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## FEMALE IMAGES IN THE NOVEL "WAR AND PEACE"

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### ABSTRACT

*In this article, the author conducts a comparative analysis of the main female images of the epic novel "War and Peace", as well as the opposition of the images of Natasha Rostova and Marya Bolkonskaya to the image of Helen Kuragina, as an opposition of two types of families in their conceptual meaning*

**KEYWORDS:** *Female images, princess, estate, secular society, French companion, Napoleon's invasion.*

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### INTRODUCTION

The great Russian writers of the 19th century, creating positive female images, always focused not on the perfect facial features or the beauty of the figure, but on the richness of the inner world of their heroines, which spiritualizes their appearance. Such are, for example, Pushkin's Tatyana Larina or Turgenev's Liza Kalitina. The same artistic principle was used by L.N. Tolstoy. The female characters in the novel "War and Peace" play an important role. They not only determine the behavior of the main characters, but also have an independent meaning. Just like male images, they reveal the author's idea of beauty, good and evil. When portraying his heroines, the writer used the method of opposition. Comparing girls who are completely different in character, upbringing, aspirations and convictions - Natasha Rostova, Marya Bolkonskaya and Helen Kuragina, Tolstoy tried to express the idea that emptiness and pretense is often hidden behind external beauty, and behind visible ugliness - the wealth of the inner world. Natasha Rostova and Maria Bolkonskaya are Tolstoy's favorite heroines with opposite characters. Emotional, charming, full of life and movement, Natasha immediately stands out among the restrained, well-bred girls-nobles. For the first time, she appears in the novel as a thirteen-year-old black-eyed, ugly, but lively girl who, flushed from a fast run, literally bursts into the living room, where adults are having a boring conversation. [1]

Together with Natasha, a fresh breath of life bursts into this decorous world. More than once Tolstoy will emphasize that Natasha was not beautiful. She can be beautiful, or she can be ugly - it all depends on her state of mind. In her soul, the intense work, not accessible to an outsider's eye, does not stop for a second. Natasha's spiritual beauty, her love of life, her thirst for life extend to those close and dear to her: Petya, Sonya, Boris, Nikolai. Prince Andrei Bolkonsky was involuntarily drawn into this world. I could not resist her charm and Boris Drubetskoy, a childhood friend, with whom Natasha was bound by a child's oath. Natasha meets Boris when she is already 16 years old. "He rode with the firm intention to make it clear to her and her family that the childhood relationship between him and Natasha cannot be an obligation either for her or for him." But when he saw her, he lost his head, because he also plunged into her world of joy and kindness. He forgot that he wanted to marry a rich bride, stopped going to Helene, and Natasha "seemed still in love with Boris." In any situation, she is extremely sincere and natural, there is not a shadow of pretense, hypocrisy and coquetry in her. In Natasha, according to Tolstoy, "an internal fire was constantly burning and the reflections of this fire imparted something better to her

appearance than beauty." It is no coincidence that Andrei Bolkonsky and Pierre Bezukhov love Natasha, it is no coincidence that Vasily Denisov falls in love with her. The development of these qualities of the heroine is facilitated by the atmosphere of the Rostovs' house, full of love, respect, patience and mutual understanding. [2]

A different atmosphere reigns in the Bolkonsky estate. Princess Marya was raised by her father, a proud and self-righteous person with a difficult character. It is worth remembering the lessons of mathematics, which he taught not so much as tortured his daughter. Princess Marya inherited his secrecy, restraint in expressing his own feelings and innate nobility. The old prince Bolkonsky is despotic and strict with his daughter, but in his own way he loves her and wishes her well. The image of Princess Marya is particularly attractive. The author constantly reminds of her ugly face, but the reader completely forgets about it in those moments when the best part of her spiritual being manifests itself. In the portrait of Marya Bolkonskaya, extremely laconic, her radiant eyes are remembered, which made the princess's ugly face beautiful in moments of strong spiritual uplift. Marya Bolkonskaya is the owner of a lively mind. A significant contribution to the development of her mental abilities was made by her father, who attached great importance to education. [3]

