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Two Inspirations by Sainte-Beuve and Tolstoy: Art and Canon

Sainte-Beuve ve Tolstoy'dan İki Esin Kaynağı: Sanat ve Kanon

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Abstract: Art and the classics serve us individually and collectively since they provide kinder and deeper feelings that help us form accurate and ethical concerns. Art and canon are soft powers that affect minds and attitudes. They influence change, help form new perceptions and lead us to discover new horizons. The literary canon helps us to understand the social structures of a nation and its literary tradition. This article focuses on these two terms and explores their potential impact on people's lives in the light of the ideas of literary figures concerning classics and art. The critics in question are the French humanist Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve and the Russian author Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy, both influential figures of their periods and representatives of their countries. This paper aims to examine the notion of literary canon using a comparative approach. Two important essays, in relation to the literary canon, Saint-Beuve's well-known work "What is a classic?" and Leo Tolstoy's "What is Art?" display the ideological considerations in the evaluation and evolution of the works of art. The methodology involves textual analysis of the two different cultural works and their spiritual relationship and influences. Both studies focus on real-life tradition while finding keys in canon formation and they become examples of the universality of what they describe. As a result of the analysis, from antiquity till the present, canon is practical because it serves as a guide to people in choosing those works which can contribute to building fruitful lives. Canon also has an essential role in reflecting a wide range of cultural, ideological, and religious aspects of a society.

Structured Abstract: "What indeed is good art?", is an important question that needs to be considered deeply. Art means so many things. It is not just something delightful, but it also shows pain and sorrow. It does not always present beauty, it also disturbs. Art helps one to be a better thinker, while literature, as an art form can also be a form of psychological education in itself. Literature can lead to a renewal of meaning while the actual classics remain as a constant within these movements. Both art and literature do not only belong to sophisticated high cultures, rather they are for all humankind to cultivate a wider cultural background. Individual methods, causes, effects, reasons and reasoning, mentalities, perceptions and perspectives constantly change over time while art and literature illuminate the vision of the people of that time.

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One of the concerns of this paper is to display that canon is not an outdated term. Today, people find themselves living in strange times. Both human being and nature are in a serious state of flux. From climate to geopolitical order, everything appears to be either changing or failing. They are focused mostly on dealing with consuming or gaining power. There is a new cultural paradigm and within this new cultural reality, people feel lonelier and less safe. They have lost their ability to imagine a better life. In this respect, the canon can help people to clarify their quest to comprehend anew their humanistic aspect and find appropriate examples of them.

Canonizing has led to a great deal of argument, but this theoretical study explores the role of the canons in a society, and this role has been widely debated. Both the literary canon and art have been studied by many scholars and researchers through the years, two most well-known names Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy (1828-1910) and Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve (1804-1869) will be the focus of this paper. The literary canon is dynamic and it reveals its own nature and function. It has direct relations with culture and history because it is constructed within them. The formation of the literary canon is not a product of the most powerful, but it serves the majority with its huge cultural background and narrative traditions which are revisited over the years. This paper aims to present human emotions within the context of two scholars, Sainte-Beuve and Tolstoy. An analysis of their works reveals the evolutionary aspects of the literary canon. The whole apparatus of social psychology- thoughts, beliefs, intentions and the behaviour of others- affects our state of mind and our feelings but cannot dominate them if we look deeply into art and follow the path of the classics. This self-inquiry allows us to frame our own definitions of emotions and artistic taste.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates two different opinions regarding art and the classics from two major sources. The analysis has tried to be made holistically, placing importance to the 19th century literary critics and authors, Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve and Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy. Their opinions lead to an understanding that art and classics represent the memories of a nation. They are the communicative tools of people of the past and people of the present and they break down the boundaries between people within similar or differing cultures. They serve as unifying elements; however, they are also independent because they are the products of the human mind. People will have a moment of enlightenment when they suddenly understand that we all have to do it together. There is no difference or distance between us. All that has generated been appreciated for its beauty and emotional power and has also been thought-provoking.

