

PSYCHOSEMANTIC APPROACH TO ART (ON A MATERIAL OF CINEMA)

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This article discusses an application of psychosemantic methods for the analysis of viewer understanding. As an example, the movie "Sibirskiy Tsiryulnik" ("The Barber of Siberia", directed by a famous politician N. Mikhalkov) is taken, where Russian and American mentalities are juxtaposed. Basing on the works by M. Bakhtin and G. Kelly the concept of "art construct" is introduced. For the construction of semantic spaces of film perception the method of attribution of motives to film characters' deeds was elaborated and used with the G. Kelly's triadic method, followed by factor analysis.

Keywords: Art psychology, psychosemantics, film perception, personal and art constructs, understanding, deed, semantic space, factor analysis.

Introduction

Kant (1787/1929) stressed that phenomenality requires intentionality to be classified as consciousness. Husserl's (1939/1954, 1913/1962) existential phenomenology examined the life-world as apprehended by individuals through their own perspectives.

Likewise, Kelly (1955/1991) developed the philosophy he called constructive alternativism. It comprises the idea that reality is always experienced from one or another perspective, or alternative construction. Kelly's constructionism highlights a person as anticipating events by construing their replications. This is the step from construction system (knowledge, understanding) to anticipation. A person's construction system varies as he or she successively construes the replication of events, other people, or oneself. Kelly's constructionism contrasts with

the Marxist reflection principle. The latter underlies realism and naive materialism, or socialist realism in artistic creative work. Whereas the reflection principle assumes there is only one true reality, the constructionism emphasizes an infinite number of alternative constructions one may take towards the world. Instead of "objective reality" containing no subjective intentionality Rubinstein (2001) followed Heidegger (1962) in that the "world of existence as the world of human suffering..." (Rubinstein, 2001, p. 19) can be the subject of psychological consideration and realization.

For Kelly (1955/1991) a construct is an individual form of categorization of the world, other people, or oneself. Operationally, the construct serves as an element gluing together a series of attributes in an individual cognitive standard. If a child asserts that "a dirty shirt is warmer" (Chukovsky, 2005), or a woman visiting a family consultant is of the opinion that "all men are swine", these are their specific life constructs under consideration from a teacher's or psychotherapist's perspective. Social stereotypes, fragments of canonical texts, aphorisms by great thinkers, sayings, or even fragments of advertising texts replacing the system of philosophical or religious world view in the worldly consciousness can be specific social constructs adopted by the individual and becoming his personal constructs. Deleuze and Guattar (2000) suppose that the function of world cognition is creating concepts as "stable clusters of meaning". Constructs are used as building materials for the concept.

Bakhtin (1979a; 1979b), Lotman (1999), and Vygotsky (1930/1978) emphasized the dialogue-based origin of consciousness. It was considered through interiorization of social interaction and human dialogue with significant others. Bakhtin (1979b) defined the works of Dostoevsky (1846/1985) as 'polyphonic' novels. Every character is a competent voice of full value in a polylog to find and prove a truth of his/her own life. In terms of physical science, we could say that every character of a polyphonic novel plays the reference role. When an absolute system of coordinates is absent (it is claimed by an author position), a polyphonic novel describes the relativism of world views passionately seeking to be understood and heard. Both judgments and actions by characters can be considered as replicas in such a dialogue.

The concept of art construct

Based on Bakhtin's (1979b) idea, we introduce the concept of art construct as an opposition to characters' life positions. In turn, the language of characters conceives of oppositions that generate the art construct. The author of the work expresses an idea with no wording in the language. This idea has so many aspects that it cannot be expressed verbally. Oppositions of some symbols are required for characters to raise their part. The character oppositions gains a simultaneous structure of concept displayed then in the text. In their study, Petrenko and Pronin (1990) found that a reader's world view changes through art constructs. It is operationally expressed through transformation of the reader's semantic space. When the artwork effects the reader's world, new meaning dimensions (consciousness constructs) can appear as art constructs.

