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Leo Tolstoy's Fyodor Dolokhov: Between a Literary Image and a True Fact

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The article focuses on the methods of image creation of Fyodor Dolokhov, one of Leo Tolstoy's strangest and ambiguous characters. Besides the relations between this image and three prototypes well known in philology (Fyodor Tolstoy-American, Rufin Dorokhov, Alexander Figner) there is a significant connection between Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dolokhov. The latter reveals itself in the author's attention to this character in his diary and many similar features (which Tolstoy wanted to restrain in himself to become a better person).

Keywords: Tolstoy, Dolokhov, prototypes, diary, autobiographical character.

Introduction

The image of Fyodor Dolokhov, a character of "War and Peace" epic novel, stand out in the text. It doesn't only dissociate itself from other characters regarding the point of behaviour. It neither objectively fits in with characterological classifications, peculiar for the researches of Tolstoy (the image doesn't fit the dichotomy of main and background characters), nor complies with the novel's typical chronotopos such as family, estate ones, happiness "hidden in plain view" (Morson, 1987). This peculiar distance presupposes some reasons and conditions which can be easier understood if the sources of the image are taken into account.

Theoretical prerequisites

The researchers have outlined and thoroughly portrayed a circle of Dolokhov's prototypes.

Fyodor Tolstoy-American, a writer's relative, is considered to be the main prototype (this historic personality is analyzed in T.N. Arkhangelskaya's works (Arkhangelskaya, 2010)). The biographies of A.S. Figner, a partisan, and R.I. Dorokhov, Pushkin's and Lermontov's contemporary, considerably influenced the image of Tolstoy's character (the fact is admitted by B. Kandiev, in particular (Kandiev, 1967)). R.I. Dorokhov is the author of "Voennaia zhizn' generala-leitenanta Dorokhova" ("Lieutenant-general Dorokhov's military life") biographic text, devoted to his father, I.S. Dorokhov, whose features could also influence Fyodor Dolokhov's image (motifs of the manuscript are similar to Dolokhov's story in "Peace and War"). Being Dolokhov's probable prototypes, the Dorokhovs (a father and a son) represent the connection between the image and Tolstoy's early narrative "Dva gusara" ("Two

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hussars") with such characters as the Turbins, a father and a son.

The images of a Turbin father and Yashvin ("Anna Karenina") also go back to F.I. Tolstoy-American's documentarily fixed features. "Yashvin, a gambler and a rake, a man not merely without moral principles, but of immoral principles <...> Vronsky liked him both for his exceptional physical strength, which he showed for the most part by being able to drink like a fish, and do without sleep without being in the slightest degree affected by it; and for his great strength of character which he displayed towards chiefs and friends, provoking fear and respect to himself" (Tolstoy 1928-1958, Vol. 18, 186).

"War and Peace" describes Dolokhov the following way: "Dolokhov could play all games and nearly always won. However much he drank, he never lost his clear-headedness" (Tolstoy 1928-1958, Vol. 9, 39). Fyodor Turbin's appearance is similar to that of Fyodor Dolokhov's. Turbin was "not tall but perfectly built. His clear blue and extremely sparkling eyes and rather long, curling dark brown hair gave his beauty a remarkable character" (Tolstoy 1928-1958, Vol. 3, 157). As for Dolokhov, he was "of medium height" (Tolstoy 1928-1958, Vol. 9, 38), with a slim figure (Tolstoy 1928-1958, Vol. 9, 144), huge, combed high bush of curly hair (Tolstoy 1928-1958, Vol. 10, 325), blue eyes, repeatedly characterized as "clear" in the text. In "Dva gusara" ("Two hussars") it is said about a Turbin father: "Who abducted Migunova? He. It was he who killed Sablin. It was he who dropped Matnev out of the window by his legs. It was he who won three hundred thousand rubles from Prince Nestorov. He is a regular dare-devil, you know: a gambler, a duelist, a seducer, but a jewel of a hussar – a real jewel" (Tolstoy 1928-1958, Vol. 3, 147). The same can be said about Dolokhov. P. Gromov in his "O stile L'va Tolstogo. 'Dialektika dushi'

v 'Voine i mire'" ("On Leo Tolstoy's style. 'Dialectics of soul' in 'War and Peace'") arrives at an interesting conclusion: "A Turbin father can be present there (in "War and Peace" – O.G.) in the role of Dolokhov's equal partner, can even drink a bottle of rum on an open slanting cornice of a window instead of him" (Gromov, 1977, 245). This equivalence of images is very important as it reveals their alliance.