An examination also reveals similarities as well as differences between their approaches to classical arts and works. To Leo Tolstoy, the educative function of art helps individual and the historical developments of different countries within different contexts. To Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve, a writer or a critic should enrich or cultivate literature and public taste. Obviously, the different periods and their social and political situations need to be observed before determining and fixing opinions regarding the past and its art, canon and writers. Art is rooted in nature and extends it outwards to influence the human emotions and mind. Art is not competing with nature, culture or science. Humans have great potential to create illuminating pieces of art and this shared knowledge, which is full of great works, forms the canon that helps people understand their inner and outer self. Canon, including literature and art history, incorporates the aesthetic value of the cultural practices and it establishes the common culture of world history. Canon is not just a collection of valued pieces. Universal value, individual talent and achievement are all represented in canon. The canon with its literary genres emerges as the basic means of expression both of antique and modern life.

Keywords: language and literature, literary studies, art, canon, classics, Sainte-Beuve, Tolstoy.

Öz: Sanat ve klasikler, doğru ve etik kaygılar oluşturmamıza yardımcı olmak için daha hassas ve derin duygular sunarak bizlere hem bireysel hem de toplu olarak hizmet ederler. Sanat ve kanon, zihinleri ve tutumları etkileyen hassas güçlerdir. Bu güçler değişiklikleri etkiler ve yeni ufuklar keşfederken bizlere öncülük ederler. Onların sayesinde yeni algılar oluşturulur. Edebiyat kanonu, bir ulusun sosyal yapısını ve edebi geleneğini anlamamıza yardımcı olur. Bu makale, bu iki terimin insanlık tarihinin nasıl birer parçası olduklarına odaklanır ve klasikler ile birlikte sanatla ilgili usta edebi figürlerin fikirleri ışığında insanların yaşamları üzerindeki potansiyel etkilerini araştırır. Dönemlerinin ve ülkelerinin etkili figürleri olan söz konusu eleştirmenler, Fransız hümanist Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve ve Rus edebiyat yazarı Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy'dur. Bu makale, karşılaştırmalı bir yaklaşım kullanarak edebi kanon kavramını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Edebi kanon ile ilgili olan Sainte-Beuve'nin tanınmış eseri "Klasik nedir?" ve Leo Tolstoy'un "Sanat Nedir?" adlı makaleleri sanat eserlerinin değerlendirilme ve evrim sürecindeki

ideolojik düşünceleri sergiler. Metodoloji, iki farklı kültürel eserin ve bunların manevi ilişkilerinin ve etkilerinin metinsel analizini içerir. Her iki çalışma da kanon oluşumundaki anahtarları bulurken gerçek yaşam geleneğine odaklanır ve tanımladıkları şeyin evrenselliğinin örnekleri olurlar. Sonuç olarak, Antik çağdan günümüze, kanon pratiktir çünkü insanlara verimli hayatlar inşa etmeye katkıda bulunabilecek eserleri seçmede rehberlik eder. Kanon ayrıca bir toplumun çok çeşitli kültürel, ideolojik ve dini yönlerini yansıtmada önemli bir role sahiptir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: dil ve edebiyat, edebi çalışmalar, sanat, kanon, klasikler, Sainte-Beuve, Tolstoy.

Introduction

Much attention to the formation of literary canon has been given within the field of literary production. The notion of canon has examined in so many different contents either being an ideological or an aesthetic quality. Its history and forming process, its representations, old and modern productions as well as its structural, semantic, contextual, psychological, and cultural elements have been the concerns of several literary scholars. Heinzkill (1990) deals with what constitutes the literary canon and its formation, Juvan (2004) studies the instruments, activities, and strategies of canon in a culture. Price (2009) examines the newly emerged canon in the digital age. Each nation studied its own canon formation. As well as British and American literary canons, German literary system (Rusch, 1999), Chinese canon (Ning, 2004), American literary reconstruction (Joyce, 1987), Thai literary canon (Chaloemtiarana, 2009) and many other national canons from all over the world have been examined in years. This paper goes back in time and pay attention to valuable ideas of French and Russian scholars, namely Sainte Beuve and Tolstoy about art and canon. The concept of a canonised literature is important because it moralises us, improves societies, and it is still functioning.