The psychosemantic approach

We developed the psychosemantic approach to study artworks. A "person-oriented" approach was used to understand the other. It consists of the work of art as captured indirectly that is in how a person experiences (sees, hears, perceives, understands) the work of art by constructing their replications from their own perspective. Then the work of art acquires another existence in the reader's consciousness. It can be examined through construction of subjective semantic spaces.

A person needs some knowledge to live and to participate in social interactions. As a rule, world views of some spheres are poorly structured and poorly realized if the person received no special training (Kelly, 1955). Bruner and Tagiuri (1954) called this knowledge ordinary consciousness and linked it with personality implicit models. Consciousness is categorized on the most general meanings such as time, space, causality, value, etc. (Gurevich, 1972; Stepin, 2000). They proliferate implicit models which underlie perception and understanding of world substantial spheres. Categories are tools by which a person discerns the world. Usually, he or she is not aware of it, though. In a psychosemantic study, a participant is asked not to introspect or reflect on the categories. Rather, the participant is asked to produce another kind of activity. He or she should sort objects such as works of art. In doing so, the participant evaluates them on some scales, considers potential motives of characters, puts one art work as compared to another works

of art, etc. Categorizations and implicit models are used in a "consumption mode". Participants' judgments are recorded in the form of data matrices. Then mathematical statistical procedures are used to bring to light categories that the person used implicitly. In geometric presentations of semantic spaces, categories are seen as categorical space axes. In turn, the objects appear as coordinate points within such semantic spaces. Individual parameters of semantic spaces are operational equivalents of various parameters of the person's consciousness (Petrenko, 2005). Substantive use of semantic spaces have put forward the approach according to which one's world view or world view of other persons can be measured and evaluated.

General procedure

To study artwork's perception and understanding we use, in particular, the procedure of triadic choice developed by Kelly (Kelly, 1955; Francella, and Bannister, 1987) that involves a comparison of characters. Based on this procedure it was found that viewers use constructs when they estimate characters from the feature film *The Stalker* (Petrenko, 2005). Another procedure is the "polyidentification" developed by Petrenko (1987; 2005). It is widely used within the psychosemantic approach. Depiction of tentative conduct in proposed circumstances of literary or film characters are used to frame semantic spaces. Significant others, oneself, contemporaries, historical of literary characters can be configured in a semantic space. In what follows the goal is to discover a person's world perception, to understand his or her values, settings, and personal meanings. Our other psychosemantic procedure is the «motive attribution». Viewers are asked to assign motives of characters' conduct (Petrenko, 1987; Petrenko, et al., 1988; Petrenko, and Sapsoleva, 2002). Then viewer's understanding of a character's inner world is reconstructed. We arrived at our main conclusions in this way. When a viewer accepts the character and self-identifies with it, the more multidimensional and complicated motivational palette of character's conduct appears. Given this, viewer's perception of the character is more subjective rather than object-oriented.

Examining the work of art can be considered as a search for the personal meaning of a text. The creator expresses them in the text and through language and emotion translates meanings to other people.

This is a mental product derived from original understanding of how the world is structured. The emergent new categorizations differ from the stereotypical categories.

In recent years, a series of monographs appeared in Russian psychology. They consistently develop the theory of psychology of art (Alakhverdov, 2001; Dorfman, 1997; Leontiev, 1998).

Art constructs of the feature film 'The Siberian Barber'

We will briefly retell the story for those who did not see the film. It is Russia, in the nineteenth century during the reign of Alexander III. An American adventurer, Jane, comes to Russia in order to "push" a technical project by engineer McCracken through the Russian military department. To achieve that, she needs to gain the sympathy of general Radlov, head of the junker school. On the way to Moscow, she gets acquainted with a young junker, Tolstoi, and love feelings arise between them. In carrying out the purpose her coming to Russia and seeking sympathy from general Radlov, Jane provokes a feeling of jealousy in Tolstoi and a dislike for Tolstoi in Radlov. A conflict arises between the men, and Tolstoi is condemned to penal servitude under a faked accusation of terrorism. In our opinion, director Mikhalkov conceived the film so as to show the unique features of the uncontrollable Russian open and emotional soul in opposition to the rational and pragmatic West. The film is interesting not only as a work of art, but also as a work of ideology. Mikhalkov is a well known public figure, one of those who supports a unified Russia. His view of Russian identity as expressed in the film brings a deeper understanding of Russian search for its cultural originality and its part in the modern world.