Tolstoy and Dolokhov: relations of attraction and repulsion

Commonness of Turbin's, Dolokhov's and Yashvin's characteristics proves that the images of this "borderline" type (fire-eaters, gamblers, professional soldiers) meant something special (and invariant) in poetics of Tolstoy's works.

Leo Tolstoy's diaries and letters contain motifs and features, bringing the writer and his main characters together. It has become common to compare details in Tolstoy's diaries with Levin's image. Tolstoy himself regarded his childhood, adolescence and youth to be the most important material for the trilogy with the same title. The researcher's reaction is also indicative. He deliberately shortens the "distance" between the author and a character (characters). Thus, Rankur-Lafar'er, a French-American Slavonic scholar, assumes that Pierre and Andrey are probably two poles of Tolstoy's ambiguous attitude towards Russian peasantry and Russian people in general (Rankur-Lafar'er, 2004). It was common for Soviet philology to apply N.G. Chernyshevsky's definition "dialectics of soul" to Leo Tolstoy's creative work (Govorukhina, 2012). To a greater extent it is probably the dialectics of the writer's soul who seemingly split it into myriads of parts, having endowed all the characters with his ideas and traits of character.

O.V. Slivitskaia mentions Dolokhov's special place in the novel. She proves it by K. Leont'ev's neat notice that Tolstoy loves "mean Dolokhov"

as well (Slivitskaia, 2009). S.A. Tolstaia writes to her husband in her letter dated July 29, 1865: "I like Dolokhov very much" (*Tolstaia*, 1936, 58). It should be also emphasized that Dolokhov is mentioned in Tolstoy's diary more often than other characters of the epic novel (the fact serves the evidence how hard the writer worked at this image).

Dolokhov constantly appears near the main characters of the epic novel, setting each of them off and becoming their temporary contextual double. Peculiar relations of "attraction-and-repulsion" are formed between Fyodor Dolokhov and Nikolai Rostov, Andrey Bolkonsky, Pierre Bezukhov. In a case with Nikolai and Pierre the scheme of "friendship-animosity" is activated. It is marked with love triangle twice. The situation with Andrey Bolkonsky is a bit more complicated. The characters never face each other though Andrey as if constantly watches Dolokhov and turns to be extremely conformable with him in his "napoleon" period (Sekirinskii, 2012). A love triangle here is complicated by the parties, though it is definitely absent that becomes clear if the fact that it is Dolokhov who develops the plan of kidnapping of Natasha, Bolkonsky's bride, by Anatoly is taken into account. It should be pointed out that the plot significance of Fyodor Dolokhov's image is proved rather easily: at this character's exclusion from the text of the novel the scene of the story inevitably stops while we can easily imagine the plot of "War and Peace" without such characters as Boris, Berg, and Bilibin, for example.

It is evident that there was something that attracted the writer of "War and Peace" to this ambiguous character.

Fyodor Dolokhov is an ambivalent image. This might be also connected with several prototypes in its basis. He is both in Tolstoy's text: a crafty devil, cold-blooded gambler-scrapper, and a pure angelic soul (Kovtun, 2012).

This ambivalence keeps him in harmony with Tolstoy' judgments about a human. In his novel "Voskresen'e" ("Ressurrection") Leo Tolstoy wrote: "People are like rivers: the water in each of them is the same but each river can be sometimes narrow, or fast, or wide, or slow, or transparent, or muddy, or warm. The same with people. Every person has seeds of all human qualities, and sometimes he displays some of them, other times others..." (Tolstoy, 1928-1958, Vol. 32, 194). As the time ran he himself as well as his views and artistic world also changed greatly. In his letter to A.A. Tolstaia dated October 17-31, 1863 he notes: "Proves it the weakness of character or its force (I sometimes think that both are involved), but I must confess that my view on life, *people*, and *society* is totally different from what I thought last time, when we met" (Tolstoy, 1928-1958, Vol. 61, 23), "I can hardly understand myself a person I was a year ago" (Tolstoy, 1928-1958, Vol. 61, 24).

Young Leo Tolstoy wished "to be colder as far as possible and display no impression" (Tolstoy, 1928-1958, Vol. 46, 40). In "Dolokhov" concept the idea of cold is a key one (his eyes and stare, and the manner of his speech are "cold", even the root of this Russian surname is noticed to be the inversion of the noun "kholod" (cold): cf. two surnames "*Dolokh-ov*"— *"*Kholod-ov*"). "Tolerate no slightest misfortune or biting word without paying them back twice as much," was further written in Tolstoy's diary (Tolstoy, 1928-1958, Vol. 46, 41). Dolokhov's uncompromisingness, his revenge in the form of a card duel to Nikolai Rostov, caused by jealousy, are easily recollected (Anisimova, 2010). Jealousy was always an extremely significant motif for Tolstoy. It is well-known that the tragedies "Anna Karenina" and "The Kreutzer Sonata" are connected with the feeling of jealousy proper. This feeling is also vital in the plot of Tolstoy's early narrative "Family Happiness" (Vasil'ev,

2010). Gambling serves an important interlink between Tolstoy and Dolokhov (when young the writer was obsessed by gambling, he even gambled his house in Yasnaya Polyana once; as for Dolokhov, he constantly wins).