Saint-Beuve and Tolstoy's essays "*What is a classic?*" and "*What is Art?*" respectively are noteworthy contributions to literary criticism with their rational and earthly morality. Sincerity is important for them, and that is why they criticize fake and imitative art which has no morality in the act itself. Only truth can provide the humanitarian values and moral wisdom. Moreover, for them literary taste is gained by cultural productions and affect world views. These cultural memories reflect the texture of society and reason and results of the prior events. They also have moralistic purpose that indicates the values of a particular group but not controlled by its political power. These two essays show that for historical awareness and deep understanding, humanity needs art and classics.

Goethe states that (Eckermann, 1964: 157), "Ancient works are classical not because they are old, but because they are powerful, fresh, and healthy." A literary work to Taine (1871: 1) is like "a transcript of contemporary manners, a type of a certain kind of mind." It is not just the product of a brain that imagines. Through these works, we can go back in time and trace the feelings and thought of humans. For years literary studies paved the way to seeing the transformation of history.

Canon from antiquity was created with the purpose of social concern to generate a deep understanding of all artistic works of people and nations. It has both religious meanings and modern perspectives. It classifies the works of art and literature and also functions as a guide for people in selecting the best pieces and in recognizing the structure of a social group. Canon reflects the ideologies and cultural, religious and social beliefs and practices of specific groups of people from different periods in history. Through this canonical identification, contemporary individuals gain an understanding of the various ideologies, structures, relations, lifestyles, common knowledge and shared customs and beliefs that belong to both distant people and times. Both the artistic and textual value of this art and literature are significant in showing the literary tradition and inheritance of world history.

Canon as a term Pollock explains (1999) comes from the Greek *kanon* meaning “rule” and “standard” and has religious connotations. Going back to the seventeenth century, clashes between classes were reflected in works of canon as means to attain power. That is why canon can be considered the “backbone of a cultural and political identity.” Later it started to refer to the literary works of art after many of the established universities and were secularized (Pollock, 1999: 3). To Richard Terry (2001: 58) canon formation comes from the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, but during the post-restoration period the importance given to literary past increased. According to Harold Bloom (1994: 17-20) canon, which is originally a religious word, is not a set of books but “literary Art Memory” and even if it works unconsciously, it is still art. The Western canon serves everyone, it is for us and for the others to have a chance to encounter the “aesthetic dignity” that is the “authentic aesthetic power and the authority” so described by Baudelaire and later on by Erich Auerbach (Bloom, 1994: 36). Overall, literature is a sensitive tool for measuring the variations of a society and understanding its soul (Taine, 1871: 20). What work of literature qualifies as a classic has been one of the major concerns of the critics and authors for years. Each nation tries to find its own classical authors in order to set these writers’ works among the great works of art.

Applications regarding canon are enough for one-sided claims about being political and ideological. “The Western literary canon is either pedagogically useful or socially oppressive, a source of enlightenment or of deception, a fetish disguising political interests or an instrument of democratic humanism” (Kolbas, 2001: 140). For all the diverse claims that have been made about the canon, the usefulness of canon is preferable because art and literature are places where a person can encounter several different elements such as values, historical and cultural elements and the psychological revelations of other individuals. As they represent history within their national contexts and provide a national taste, individuals self-invest through reading the canon and through being captured by works of art. Art and the canon represent the common needs, desires, reasons and necessities of this world.