Mikhalkov's feature film 'The Siberian Barber' is undoubtedly very important for Russian cultural life. A large-scale advertising campaign, high financial expenditure for the film production, and famous actors yielded a great cultural and artistic effect in Russia. Mikhalkov himself is one of the most interesting directors of Russian cinema. Public opinion expects masterpieces from him. Not surprisingly, the Mikhalkov's feature film was first presented at the festival in Cannes in the hope of a prize.

On the contrary, Mikhalkov's feature film generated broad discussion in the press, on TV and on the Internet. Judgments ranged from

excited references about the glorious Russian army and homesickness about "the Russia we lost" to ironic statements about popular presentation of Russian life as "matrushka", "vodka", and "balalaika" (Sokolov, 2000) and presentation of cadets as a "crowd of exalted chaps". Likewise, judgments ranged from positive to negative ones in the Western press. Irina de Chicoff ('Figaro') wrote that "Nikita Mikhalkov managed to express the spirit of ancient traditions and charm of Russian life during the reign of Alexander III to avoid "unmoderate patriotism". In contrast, Didier Peron ('Liberation') defined the film as "...about wearisome three-hour long advertising of a product named "Russia".

In our opinion, it is an excellent director's work. One can see beautiful plays by Menshikov, Ormond, Petrenko, Il'in. Operator Lebeshev created a dynamic picture similar to the art of Surikov, Borisov-Musatov, Somov, or Kustodiev. However, so broad a range of film judgments was conditioned not so much by its artistic advantages. Rather, some historical and household inaccuracies and the ideological implications led to impetuous discussions. In an interview, Mikhalkov himself says that this is a film about "inner human dignity". It is most probably so. However, the leitmotif of the film, in our opinion, is the phrase "He is a Russian, and it explains a lot". Of course, this is a film about the Russian idea so much necessary and disputable at the border of centuries. The uncertainty of values and lack of widely shared ideology can be seen as a sort of point of bifurcation. The script writer Ibragimbekov and the film director Mikhalkov looked to the past in their search for way of nationhood, cultural, and moral perspectives.

The compositional peculiarity of this film is shown this way. Russia is seen as if through a foreigner's eyes (Jane). Jane's cultural tradition and the Russian one differ. Jane extrapolates some native attitude to Russian life, likely of taking a fresh but somewhat surprised look at Russia. An offscreen voice (by Mikhalkov himself) gives appropriate explanatory comments. These meta-insertions fix key ideas and sets, in our opinion, of the author's art constructs. They look as a sort of prompt to the viewer in his understanding of the film.

This study was conducted to examine Mikhalkov's feature film 'The Siberian Barber' taken into account its implicit ideology expressed in art constructs. In contrast to critics relying on their own taste, values and ideological settings, our purpose was to assess film art constructs from the perspective of viewers.

Study 1. Character discrimination

Method

Participants

Participants were 100 students from various higher schools of Moscow, 50 women and 50 men. Age ranged from 18 to 30.

Stimulus material

The following characters were administered to participants to their estimations: Tolstoi, Jane 1 (upon arrival in Russia), Jane 2 (upon falling in love with Tolstoi), Radlov, Mokin, Tolstoi's mother, McCracken, Duniasha, Alexander III, Grand Duke, Polievsky, Terrorist, Sergeant, Andrew. Participants were suggested to make their estimations departing from two positions: as if they were Russian or American persons.

Procedure

After a collective viewing of the film, participants were asked to compare film characters in pairs. The participants were to mark some bipolar features of suggested characters. For example, the pair Andrew ↔ Sergeant: "Adhered to some value-laden domains of human living ↔ Absorbed in everyday instrumental behavior".

Participants made 1,038 constructs in total. The number of individual constructs ranged from 5 to 21, 10 constructs per one participant, approximately. By means of cluster analysis 275 primary constructs were specified. Then participants were asked to refer each character to the left or right pole of these primary constructs. Next, participants rated the characters on seven-point scale.

