

Title: Frills and Perils of Fashion: Politics and Culture of Eighteenth-Century Russian Court Through the Eyes of La Mode
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In *Perepiska Mody* [*La Mode's Correspondence*] (1791), Nikolai Strakhov creates a model of the royal court and society through metaphoric transfer of their laws onto those of fashion. In this paper, I will demonstrate how Strakhov uses references to fashion to reproduce social and cultural structure of eighteenth-century society, to show its social emulation and commodification. More importantly, the writer employs fashion as a cultural mnemonic device to represent and parody century-long cultural clashes still pertinent at the end of the century, and expresses political messages about Russia, France, and Poland through the discourse between la mode, objects of material culture and cultural concepts.

The sartorial discourse created by Strakhov is encoded in the Aesopian language. The writer suggests that fashion and clothes can be read as dangerous texts due to their political and historical associations, in certain ways anticipating Tsar Paul's vestimentary censorship. Strakhov's travestied history of apparel and other cultural artifacts (with their rises and downfalls, with la mode exercising its power over clothes and human subjects, with censorial restrictions affecting literary texts and sartorial styles) serves as an encyclopedia of culture at the turn of the century.

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