Saint-Beuve and Conscious Mind

Compagnon (1995:1190-1191) states that “classicism” is a more recent term than “classique”, which was used for “Romantisme” in the 19th century. However, “classique” appeared in the 17th century and was an authoritative model to be imitated. In the 18th century, it was the antiquity remaining from Greek and Latin culture. Later in the 19th century, it was used as an antonym of “romantique” in German representing the outstanding French writers of the 17th century. Hardison (1962: 63) points out that Charles-Augustin Saint-Beuve (1804-1869), a romanticist at first and who later experienced the impressionist period, became a humanist fond of classicism. This 19th century French critic is considered a European “arbitrator of literature”. He gave importance to logic and literary taste- which for him was a “matter of instinct” and should be enriched by the reading of European cultural traditions. Saint-Beuve thought that literary criticism must create “a natural history of souls” which is why he is considered the founder of psychological criticism. Like Saint-Beuve, Delbanco (1997: ix) prefers a critic who “celebrates books as sources of aesthetic delight” rather than a critic who explores a literary work’s political perspectives. Using biographical details of individuals having different psychological aspects as the basis of a “future science of morals” was Saint-Beuve’s purpose (Kaltenbrunner, 2010: 74). By looking at the psychological depth of the individual, Saint-Beuve sees culture and society not just as mere materials but as entities that hold ideas, values and morals. Together with its people, this perception forms the mental process of that culture. Culture and its products reflect the history of mankind. Literature provides engagement through its contexts which link people of today to the past and consequently they begin to realize that they possess shared social, cultural and political elements. This consciousness of society becomes their history, their common sense and their instinct.

In his well-known essay “*What is a Classic?*” (1850), Sainte-Beuve reminds that the ancient real classics were first those of the Greeks who had no previous examples and then came the Romans. The word “classic”- in its simplest form- meant “an old author canonised by admiration, and an authority in his particular style” in the beginning. Later, “classicus” was used for distinctive writers belonging to the upper class. Even in those times, there was some form of classification in letters. However, for Sainte-Beuve, the Middle Ages did not possess proportion and its works were tasteless and deserved no particular ranking. Ovid was placed above the greatest ancient Greek epic poet Homer. Another example is ranking the Roman philosopher Boetius equal to Plato. Nevertheless, the 15th and 16th centuries saw the revival of learning and there was a re-ordering in the ranking of classical works. With the birth of modern literature, classic Italian and Spanish authors appeared in the Middle Ages such as the Italian poet Dante with his “*Divine Comedy*”. At the same time, France was trying to identify its own classical authors. There were some talented writers, but insufficient in number. The ages named after Louis XIV and Queen Anne were classical in the sense that an atmosphere of welcome to talented writers was created (Sainte-Beuve, 2008: 1-2).

To Sainte-Beuve (2008: 8), there is no “receipt” for creating a classic and the belief that “imitating certain qualities of purity, moderation, accuracy, and elegance” is like believing that the 17th century playwright Racine’s son will also have a place among the classical authors by imitation- both merely a role and the worst form of poetry. Sainte-Beuve (2008: 9) reminds one of Madame de Sévigné’s expression “evanescent colour” for those writers who will not have a place in the continuum of the canon. A classical author was defined by The First Dictionary of the Academy (1694) as “a much –approved ancient writer, who is an authority as regards the subject he treats” and then in another definition in 1835, “who have become models in any language whatever” was a narrower definition. It was now time to dispense with strict rules and free the mind (Sainte-Beuve, 2008: 3). If an artist wants to be remembered and possess a unique style, a colour, and a taste but not a dull role, Sainte-Beuve (2008) defines the path as:

an author who has enriched the human mind, increased its treasure, and caused it to advance a step; who has discovered some moral and not equivocal truth, or revealed some eternal passion in that heart where all seemed known and discovered; who has expressed his thought, observation, or invention, in no matter what form, only provided it be broad and great, refined and sensible, sane and beautiful in itself; who has spoken to all in his own peculiar style, a style which is found to be also that of the whole world, a style new without neologism, new and old, easily contemporary with all time. (Sainte-Beuve, 2008: 4)

This definition of classics of Sainte-Beuve’s is “the genuine modernity” with its long, complex clauses that “culminates in a double asyndeton in order to convey the multiple and paradoxical aspects of the Notion” and has “humanistic and universalistic persuasion” (Compagnon, 1995: 1190). With his definition, it is understood that to Sainte-Beuve, authors are in charge of cultivating society and liberating the people’s mind. Authors are responsible for presenting the truth and moralistic values of the culture that they observe and study. It is their duty to reveal the truth and values to their societies. They have to form a shared culture with certain values. Their unique style can be reached by each and every individual- not only in their own time- but also by future generations. They have to be timeless and address the whole of humanity. This is how they become classical authors.