Data analysis

Individual data matrices were combined into a common data matrix. Principal Components Analysis was performed to test differences among characters. A correlation input matrix and varimax rotation procedures were used (Mitina and Mikhailovskaya, 2001).

Results

A Principal Components Analysis resulted in the extraction of six factors.

Factor 1 (27.1% of variance explained) included the following constructs.

191. He lives by other people's instructions ↔ He lives as he wishes without reference to others.

138. He does not manifest himself as a personality, as something unique in any way; an ordinary person ↔ He differs from other people in his views, he is not afraid of demonstrating his personality.

259. He lives by rules ↔ He lives as he wishes.

100. He tames to what happens without trying to change anything ↔ He interferes in the course of events and uses methods of pressure and struggle.

196. He has no goal in life, he wants nothing ↔ He has a clear goal to be achieved using any means.

102. He is more of an observer or contemplator in life, not its active participant ↔ He is an active person in life, he needs everything, he interferes in everything, he likes to live, not to merely observer life.

121. He is satisfied with what he has, he seeks nothing, he changes nothing ↔ He strives to have more and better than is available.

28. He is incapable of defending his point of view ↔ He actively defends his point of view

76. Natural conservatism, outstanding patience, non-aggressive life position ↔ Strong instinct of struggle for rights.

33. Fear of openly expressing a protest ↔ Ability to openly protest.

170. Traditionalist ↔ Modernist.

151. He submissively accepts his destiny ↔ He struggles for a better place in life, he is capable of changing his destiny.

186. He lives as if on his last legs, as if he were dying already ↔ He lives a full life.

34. He follows traditions and supports monarchy ↔ He wants to change the world and its order.

111. He always expects the worst combination of circumstances ↔ He believes that a better solution can be found.

236. He is quite happy and satisfied with himself ↔ He seeks changes.

164. He lives in his little world ↔ He has a broad range of interests and contacts.

248. He lives a simple and understandable life and knows in advance how and what will happen to him ↔ He lives a life of his own, which is impossible to understand.

56. General inertia in life, he lives as instructed, he feels it is better to obey and to submit to circumstances ↔ Desire to get to the top, to new positions and opportunities, even if using not very nice methods.

200. He is full of prejudices ↔ He has no prejudices.

168. He is dedicated to monarchy ↔ He is a democrat nuts-and-bolts.

203. He more speculates than does ↔ He is a man of deed.

180. He is wacky ↔ One cannot mock him without serious consequences.

235. He is a led person and thinks that his fate is predetermined, and nothing can be changed ↔ His fate is in his hands.

The first factor was interpreted as “*Passive submission ↔ Autonomy, action, and struggle*”.

Loadings of Factor 1 and their poles (see Fig. 1) evidenced that Duniasha, Great Duke, Tolstoi’s Mother, Mokin, Polievsky, and Tolstoi can be referred to the pole of passivity and submission. Terrorist, Jane 1, Jane 2, Andrew, and McCracken can be referred to the opposite pole of those people who are able to fight for justice and own interests.

Factor 2 (22.1% of variance explained) included the following constructs.

27. Inability to use other people for achieving one’s own goals, desire to support honest and open relations ↔ Using other people for selfish purposes.

256. He values honesty and integrity in people ↔ He values what people can give him (power, wealth).

22. He possesses the felling of inner dignity, does not want to get even with other people ↔ He is revengeful and inclined to get even with people and to calculate possible revenge options.

