations, they have all failed. After a series of failures, they often lose the ability to act and can only "idle" all day.

Secondly, they are giants in thought but dwarfs in action. "Superfluous persons" often have their ideas. When promoting their ideas, they are often shocking, can conquer the audience with their agile thinking, and even gain the favor of young girls. However, when they should take action, they are always indecisive, and many things are abandoned halfway by them. Even sometimes, they are not as brave as the heroine in the story. What's more, in the considerable contrast between the ideal and the reality, they even become afraid of thinking, avoid, give up, and eventually become the "marginal persons" of society. They are bright and intelligent, dissatisfied with reality and eager to seek a new way of life. Unfortunately, they cannot find their position in the world, are unable to break through the secular prejudice, and cannot break the shackles of the old traditional ideas. They feel the heavy constraints of society, but they are too weak to resist [26]. They want to resist society, but they are powerless; they want to obey society, but they are unwilling to do so, so their resistance against society ultimately turns into opposition to themselves [27].

Thirdly, they are at odds with the times and their surroundings. The first and second generations of "superfluous persons" in Russian literature are mostly aristocratic young intellectuals who have, to some extent, been baptized

by Western progressive thought, and some have even studied abroad directly for years, which led to their thinking and the thinking of Russian society and sometimes the old aristocracy at odds. The "superfluous persons" of the latter two generations, either because they cannot keep up with the pace of the development of the times or because they do not want to be in cahoots with the common customs, isolate themselves from the world, either actively or passively. The same is true of the "superfluous persons" in Chinese literature, especially ones in modern times. On the one hand, they were born into a traditional family; on the other hand, they received a new type of education. The awakening of the mind makes them at a loss between the two. And the later "stubborn person" and "desolate person" were even more intolerant of the world.

5. THE VALUE OF COMPARATIVE STUDY OF "SUPERFLUOUS PERSON" IN CHINESE AND RUSSIAN LITERATURE

In Chinese and Russian literary works, the appearance of "superfluous person" has spanned a hundred years. The image in Chinese and Russian literature is compared and studied, and its value is mainly embodied in the following aspects.

First, the comparative study of the images of "superfluous persons" in Chinese and Russian literary works has specific significance in literary history. By combing and comparing the images, we can clearly see their respective developing course and the relationship between them. The image of the "superfluous person" in Chinese literature is not created out of thin air but the result of a large number of translations of Russian literature before and after the May Fourth Movement, which makes Chinese literature inspired and influenced by the image "superfluous person" in Russian literature. Later, Chinese intellectuals, writers and people of insight, in the specific context of Chinese society at that time, created the "superfluous person" with Chinese characteristics. Therefore, when compiling the history of Chinese literature, especially the history of modern Chinese literature, it is inevitable to talk about the influence of the image "superfluous person" in Russian literature on the image "superfluous person" in Chinese literature. At the same time, the same principle applies when it comes to the history of Sino-Russian literary relations. Therefore, a comparative study of the images of "superfluous persons" in Chinese and Russian literature has created favorable conditions for the compilation of a complete history of national (ethnic) literature, and it also lays a solid foundation for compiling the history of Sino-Russian literary relations.

Second, the comparative study of the images of "superfluous persons" in Chinese and Russian literary works has particular practical significance. Literature reflects the social reality. The images in the text are the images created by the writers, and their birth must contain some practical significance [28]. The practical significance of the research is mainly reflected in its social effects and educational function. On the one hand, this comparative study can produce specific social effects. By systematically combing and comparing the images of "superfluous persons" in Chinese and Russian literature, people can understand the image more comprehensively. It can also make people clearly understand its source, the psychological causes, the social environment, as well as the "superfluous person" of different times, different countries and different nationalities—what is in common, what is its spiritual core, and at the same time, with the development of the times, whether its extension and connotation have changed or not. On the other hand, this comparative study has a particular educational function. "Superfluous person" often has a kind of decadent temperament, but the formation of this temperament has its social reality root, which is different from the decadence of some groups today. Throughout the history of Chinese intellectuals in the 20th century, it is not difficult to find that the appearance of every "superfluous person" is the affectionate cry of intellectuals for the changes of the times and the emergence of some social problems [15]. A comparative study of the images of "superfluous persons" in Chinese and Russian literary works can inspire people, especially young people, to examine and compare the images at home and abroad at all times, and understand the social roots of "redundant", so as to finally return to themselves and examine their hearts.

Third, the comparative study of the images of "superfluous persons" in Chinese and Russian literary works can bring some valuable enlightenment. Thousands of years ago, in the temple of Delphi on the Greek Mount Olympus, there was a stone tablet that said, "Know thyself". Socrates made it a manifesto for his philosophical principles. At the same time, according to Ernst Cassirer, knowing the self is the supreme goal of philosophical inquiry [29]. The creation of the image "superfluous person" reflects people's exploration of the value of life, which has a universal social significance beyond time and space and national boundaries [30]. Since the beginning of the 20th century, with the rapid development of the material civilization of human society, social crises and social disasters have also constantly emerged; questions are raised about the meaning of existence, the meaning of compassion, the meaning of justice, etc. [31]. Zou Shipeng believes that the characteristics of modernity are more and more manifested as the universal surplus, and the surplus of the subject is manifested as "superfluous person" [32]. The

image "superfluous person" is the vivid incarnation and historical record of the spiritual value that human beings are struggling to find in the process of modernization, and there is no doubt that it is instructive to enrich our understanding of the human race and our thinking about future development [33]. In this new era, a comparative study of the images of "superfluous persons" in Chinese and Russian literature can help us better understand ourselves and the future of our human beings as well.

6. CONCLUSION

Literature is national as well as world. Communication and interaction are its core and motive forces for development. The image "superfluous person" was born in Russia in the first half of the 19th century. With the outbreak of the May Fourth Movement and the translation of a large number of Russian literature, the image gradually entered China. The images in Chinese and Russian literary works show their characteristics under different social and historical conditions. However, the kernels of the two are identical. By combing the images of "superfluous persons" in Chinese and Russian literary works, the research finds that the images in Russian literary works can be roughly divided into four stages, and the images in Chinese literary works can be divided into three stages. Through the comparative study of the two, it is found that they have a high degree of consistency in the causes, educational background and temperament. At the same time, based on the above analysis and comparison, the study also explores the significance of the comparative study of "superfluous persons" in Chinese and Russian literature. It is hoped that this research can make some contributions to the exchange, interaction and development of literature in various countries.

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