When their personal journeys end with several experiences, people feel the joy of their maturity and form their own “taste” in life. People will take pleasure in their maturity with “old wine, old books, old friends” and that is when the word “classic” takes on its true meaning. The mature antique minds never fail or deceive us. With the sense of “serenity and amenity”, people will be united with the human race (Sainte-Beuve, 2008: 12). According to Sainte-Beuve (2008),

those oldest wise men and poets put human morality into maxims. From the ancient writers people obtain taste, imagination, and knowledge. So, readers, should decide upon their poetic taste. They have to make their choices, read and understand the ancient authors, and penetrate and admire them. Then, they endeavour to be themselves without imitating others. People can realize their own strength and weakness while speaking their own language under the conditions of that age. They should remember those mortals who have been honoured and what they have to offer people. The question “*What is a Classic?*” is a “delicate” one that differs according to “times and seasons” (Sainte-Beuve, 2008: 1). Meanings can change and so do perceptions in accordance with social, political, and cultural changes. Inevitably, this affects world literature.

Pollock (1999: 10) thinks that the nature of the canon embraces tradition. According to Williams (1977: 115), the “dominant and hegemonic pressures and limits” are verbalized through tradition and it is not only the remaining of the past, but also “an intentionally shaping of a version of past and a preshaped present, which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural definition and identification”. Similarly, a classic is a product of a mature civilization, mature language and literature and “mature mind” that would give “universality”. A mature literature reflects its society and it has its own history and language behind it with all its potentials and limitations (Eliot, 1944: 10-11). Eliot (2011) wants us to look at the individualistic aspects of the work produced by a poet - not to look on the poet with prejudice. In these works, one could find the best aspects and also encounter dead ancestors. However, this could only happen in the mature period of a poet not during “the impressionable period of adolescence”. In his outstanding work *Tradition and Individual Talent* (1919) he states, “Every nation, every race, has not only its own creative, but its own critical turn of mind” (Eliot, 2011: 85). To Eliot (2011), tradition is very important and cannot be “inherited”. It requires great effort and “historical sense” with “perception” of the past as well as the present. This sensitivity forces people to write so that writers and hearers both feel the period in their “bones” while literature from Homer to the present ushers in “a simultaneous order”. This “timeless” and “temporal” historical sense produces traditional writers who simultaneously become aware of their accurate place in time and in “contemporaneity”. As well as being a historic principle, it is also an aesthetic one. Being coherent is not “one-sided”, the newly created piece of art affects previous art pieces and modifies those existing pieces which already have “an ideal order”. This order was not incomplete before the arrival of the new pieces, however, for the maintenance of continuity, this order needs to undergo slight changes. Artists or poets cannot complete their meaning on their own and “the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past” (Eliot, 2011: 85-86). Eliot’s idea confirms his concept of universality. The new art pieces display new possibilities and potentials; tradition and history in return advocate them. So, all the mature minds come together, awaken and are aroused over and over again.

As one of Eliot’s ancestors, Augustin had an idea of what being a classic implies “something that has continuance and consistence and which produces unity and tradition, fashions, and transmits itself, and endures” (Sainte-Beuve, 2008: 2). Artists, literature and art all need to be aware of their culture and tradition. They should have an historical awareness in order to observe the past with its culture and cultural works to have new trends and new directions to enrich their history, art and letters. In this way, all will be orderly and united and divisions will not be able to destroy this unity. Art is an eternal creation.

In his *The Age of the World Pictures* (2002), while presenting the essentials of modernity, science and machine technology were considered as a “growth”. Art is also on the list as the third phenomenon. Art becomes the “purview of aesthetics”, an “object of experience”, and in general “the expression of human life”. Human acts can be perceived as culture which itself is the “realization of the highest values through the care and cultivation of man’s highest goods” (Heidegger, 2002: 57). “Cognition cannot proceed without memory, and the canon is the true art of memory, the authentic foundation for cultural thinking” and individuals as well as the individual

mind are influential in creating unity because they form the culture with its traditions. So, canon is the “image of the individual thinking” (Bloom, 1994: 35). Individuals maintain continuity and form memory by thinking and producing. Individual thought is in fact the aesthetic cultural history that forms art and the classics.