The writer often mentioned “Tolstoyan wildness” as a peculiar family feature. It was most vividly revealed in legendary Tolstoy-American (Dolokhov’s main prototype). This wildness was also peculiar for all the family members to a different extent. In Dolokhov’s image “wildness” strikingly manifests itself both in military episodes and in peaceful ones (burst by his presence though).

Leo Tolstoy made up endless lists of codes of behavior and life not without reason. He did it in order to put this “family wildness” down, to frame it into “*comme il faut*” concept first as it was important for him when a young person, and then into more serious ethic-and-Christian limiting ideas.

One more parallel can be mentioned if the attention is focused on the notes in the writer’s diary about Dolokhov and hunting (the character’s reference to a “bear huntsman at Kostroma”). As for hunting, in early versions of “War and Peace” these are Dolokhov’s descriptions that contain reference to it: “Suddenly it seemed to Dolokhov that it is easy to deal with a rosy officer and his soldier instead of this terrible mysterious mass. He was consumed with this hunter’s feeling of being eager to kill an animal that goes farther than a feeling of danger. Thus he didn’t feel any other excitement but joy <...> His animal was a rosy-cheeked officer” (Tolstoy, 1928-1958, Vol. 13, 401). It’s significant that the symbolism of hunting didn’t disappear afterwards, but these were Russian people who tuned into hunters, while Napoleon turned into a “wounded animal” (Anisimov, 2010).

In Tolstoy’s diaries Dolokhov is always mentioned in connection with hunting: “October,

15. Felt gall, was angry with a hunter. The hunting was bad. Two chapters have been thoroughly thought over. Nothing good comes out of Brykov and Dolokhov. Could have worked more”, “October, 17. Had bad hunting before lunch time. Wasn’t eager to write <...> Got a clear idea of the place of Dolokhov’ shunting”, “October, 20. I’m draining my strength with hunting. Had to reread, rewrite. Things are moving. The scene with Dolokhov is outlined” (Tolstoy, 1928-1958, Vol. 48, 65).

Afterwards Tolstoy will stop hunting, having set the next limiting frame. As for Dolokhov, his image goes far beyond any limits (crossing “the borders” is a constant motif connected with this image). He seems to personify everything the writer tried to crucify.

Conclusion

Absence of attachment to the family and a bad luck in a family life are vividly embodied in the analyzed literary image (Oliver, 2003). Being characteristic to each prototype, they are paradoxical and tremendous. This, probably, explains why Tolstoy forced this “wilderness” out of his life, but, nevertheless, left his large family.

The image of “a natural human”, breaking social conventions by his behaviour, was always close to Tolstoy, a former admirer of Russo (Layton, 1994). Dolokhov is in keeping with this concept of “natural”. But he has nothing to do with Russo’s pacific pattern as he is an “animal”, a “beast” whose natural state of life is a war, “hunting”. The relations of attraction and repulsion always came into existence between a biographical image of Tolstoy’s author’s instance and Dolokhov as an embodiment of symbolic-and-behavioral spheres of “war” and “hunting”.

Outlined and analyzed motif correspondence proves that Dolokhov’s image is to some extent

an autobiographical one. Thus, regarding a biographical dimension of an author's personality, Tolstoy himself can be ranked among Dolokhov's prototypes.

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Федор Долохов Л.Н. Толстого: между литературностью образа и достоверностью факта

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В статье рассматриваются методы создания одного из самых странных и амбивалентных образов в творчестве Л.Н. Толстого – Федора Долохова. Помимо трех хорошо известных в литературоведении прототипов Долохова (Федора Толстого-Американца, Руфина Дорохова, Александра Фигнера) обнаруживается значимая соотнесенность этого героя с самим автором, которую можно подтвердить особым вниманием Толстого к созданию образа Долохова и совпадением ряда характерных черт (которые Толстой хотел в себе подавить, чтобы стать лучшими).

Ключевые слова: Толстой, Долохов, прототипы, дневники, автобиографический персонаж.