Natasha Rostova has a slightly different mindset. She does not reflect on events like Marya, seriously and deeply, but with her heart and soul she understands that which another person cannot understand. When asked about the intellectual abilities of Natasha Rostova, Pierre answers perfectly well: she "does not deign to be smart," because she is much higher and more complex than the concepts of intelligence and stupidity. Natasha differs from the seeking, intelligent and educated heroes in that she perceives life without analyzing it, but cognizes it in a holistic and figurative way, like an artistically gifted person. She dances beautifully, delighting those around her, since the plastic language of the dance helps her express her overflowing with life, the joy of merging with her. Natasha has a wonderful voice that charms the audience not only with its beauty and sonority, but also with the strength and sincerity of the feeling with which she is given to singing. When Natasha sings, for her the whole world is in sounds. But if this impulse is interrupted by someone's intrusion, for Natasha it is blasphemy, shock. For example, after an enthusiastic younger brother ran into the room during her singing with the news of the arrival of the mummies, Natasha burst into tears and could not stop for a long time.

One of the main character traits of Natasha is amorousness. At her first adult ball in her life, she entered the hall and felt in love with everyone. It could not be otherwise, because love is the essence of her life. But this concept in Tolstoy has a very broad meaning. It includes not only love for the groom or husband, but also love for parents, family, art, nature, homeland, and life itself. Natasha is keenly aware of the beauty and harmony of nature. The charm of a moonlit night evokes in her a feeling of delight, which literally overwhelms her: "Oh, how lovely! Wake up, Sonya", she said almost with tears in her voice. "After all, such a lovely night has never, never happened."

In contrast to the emotional and lively Natasha, in the meek Princess Marya, humility and restraint are combined with a thirst for simple human happiness. Unable to know the joys of life, Marya finds joy and consolation in religion and communication with God's people. She meekly submits to her eccentric and despotic father, not only out of fear, but also out of a sense of duty to her daughter, who has no moral right to judge her father. At first glance, she seems timid and downtrodden. But in her character there is a hereditary Bolkonian pride, an innate self-esteem, which manifests itself, for example, in her refusal to offer Anatole Kuragin. Despite the desire for quiet family happiness, which this ugly girl deeply conceals in herself, she does not want to become the wife of a handsome socialite at the cost of humiliation and insult to her dignity.

Natasha Rostova is a passionate, impetuous nature who cannot hide her feelings and experiences.

Having fallen in love with Andrei Bolkonsky, she could not think of something else. Separation becomes an unbearable test for her, because she lives every moment and cannot postpone happiness for a certain period. This quality of Natasha's character pushes her to betrayal, which in turn gives rise to a deep sense of guilt and remorse in her. She judges herself too harshly, refusing joys and pleasures, because she considers herself unworthy of happiness.

From the state of painful crisis Natasha is brought out by the news of the threat of the French who have approached Moscow. A common misfortune for the whole country makes the heroine forget about her sufferings and sorrows. As for other positive characters of the novel, for Natasha, the main idea is to save Russia. During these difficult days, her love for people becomes especially strong, her desire to do everything possible to help them. This selfless love of Natasha finds its highest expression in motherhood. But, despite the outward difference, the dissimilarity of the characters Natasha Rostova and Princess Marya have a lot in common. Both Marya Bolkonskaya and Natasha are endowed by the author with a rich spiritual world, an inner beauty, which Pierre Bezukhov and Andrei Bolkonsky loved so much in Natasha, and which Nikolai Rostov admires in his wife. Natasha and Marya give themselves to each of their feelings to the end, be it joy or sadness. Their mental impulses are often selfless and noble. They both think more about others, loved ones and loved ones than about themselves.

For Princess Marya, God throughout her life remained the ideal to which her soul aspired. But Natasha, especially in difficult periods of her life (for example, after the story with Anatol Kuragin), gave herself up to a feeling of admiration for the Almighty. Both of them wanted moral purity, spiritual life, where there would be no place for resentment, anger, envy, injustice, where everything would be sublime and beautiful.