Heidegger (2002: 1) exemplifies the German proverb “the work praises the master” and values both the work and the artist. They are the origins of each other. In *The Origin of the Work of Art*, he states that art preserves the truth because it is historical and embraces several different things while changing, fading and offering other changes. Truth arises in art and art is the origin (Heidegger, 2002: 19). “To allow something to arise, to bring something into being from out of the essential source in the founding leap [*Sprung*] is what is meant by the word “origin [*Ursprung*]” (Heidegger, 2002: 49). To this point, Heidegger has associated art with beauty instead of truth. Now, truth stands for itself. In art, even “a pair of peasant shoes” finds “its being” and this is the “essential nature of art” to him, “the setting-itself-to-work of the truth of beings” (Heidegger, 2002: 16). Art is the becoming conscious of the innate creativity and beauty of all reality. In looking back at art, one is amazed by its extent and continuity.

Tolstoy’s Literary Presence

Leo Tolstoy, one of the greatest authors of the nineteenth century, defines what good art is and its purpose in his work “*What is Art?*” (1897). In this work, he claims that good art is surrounded by religious and moral values, and he criticizes “counterfeit art” which has no morality in it and adds that it stands only for pleasure. Tolstoy believes that art is universal and does not belong to a special group of the society, therefore he declares that the best works of art express religious feelings in order to unify mankind and bring peace. In the quotation below, it can be seen that he believes religious perception is the key point in human life and that it brings harmony and understanding to society:

The religious perception of our time-which consists in acknowledging that the aim of life (both collective and individual) is the union of mankind-is already so sufficiently distinct that people have now only to reject the false theory of beauty according to which enjoyment is considered to be the purpose of art, and religious perception will naturally take its place as the guide of the art of our time. (Hardison, 1962: 136-137)

Good art then, depicts the religious perception of the society one lives in. While Tolstoy is criticizing the art of his time, he likens art to a prostitute because of its deficiency in moral values. He states his belief in his expressions, “real art, like the wife of an affectionate husband, needs no ornaments. But counterfeit art, like a prostitute, must always be decked out” (Hardison, 1962: 137). The author’s strong feelings towards the importance of moral and social values in a society are seen again. His emphasis on the importance of religious and moral values in real art can also be clearly seen in the quotation below; and he harshly criticizes “counterfeit art” which is lacking all these virtues and spiritual values:

The consequence of true art is the introduction of a new feeling into the intercourse of life, as the consequence of a wife’s love is the birth of a new man into life. The consequences of counterfeit art are the perversion of man, pleasure which never satisfies, and the weakening of man’s spiritual strength. And this is what people of our day and of our circle should understand, in order to avoid the filthy torrent of depraved and prostituted art with which we are deluged. (Hardison, 1962: 137-138)

Tolstoy defines art as “one of the conditions of human life” and he believes that art cannot be a source of pleasure. He claims that art is a means of communication between people. To him, “every work of art causes the receiver to enter into a certain kind of relationship both with him who produced, or is producing, the art, and with all those who, simultaneously, previously, or subsequently, receive the same artistic impression” (Hardison, 1962: 128-129). All the feelings that

the artist transmits to the others is art for Tolstoy. On the other hand, he claims that art is not a description of beauty, or pleasure; but art is there to influence society and join people together with the same feelings of human prosperity as is clearly seen in his expressions, "...it is a means of union among men, joining them together in the same feelings, and indispensable for the life and progress toward well-being of individuals and of humanity" (Hardison, 1962: 128-130). Tolstoy had his own state of humanitarian values and moral wisdom. To him, wisdom, morality and all religions aim at uniting people in love. After birth, society begins to influence the individual with its practices, habits, customs and of course with religion. A child accepts all that without questioning. However, the "will-power" of an individual will start to investigate later (Redfearn, 1992: 8). Tolstoy's works mainly focus on this moral change of the individual which is the "biblical *metanoia*" meaning "change of mind" or "change in the inner man" (Redfearn, 1992: 13). It is easy to detect the emphasis on moral principles in Tolstoy's writings.

