

## THE ROLE OF THE "DIALECTICS OF THE SOUL" IN Y. BONDAREV'S MILITARY PROSE

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**Abstract** – The article reveals the definition of "dialectics of the soul" by Y. V. Bondarev, its role in the representation of the writer's aesthetic attitude to the world. The author substantiates the continuity of Y. V. Bondarev's description of the inner world of a man of the Tolstoy tradition. "Dialectics of the soul" by Y. V. Bondarev's creativity is inseparable from the solution of the problem of moral choice between duty and self-defense, a sense of responsibility and selfishness. Life prepares the hero for a choice, but he is free in his choice. The last step of a person towards good or evil is determined by a sense of duty, personal responsibility for other people. If a person remembers his duty and communication with other people, then he takes a step towards good. If a character makes a choice in the name of the egocentric "I" and breaks with people, then he may not take the last step on the path to good. Duty (an act performed according to the moral law) is not opposed to freedom; on the contrary, it appears to be freedom in the highest degree when a person comes above himself and rises above himself. The choice made in a situation on the verge of life and death reveals the character and moral essence of the character. For the sake of duty, a person is obliged to overcome his natural anxiety for life. A person must feel responsible not only for himself, but also for others, and then he will become stronger than fear and death. Leading the reader through the doubts and hesitations of the hero, the writer proves the freedom of a person's moral choice.

**Key words:** dialectic of the soul, continuity, moral choice, Y. V. Bondarev, psychologism in fiction, aesthetic attitude to the world.

### I. Introduction

The meaning of the "dialectic of the soul" in the works of Y. V. Bondarev, its role in reproducing the aesthetic attitude of the writer to the world is revealed. The continuity of Y. V. Bondarev's depiction of the inner world of a person with the Tolstoy tradition is substantiated. The "dialectics of the soul" in the works of Y. V. Bondarev is inseparable from the solution of the problem of the moral choice between duty and self-preservation, a sense of responsibility and selfishness. Life prepares the hero for a choice, but he is free to choose. The last step of a person towards good or evil is determined by a sense of duty, responsibility to other people.

If a person remembers his duty, his community with other people, then he takes a step towards good. If the hero makes a choice for the sake of the egocentric "I", breaks away from people, then on the path to goodness, the very last step may not be enough for him. Duty - an act performed in accordance with the moral law - is not opposed to freedom; on the contrary, it manifests freedom in the highest sense, when a person overcomes himself, rises above himself. With particular clarity, the character, the moral essence of the hero is revealed by the choice made in a situation on the verge of life and death. In the name of duty, a person must overcome his natural craving for life, a person must feel responsibility not only for himself, but also for others, and then he will become stronger than fear, stronger than death. Leading the reader through the doubts and hesitation experienced by the hero, the writer proves the freedom of a person's moral choice.

### II. Literature review

Since ancient times, aesthetic thought has established moral problems in art. For genuine art, the categories of beauty and morality are inseparable, good is attractive, and evil is repulsive. The soul of a person is complex, good and evil impulses are intertwined in it, prevailing at different moments, depending on both external circumstances and the characteristics of an individual character that is formed throughout a person's life. The complex correlation in human behavior of inner freedom, the influence of the environment,

upbringing, and individual psychological characteristics has always been of interest to art. However, the image of the internal choice in all its complexity and inconsistency, in dynamics, in interaction with external impressions and circumstances did not become possible immediately.

The “dialectics of the soul” as a way of depicting character was first singled out by N. G. Chernyshevsky in 1856. He wrote: “... a feeling that directly arises from a given position or impression, subject to the influence of memories and the power of combinations represented by the imagination, passes into other feelings, again returns to the previous starting point and again and again wanders, changing, along the entire chain of memories; how a thought, born of the first sensation, leads to other thoughts, gets carried away further and further, merges dreams with real sensations, dreams of the future with reflection on the present” (Chernyshevsky, 1981: 34).

The subject of art is man and human life. Consequently, the dialectic of the soul of a literary hero recreates the real dialectic—the organic unity of opposites—in human life. The question should be put like this: what contradiction in a person's life is revealed precisely by the dialectic of the soul? Literary criticism considers this problem in the context of the correlation in a person of subjective and objective, personal and social, internal and external.

### III. Analysis

The artistic function of the dialectic of the soul, according to various literary critics (Gromov, 1971: 180; Kurlyandskaya, 1988: 91; Khrapchenko, 1965: 368), is the depiction of the inner and outer life of a person in an interconnected, organic unity and development, in harmony.