269. He is capable of compassion ↔ He does not spend feelings.

230. He is sincere and cannot lie ↔ If necessary, he won’t hesitate to lie.

221. Romantic ↔ Pragmatic.

237. He is a good and true friend ↔ One won’t wish a friend like he to the enemy.

240. He can share other person’s problems ↔ He does not care what other people feel or think.

169. He dissolves himself in another person and lives only his life ↔ He never forgets about himself.

19. He can feel guilt for what happened ↔ He deletes people from his life and abandons them as unnecessary obstacles.

250. He can sacrifice anything for the sake of love ↔ Sacrifice is not typical of him.

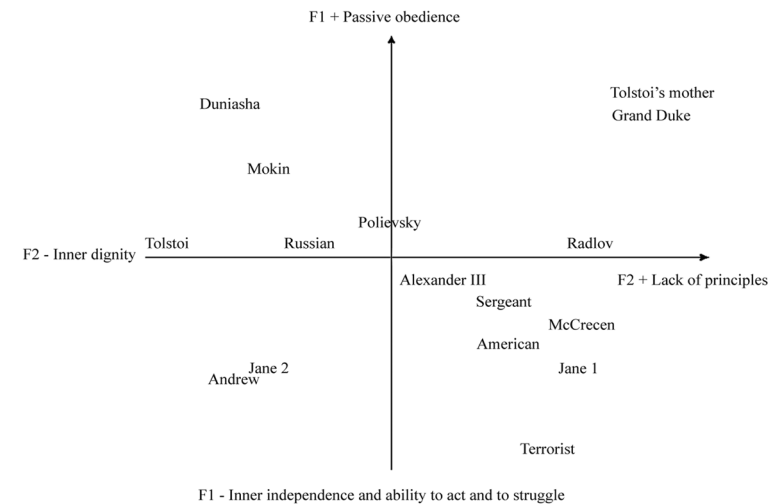


Figure 1. The semantic sphere organized by Factor 1 and Factor 2

226. He thinks not only about himself, but also about other people ↔ He thinks only about himself.

127. He is capable of deep feelings, both pain and joy ↔ His feelings are superficial, his soul is never touched.

199. He respects himself and does not go down to platitude ↔ He humiliates himself through indecent behavior.

158. He is oriented toward abstract spiritual values (love, brotherhood, honor, duty) ↔ He is oriented toward concrete tangible values (wealth, prestige, power).

144. He strictly judges his own behavior ↔ He always find an excuse for himself.

161. Humanist ↔ He has no human feelings for people.

231. He cannot do harm to people ↔ He can deliberately cause pain to people.

176. He follows the feeling of responsibility and duty ↔ When duty and responsibility are an obstacle, he moves them to the background.

218. He has stable values, he does not change them ↔ He thinks so as it is profitable to him.

23. He trusts people ↔ He is suspicious and expects deception.

59. He is too naive and does not understand that words are just words, that there situations in life where people lie and deceive each other ↔ He doubts everyone and everything.

163. Word and deed coincide ↔ Words and actions contradict each other.

215. He is not suspicious ↔ He is as if on alert and always expects to be deceived or offended.

142. He acts without calculation ↔ He is a sample of adventurous style and rationalism.

Factor 2 poles are Tolstoi, Andrew, Jane 2, Duniasha, Mokin, Russian role position as people “capable of compassion, sincere feelings and direct artless behavior” in opposition to Radlov, Great Duke, Tolstoi’s Mother, McCracken, American and Jane 1 characterized as “people using other people as a means for achieving their selfish goals”.

Factor 2 was interpreted as “*Dignity ↔ Lack of principles*”.

Factor 3 (13.0% of variance explained) included the following constructs.

258. Reckless ↔ Governed by his head.

66. He never thinks over his actions, is impulsive, and, the main thing, he never thinks afterwards either ↔ He thinks about the future and consequences of what is happening now, he never lives in illusions, he is a realist.

120. Dreamer ↔ Realist.

54. He is not used to discipline, cannot control emotions ↔ He is a disciplined person, i.e., strictly respects the division into the senior and junior.

113. His entire behavior and feelings are irrational, he always makes choice not for the benefit of consciousness ↔ He always thinks in any circumstances, and expresses his emotions only after thinking.

98. The entire life and its variety are emotions to him, he is very sensitive and jumps from laughter to tears ↔ He is more oriented to rational arguments than to emotions In principle, he is quite predictable in his reactions, one does not expect hysteria or emotional explosions of him.

140. It is more important for him to express his feelings than to think over the situation and to do something ↔ It is important for him to understand how to behave and what to do.

247. He lives in the world of illusions ↔ He builds no illusions and lives a real life.

119. He lets down his friends, family and loved woman without any reason ↔ He prefers first to get all information, and then to make a decision.