There are internal and external tests that Tolstoy applied concerning art. In the internal test, he questioned the relationship of art and morality; the subject matter and the form of art, the real art and its counterfeit. In this respect, he thinks that art and morality are two different things, and as long as it is sincere, art is contagious, which is a good quality of true art. With his external test, he looks for the "refined" and "universal" art and whether the art is for the upper class or everyone. Upper class art was only for pleasure and "incomprehensible" for the ordinary man. So upper class art and universal art were separated. However, Tolstoy insists that all great pieces of art are "accessible" and "comprehensible" to the masses and they trigger basic feelings of ordinary lives. This only makes us a part of the human race (Simmons, 1949: 593-594).

Tolstoy writes about the decadence of art-referring to the time of the Renaissance. He criticizes the upper class because of their proud attitude towards art. He believes that art does not belong to them only, it belongs to all members of society. He also criticizes the compulsive entering of sexual element to art in his lines "A performance is not a performance unless, under some pretense, women appear with naked busts and limbs" (Hardison, 1962: 131). He harshly criticizes art for not distinguishing between relevant or irrelevant nakedness. He gives the names of artists such as Boccaccio and Marcel Prevost and criticizes them for including sexual love in their works. He also criticizes recent French literature for the same reasons. It seems that he accuses the artists of making art into a mere object of entertainment for society and for producing works which are lacking in religious and moral values, as well as sincerity and simplicity.

To Tolstoy, "the infectiousness of art" distinguishes real art from counterfeit art, "there is one indubitable indication distinguishing real art from its counterfeit, namely, the infectiousness of art" (Hardison, 1962: 134). He states as follows;

If a man, without exercising effort and without altering his standpoint on reading, hearing, or seeing another man's work, experiences a mental condition which unites him with that man and with other people who also partake of that work of art, then the object evoking that condition is a work of art. (Hardison, 1962: 134)

To him, it is the ability of the artist to transmit his feelings to the audience that makes for real art. He points out that uniting people with these feelings is the strongest force of art. However, if there is no such influence on people, he claims that it is not real art then. Tolstoy believes that "the stronger the infection, the better is the art as art" (Hardison, 1962: 135). To him, three things determine the degree of the infectiousness of art; the individuality and clearness of the feelings transmitted and the sincerity of the artist. The more individual the feelings that are transmitted, the more strongly does the receiver feel the art. If the feelings are clear, then they can be transmitted clearly. Tolstoy puts emphasis on the importance of the sincerity of the artist. If the artist is infected by his own work of art, then he infects the audience as well. He criticizes many artists and their works for being trivial and nonsensical productions. He also blames the upper class for the decadence of art and literature. He believes art is universal and belongs to all mankind. It is meant

for the goodness of everyone. Eagleton's (2008) consideration reveals an understanding of the literary canon very well as it can be understood from the quotation below;

... any body of theory concerned with human meaning, value, language, feeling, and experience will inevitably engage with broader, deeper beliefs about the nature of human individuals and societies, problems of power and sexuality, interpretations about past history, versions of the present and hopes for the future. (Eagleton, 2008: 170)

The entering of ideology into a literary text happens through the feeling of individuals and it is in historical continuity. This relationship between an individual and the texture of society reflects real human nature, social formation, productions and literary tradition of a period. It is inevitable to overlook ideological aspects of literary works because preserving the canonical works provide a deep understanding of the cultural values and standards as well as the narrative tradition.

Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy insists on sincerity, praises folk literature, and believes in human potential. To him, art is only valuable if it assists men to find the fulfillment in Christianity (Hardison, 1962: 128). He also says that art and science are closely related to each other and cannot function without this. He continues by saying that art transfers the truth that science introduces to human beings. The feelings carried by art or knowledge carried by science is "determined for people by the religious consciousness of the given time and society" which is the "general understanding" of that time and society (Tolstoy, 1995: 265). To maintain its purpose, art needs to find its own way. Art is not only to be considered as a kind of entertainment, but it is the feeling and the result of the "reasonable consciousness" of individuals. Moreover, the "common religious consciousness" of men is the common "well-being" of the society. Art should function at this point and reflect this consciousness as feelings with the guidance of religion and help of science (Tolstoy, 1995: 276-277). Apart from his outstanding literary works, Tolstoy made great social observations with practical usages. He could see the flaws of a society which shows the "catastrophes of the twentieth century" (Redfearn, 1992: 1).