G. B. Kurlyandskaya noted that the method of “dialectics of the soul” is associated with the worldview of L. N. Tolstoy, with the understanding of man as a unity of “spiritual and carnal”, “moral and natural” (Kurlyandskaya, 1988: 35–58). Depicting the momentary free mental movements and decisions of the characters, Tolstoy, according to G. B. Kurlyandskaya, proved the transcendent free will of a person at every particular moment and at the same time determinism, the regularity of the internal mental process in time. In the dialectic of the soul, there are motives coming from the inner moral%psychological experience of the hero of the character, and cause%effect relationships of reality.

With the help of the dialectics of the soul, the ideological and aesthetic position of Leo Tolstoy is conveyed: the internally and externally conditioned behavior of the characters is combined with the recognition of their free will. One of the most significant contemporary successors of the Tolstoyan tradition is Yuri Vladimirovich Bondarev. Turning to Tolstoy's heritage was natural for a writer who explores the depths of human psychology, the complexity of a person's inner world and its interaction with the outside world, the motivation of human actions and the development of a human personality, when, knowing the world, a person knows himself.

The purpose of our study is to reveal the meaning of the “dialectics of the soul” in the works of Y. V. Bondarev, its role in the process of reproducing the writer's aesthetic attitude to the world. First, let us turn to the literary-critical articles of the writer himself. Y. V. Bondarev does not use the term “dialectics of the soul”, but uses concepts close to it: “analysis of the human soul in its contradictions”, “dialectics ... of a person's character”, “dialectics of mind and feelings, inevitable in the development of each reassessment of values”, “through dialectics... to explore the soul” (Bondarev, 1986: 12, 203, 370).

Consider what the artist of the word means by them. Y. V. Bondarev emphasizes the complexity of the human soul, in which opposite, contradictory aspirations operate. A particular difficulty for the artist is the need to keep “the character from slipping into uncertainty” (ibid.: 164). The certainty of the depicted character is important for Y. V. Bondarev, who emphasizes that the origins of a person's relationship to the world are laid down by the first life impressions in childhood, and later they are only polished (ibid.: 220, 368). But a living human character itself creates a situation of moral contradiction, since it carries in its depths a clash, an internal conflict of the character, dissatisfaction with himself (ibid.: 129, 159). The writer recalls that he did not immediately come to the dialectical method of revealing character. At the beginning of his creative path, abrupt transitions from one state of mind of a person to another seemed to him to violate the truth of his

actions. Only with experience does he realize the "iron logic" of these transitions, the "sinusoidality" of a person's spiritual life (ibid.: 116, 203).

All his life, a person faces the eternal problem of choice, speaking of which Y. V. Bondarev directly emphasizes contact with the Tolstoy tradition (ibid.: 150). The problem of internal choice is brought to the center of the novel "Choice". One of the heroes of the novel says: "All life is an endless choice. Every day - from the choice of porridge and tie in the morning to the choice of the whole evening - which woman to meet, where to go, how to kill the damned time. Everything happens after a choice: love, war, murder. In recent years, I often think what governs our choices in life. (Bondarev, 1986: 192). The answer of the author himself to the question, as it seems to us, sounds in one of his literary articles: "Sometimes a person lacks only one step to commit an act of courage and justice. This last step is sometimes prepared by his whole life. However, it may also be that, for many reasons, life has not prepared him for doing good, and his will is constrained. The moment of a conscious decisive step and the last movement from darkness to light, from negation to affirmation and vice versa - this is the essence of the analysis of the human soul in its contradictions, while the character is always expressed in an act" (Bondarev, 1986a: 12).

#### IV. Discussion

Life prepares the hero for a choice, but he is free to choose. The last step of a person towards good or evil is determined by a sense of duty, responsibility to other people. If a person remembers his duty, his community with other people, then he takes a step towards good. If the hero makes a choice for the sake of the egocentric "I", breaks away from people, then on the path to goodness, the very last step may not be enough for him. Duty - an act performed in accordance with the moral law - is not opposed to freedom; on the contrary, it manifests freedom in the highest sense, when a person overcomes himself, rises above himself. Finally, with particular clarity, the character, the moral essence of the hero is revealed by the choice made at the moment of "the ultimate aggravation of the psychological conflict, which carries with it an explosion of feeling, a moral decision on the verge of death or at the moment of the death of the hero" (ibid.: 159). "Courage in the moment "to be or not to be?" - this is a moment of the categorical imperative understood in its own way: in front of me is eternity, that is, the possibility of a momentary death is not ruled out, behind me are my mother, children, Motherland, her truth and the truth of humanity. This moment - the highest point of morality, conscious justice - is not only a criterion for a soldier's deed in a war, but also a criterion for any character of our days.

Everyone passes at a certain time along the sharpest line "to be or not to be?" along the line of a test alternative that determines the self-affirmation of the individual" (ibid.: 131-132). Depicting a person's choice in a situation on the verge of life and death, Y. V. Bondarev also relied on Tolstoy's tradition. He writes: "Tolstoy was not interested in physical disappearance, destruction, but in that borderline situation in which the transition to a new state took place. At this tragic moment of transition, he wanted to know the measure of the spiritual in man" (ibid.: 239). Consider the image of the dialectics of the soul in the story of Y. V. Bondarev "Battalions ask for lights."