For all the dissimilarity of characters, Marya Bolkonskaya and Natasha Rostova are patriots, pure and honest natures, capable of deep and strong feelings. The best features of Tolstoy's favorite heroines were especially vividly manifested in 1812. Natasha took to heart the disaster that befell Russia with the arrival of Napoleon. She committed a truly patriotic act, forcing her to dump property from the carts and give these carts to the wounded. Count Rostov, proud of his daughter, said: "Eggs ... eggs teach a chicken." With selfless love and courage, striking those around her, Natasha, until the last day, courted Prince Andrew. The firmness of character of the modest and shy Princess Marya was manifested with particular force these days. A French companion invited Princess Bolkonskaya, who was in a difficult situation, to turn to the French for help. Princess Marya considered this proposal an insult to her patriotic feelings, stopped communicating with Mademoiselle Burienne and left the Bogucharovo estate. The human essence of Tolstoy's heroines is defined by the word "femininity". This is Natasha's charm, tenderness, passion, and beautiful, filled with some kind of inner light, the radiant eyes of Marya Bolkonskaya. Both of Tolstoy's favorite heroines find their happiness in the family, taking care of her husband and children. But the writer takes them through serious trials, shocks and mental crises. At the first meeting (when Natasha was the bride of Prince Andrey), they did not understand each other. But having passed the difficult path of disappointments and resentments, Princess Marya and Natasha became related not only in blood, but also in spirit. Fate brought them together by chance, but both of them realized that they were close to each other, and therefore became not just real friends, but spiritual allies with their lasting desire to do good and give others light, beauty and love.

The family life of Marya and Natasha is an ideal marriage, a strong family bond. Both heroines devote themselves to husbands and children, giving all their mental and physical strength to raising children and creating home comfort. Both Natasha (now Bezukhova) and Marya (Rostova) are happy in family life, happy with the happiness of their children and beloved husbands. Tolstoy emphasizes the beauty of his heroines in a new quality for them - a loving wife and tender mother. Natasha Rostova in the finale of the novel is no longer a charming thin and mobile girl, but a mature strong woman, a loving wife and mother. With all her being, she gives herself up to caring

for her husband and children. All her life is focused for her in the health of children, their feeding, growth, education. Their relationship with Pierre is surprisingly harmonious and pure. Natasha's spontaneity and heightened intuition perfectly complement Pierre's intelligent, searching, analyzing nature. Tolstoy writes that Natasha is not particularly versed in her husband's political activities, but she feels and knows the main thing - her kind, fair foundation. Another happy union is the family of Marya Bolkonskaya and Nikolai Rostov. The selfless tender love of Princess Mary for her husband and children creates an atmosphere of spirituality in the family, ennobling Nicholas, who feels the high morality of the world in which his wife lives.

Natasha Rostova and Marya Bolkonskaya are contrasted in the novel by Helen Kuragina. Behind the external brilliance of this heroine is an evil and immoral creature. In front of the readers' eyes, Helen consistently commits several betrayals. Like all representatives of the Kuragin family, she lives according to the invariable law of the fulfillment of personal desires and does not recognize any moral standards. Helene marries Pierre only for the purpose of enrichment. She openly cheats on her husband, not seeing anything shameful and unnatural in this. She doesn't want to have children because family means nothing to her. Death becomes the consequence of her intrigues in the world. The author does not see the future for this heroine.

Helen's coldness and selfishness is contrasted with Natasha's naturalness and fickleness. Helen, unlike Natasha, is not able to feel guilt, condemn herself. In the image of Helen, external beauty and internal emptiness were embodied. More than once in the novel we see her "monotonous", "unchanging smile", more than once the author will turn our attention to the "antique beauty of her body." But not a word is said about Helen's eyes in the novel, although it is known that they are the mirror of the soul. But Tolstoy writes about the eyes of his beloved heroines with great love: for Princess Marya they are "big, deep", "always sad", "more attractive than beauty." Natasha's eyes are "lively", "beautiful", "laughing", "attentive", "kind". Both Natasha and Marya's eyes are a reflection of their inner world. The epilogue of the novel reflects the writer's idea of the real purpose of women. According to Tolstoy, it is inextricably linked with the family, with taking care of children. Women who find themselves outside this sphere either turn into emptiness, or, like Helen Kuragina, become carriers of evil. L.N. Tolstoy [1] does not idealize family life, but shows that it is in the family that all eternal values are for people, without which life loses its meaning. The writer sees the highest vocation and purpose of a woman in motherhood, in raising children, for it is a woman who is the keeper of family foundations, that light and good beginning that leads the world to harmony and beauty.

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