114. He has completely lost the feeling of reality, he lives in an invented world with his rules, and this mismatch between dream and reality brings him into a stupor and as if suppresses the voice of reason ↔ He is well aware of the real situation, and there is no place for empty dreams in his life. Maybe he is too rational, but instead he has no “lost illusions”.

246. Any trifle, unexpected event or unpleasant thing can throw him out of joint ↔ Has firm character.

68. He has no contact with reality and lives in an invented world ↔ He thinks about the future and consequences of what is happening now, he does not live in illusions, he is a realist.

166. He has no core, he is unstable ↔ A man with a core.

266. He is a child in his soul, who steel needs care ↔ He is an independent adult person

67. He is a brinksman and has no inclination to trade-off ↔ He thinks about the future and consequences of what is happening now, he does not live in illusions, he is a realist.

275. If he loves, he does not keep silence, and is ready to cry about his love ↔ He loves silently and suffers secretly.

162. He ignores facts and sees what he wants, not what is taking place in reality ↔ He gathers facts and analyzes them before doing anything.

271. He is unreasonable ↔ He never loses ability to think and prudence.

Loadings of Factor 3 and their poles (see Fig. 2) evidenced Tolstoi is with a large gap with other characters. Tolstoi’s Mother, Terrorist, and Great Duke are characters who cannot keep themselves in hand and are immersed in an illusory world. Conversely, Mokin, Duniasha, Jane 1, Jane2, Andrew, and McCracken showed the rational and common sense. Participants perceived them as calculating, pragmatic people who clearly know their own interests and pursue them. The third factor was interpreted as “Cool pragmatic calculation ↔ Action under emotional impulse, attachment or one’s beliefs”.

Factor 4 (9.1% of variance explained) included the following constructs.

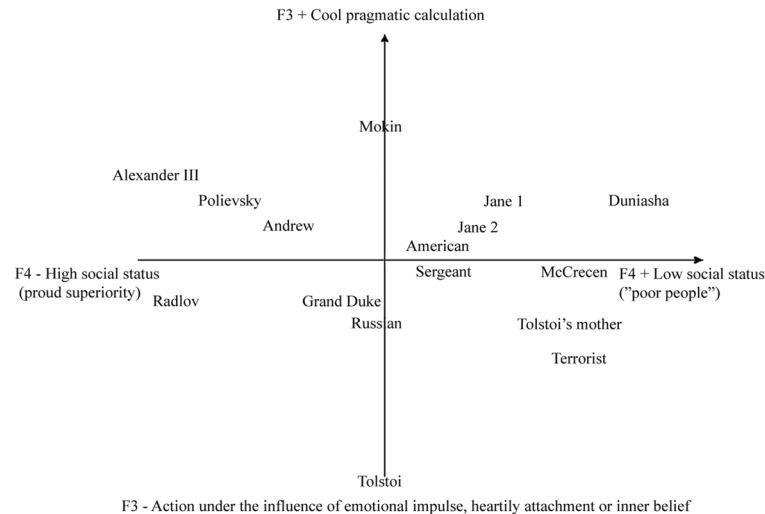


Figure 2. The semantic sphere organized by Factor 3 and Factor 4

147. Person without roots, nothing holds him, parents are left in the distant past ↔ He knows who he father was, and can be proud of him.

43. He has been taking care of himself since childhood, nobody has ever made any gifts to him ↔ He enjoys support from the family. In principle, he lives all found.

64. He neglects traditions, never shows his national traditions, although is interested in other people's traditions ↔ He feel national pride and is raised in the spirit of patriotism, "love for fathers' coffins", instinctive respect for the Tsar and God, all traditions are absorbed with mother's milk.

198. He can step over his pride ↔ He never forgives people who touched his pride.

32. He expects material support ↔ He can provide material support.

143. Is in pleading for help and dependent ↔ Russian pride on no visible foundation.

175. The family and parents were left long ago in the past ↔ He is proud of his family and motherland.

189. He is not worldly and loses confidence in himself in the society to some extent ↔ Society lion.

244. Nobody respects him ↔ His opinion has a certain weight in the society.

268. He feels he is nobody, as if he were furniture for other people ↔ He feels his superiority and actively demonstrates it.