The hero, changing the firing position with the gun, finds himself under bombardment. The young officer is tormented by the movement of conflicting thoughts, motives, and motivations. Under the immediate threat of death, the natural instinct of self-preservation wakes up in him: "I don't want to die." The duty of an officer, the sense of responsibility require him to get up, all the time bring back the thought of the need to disguise the gun, but the thought that it is necessary to stand under the bombs flying from the sky is frightening. From this arises an imaginary dialogue with the attendant at the school, on whom the hero projected his sense of duty: "Was it all that? Or maybe there was nothing? Perhaps he is not at the front at all, but sleeps in his bunk at the school? And in a minute the bugler will play the rise? And in the morning I don't want to get up so much ... "Just a little more, more!" But in the barracks one can already hear that special running around of orderlies, quick, loud orders of the battery officer on duty, and, finally, here it is - the familiar command, raising to its feet: "Get up!" He was very tired yesterday. He is dead tired. He had been clearing snow from the guns all day yesterday after the January blizzard. One threw away. And the snow was grainy, piercingly sunny, it stuck into the eyes with blue cutting needles. And now the eyelids cannot be

opened. "Listen, please," he says to the duty officer with his eyes closed. - Please be kind. I worked yesterday, I won't go to the gym on the orders of the battery commander." And who is the commander of the battery? Ah, yes, he remembered: the captain... Grechik? - Honestly!" "Climb! the attendant shouts like a deaf man. - Get up! Disguise weapon! Fast!" "By order of Captain Grechik!" - shouts Proshin. "I do not know anything! Climb! And who is Grechik? Indeed, who is Grechik? And why should you know? What does he care! Why should he know? He knows what the attendant said...

He said: you are a coward, Proshin. And then he wanted to cry from resentment, from shame, from impotence" (Bondarev, 1984a: 124–125). Such is Yu.V. Lieutenant Kuznetsov finds himself in a similar situation during the bombardment in the novel *Hot Snow*. "Now it will end," Kuznetsov inspired himself, feeling the crunch of the earth on his teeth, closing his eyes: in this way, it seemed to him, time would pass faster. "A few more minutes... But the guns... what about the guns?" "They are brought to battle... Will he break the sights with fragments? .." "He knew that he needed to immediately get up, look at the guns, do something now, but his heavy body was pressed, squeezed into the trench, it hurt in his chest, in his ears, and a diving howl, hot blows of air with a whistle of fragments pressed him more and more strongly to the unsteady bottom of the ditch. With the same thought beating in his head that something needed to be done, he opened his eyes and saw on the slope of the parapet the edge of the earth, razor-cut by a fragment.— Panoramas, Ukhanov! Hear, sights! Kuznetsov shouted, and instantly thought that he wanted and could order Ukhanov - he had the right to do this - to take panoramas, that is, by the power of the platoon commander to force him to jump out now under bombardment to the guns from the saving ground, himself remaining in the ditch, but he could not order this. "I have and do not have the right," Kuznetsov flashed through his head. "Then I will never forgive myself..." "I have no right to do so! This disgusting impotence... Panoramas must be taken! Why am I afraid to die? Am I afraid of a shrapnel in the head? Where is Drozdovsky? Ukhanov knows that I am ready to order... To hell with them, with sights! I don't have enough strength to jump out of the ditch... I'm ready to give orders, but I'll sit here myself. If I jump out of the ditch, nothing will protect me. And - a red-hot fragment in the temple? .. What is this, nonsense? "As soon as they bombard the circle, we will jump out to the guns. You - to the first, I - to the second! Let's take off the sights!.." (Bondarev, 1984b: 302–304).

## V. Conclusion

The confrontation between the instinct of self-preservation and duty is complicated here by the responsibility of the commander for his people. To succumb to the fear of death in war is to doom another to death. This Kuznetsov will not forgive himself. In the truthful novel by Yu. V. Bondarev, the depiction of the dialectics of the soul fulfills a moral task, shows the hero in a situation of internal choice, and leads the reader through all the doubts and prejudices experienced by the hero. In addition, the natural process brings the hero to the freedom of moral choice. Yes, and in an honest, courageous person there is a place for fear, impotence, thoughts of a shameful act ("ready to order, and sit here himself"). Experiencing the movement of sincere feelings and thoughts together with the literary hero, the reader, not without pleasure, understands the choice of the hero. Perceives the moral and aesthetic concept of the author. "Dialectics of the soul" acts as a means of displaying, explaining and evaluating the moral choice of the hero.

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