Canon: sincere, dynamic, and involved

This research reveals two similar viewpoints on art and the classics from two prominent sources. The viewpoints lead to the conclusion that art and classics symbolize a nation's memory. A comparison of their attitudes to classical arts and works reveals that they develop a broader cultural context and a more extensive social foundation. The purpose of comparing Sainte-Beuve and Tolstoy is to create a dialogue between past and present because they have the potential to reshape each other. Even under the influence of modern times, it is possible to find meaning and basic sincerity through art and literature. According to Leo Tolstoy and Sainte-Beuve, sincerity, ethical concerns, truth, and value should be the criteria for the authors, critics, and readers. They dismiss art as a mere source of amusement and entertainment. Sincerity is vital to them, which is why they condemn fake and imitated art that lacks morality. Truth is the ideal source of moral wisdom. Moreover, the value of literary works ought not to be diminished to that of an ideological hegemony since art unites people for the greater good of humanity. The widely debated term 'literary canon', which includes literature and art history, contains the aesthetic worth of cultural practices, creates historical and sociological contexts, and establishes common culture. Since it is built inside them, canon has direct ties to culture and history. The literary canon is not a creation of the rich or just ideological construction, it serves the majority by providing a vast cultural history and narrative patterns that are revisited over time.

Conclusion

It is not possible to imagine a World without art and literature. Art and classics are influential elements in forming the canon and its social and cultural importance. As art and the canon circulate, they meld the past and present into a historical unity. The products of ancient writers add charm to one's life now while the products of this current new world will become

cherished items in the future. Sainte-Beuve's and Tolstoy's distinctions between real and counterfeit art is so enlightening that it may help society to understand today's contemporary art as well as the art of the past as long as they provide the truth with moralistic aspects. For both writers, a classic is not a part or component of a specific class or tradition, it is part of human nature, history, and the enriched history of the human race. They remind their readers of their rich heritage of earlier literature since there is a newly emerged general public and mass media audience as well. Sainte-Beuve thinks that the ancient works should be studied rationally rather than simply being taken for granted. Likewise, Tolstoy rejects art as an object of entertainment and a mere source of pleasure. He believes that art transmits feelings, thus uniting people for the well-being of mankind. He states that if artists lose their religious and moral values, they produce only counterfeit art for mere pleasure derived from an excess of pride and sexual desire. These writers played a central part in the process of building national literacy and their specific works of literature simply reflect the inner workings of the literary canon.

Literature is still part of daily life and search for meaning occurs through the canon. Art and classics have effects upon the conscious mind as they carry information. The information provided by the canons will enable the reader to evaluate the historical and social criticism for himself. Since there are canons, the information is not scattered. The readers will make their own critical climate in their minds. The two inspirations; art and classics, illuminate human mind and empower the mental states of human awareness. Feelings are transformed into opinions and this is the basis and the power of literary evolution. The concept of canon is derived from human needs and concerns. There are various literary canons derived from different cultural and ideological backgrounds but they all share the same standpoint in the evolution of the literary canon.

In conclusion, this paper has brought two examples of world literature to the foreground with the intentions of comparing the relations between their ideas that focus on how literary texts reflect the social practices in culture. As in antiquity, the canon still classifies works of art and literature in modern times. Canon guides people in making a choice of artistic works from the limitless pieces of artwork and also reflects the social structure of a society within these chosen works. Canon does not belong to a basic one-sided perspective. A piece of work needs to be cultivated by the dynamics of universal human nature which is also culturally diverse. This is a way to hear other voices, understand other experiences and expand universality. Since the times are changing radically these days, expanding the canon with relevant works of art and literature will help the new and coming generations as the previous pieces of art still do. The expansion of canon will provide a new way of looking at and a new way of seeing for modern people to evaluate the life issues happening around them. There are still voices to be heard, stories to be told and listened to. Canon is a compass for individuals and cultural progression. A classic is always contemporary.

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