224. He is not respected ↔ He enjoys respect and is an authority for people.

31. He feels insignificant ↔ He feels he is an influential person, wants to patronize other people and to be significant.

168. Democrat nuts-and-bolts ↔ Monarchy follower.

95. Other people notice or not, the main thing for him is that he is aware of what he is ↔ It is important for him that other people notice his achievements.

219. He does not care if he is better or worse than someone ↔ He wants to become better than others very much.

One pole of Factor 4 occupies Duniasha, Tolstoi's Mother, McCracken, and Terrorist. They are people of low social status. The other pole holds Alexander III, Radlov, Polievsky, and Great Duke. They are people of power with superiority over other people.

Factor 4 was interpreted as "High social status (*proud superiority*) ↔ Low social status (*"poor people"*)".

Factor 5 (6.0% of variance explained) included the following constructs.

42. He easily adapts himself to foreign environment ↔ He does not understand foreign culture and does not see cultural differences.

210. He creates a nice atmosphere about himself ↔ He creates tension around himself.

148. His social position was so that he was well raised and received a good education ↔ He is a dull soldier who knows nothing but commands.

206. He accepts life in its full variety ↔ Many things are alien to him, he does not accept them and even does not try to understand.

192. In his opinion, every person has the right to decent existence and good attitude irrespective of anything ↔ People are nothing like cockroaches for him.

136. He plays many various roles in life without limiting himself to a single one ↔ He is limited to a single role in life.

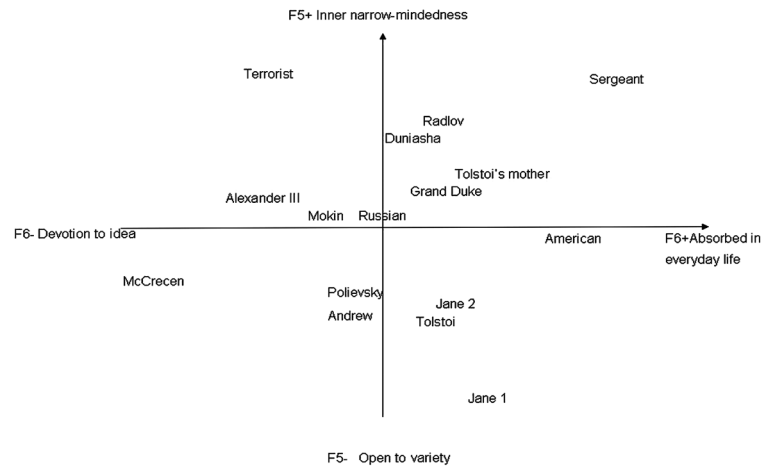


Figure 3. The semantic sphere organized by Factor 5 and Factor 6

One pole of Factor 5 occupies Jane 1 and Jane 2 (taking a considerable gap with other characters), Tolstoi, Andrew, Polievsky, and McCrecken. They accept life in its all variety. The other pole holds Terrorist, Sergeant, and Radlov. They fail to understand people or to put themselves in their places (see Fig. 3).

Factor 5 was interpreted as “*Open to variety ↔ Narrow-mindedness*”.

Factor 6 (4.6% of variance explained) included the following constructs.

159. He does intellectual work ↔ Martinet.

122. He is more of a theoretical than practical person ↔ He understands only facts, and any ideas, theories, or abstract things are not for him.

267. He creates a reality of his own ↔ He is a utilitarian realist.

171. He is a fanatic of his work ↔ He is indifferent to his work.

45. He perceives life as something difficult, as a chain of obstacles ↔ He reduced all complicated things of life to simple ones.

261. Leader in his relations and initiatives ↔ It is easier for him to follow someone than to lead other people.

153. He does not care of his family but has remote and global goals ↔ He is anxious for himself and his family.

One pole of Factor 6 occupies McCrecken (taking a considerable gap with other characters), Alexander III, and Terrorist. They are given to remote and global ideas. The other pole holds the rest of the characters. They are absorbed in current real life.

Factor 6 was interpreted as “*Given to abstract idea ↔ Absorbed in everyday life*”.

Once characters were discriminated as appeared in different factors the later can be considered as the latent art constructs of the film. According to our theory based on Bakhtin’s idea of the polyphonic novel, the author of a work of art uses a language and life attitude oppositions (“truths” in Dostoevsky’s (1846/1985) terms) held by characters to express his or her ideas. An art construct (or “artistic meaning of the work” used more traditionally) is behind characters conduct. In a scenic action, actors should display the conduct contingent on art constructs.

Study 2. Motive attribution

Once the basic lines of characters’ opposition were assessed, film constructs can be designated, as well. Of particular relevance to understand the film’s gist departing from viewers’ perspective is the motives viewers attribute to characters’ conduct. Next, the motives viewers attributed to characters’ conduct were examined.

Method

Participants

Participants were 100 students from various higher schools of Moscow, 50 women and 50 men. Age ranged from 18 to 30.

Stimulus material

The characters’ conduct was taken into consideration.

Motives

After a group viewing of the film 54 motives as tentative latent factors of characters’ conduct were administered to participants. A list of motives included such ones as ‘like feeling’, ‘get approval or admiration of other people’, ‘material interest’, ‘need for risk and acute feelings’, ‘curiosity’, ‘imitation’, ‘strive to be like everybody’, ‘conformism’, ‘of the feeling of duty and honor’, ‘proceeding from spiritual or religious requirements’, ‘need for self-realization’, ‘strive to be creative’, ‘spontaneous behavior’, ‘fear to get disapproval of other people’ (losing face, looking stupid, etc.),

'fear of administrative sanctions', 'threat of punishment', etc. Each motive was estimated on a 6-point scale ranged from 0 to 5.

Procedure

A psychosemantic procedure "motive attribution" was used to assess the motives attributed to film characters. Salient conducts yielded by each among selected characters were specified. For example, Tolstoi's conducts were considered this way: 'Fooling about with friends, he breaks into Jane's compartment', 'Once Tolstoi's matchmaking failed, and Radlov accused him of an unseemly conduct with respect to a lady, Tolstoi is going to have a duel', 'Acknowledges himself guilty of an attempt at the Great Duke', 'Marries the housemaid Duniasha', etc.

We departed from the viewpoint that motives are multiple (e.g., Vignoles, et al., 2006) and a conduct is polymotivated, that is it can be explained by a number of motives rather than by single one (e.g., Beersma and De Dreu, 2005). Based on this concern participants were asked to fill in a full data matrix 'motive attribution x conducts'.

Data analysis

Individual raw data were grouped and obtained for each character separately. Motives were combined in motivation blocks. The number of motives varied in different motivation blocks according to participants' estimation. Some motives were not appropriate with respect to a character. For example, 'material interest', 'career goals' or 'striving for cognition' motives did not apply to Tolstoi. Raw data were processed using exploratory factor analysis.

Results and Discussion

Because of space limitation factor structures behind viewers' motives attributed to film characters are not given. Only leading character motives are described. Those findings are under consideration that would seem of importance to reconstruct viewer's understanding of film characters.

The motives attributed to film characters by critics and students greatly differed. Our study was conducted in 2002/2003, while the film 'The Siberian Barber' appeared in 1997. A lot has been written about it since that time. It was very plausible that the student audience would project critics' interpretation on to characters. However it did not happen. For example, Jane was described by film critics and art critics as a "subtly realistic American adventurer" (Sokolov, 2000), "wanton girl"

(Moskvina, 1999) or "prostitute ordered from abroad to seduce Russian authorities" (Stepnina, 2001) who is too realistic, manipulates people, and fails to understand the mysterious Russian soul. The students, however, discerned Jane trying to overcome the injustice with respect to Tolstoi. Indeed, in contrast to other film characters, Jane is in search for justice. After Tolstoi's arrest she visits Radlov, asks him to be tolerant, as well as about Tolstoi's conduct to the court. She applies also to Tolstoi's mother to write a solicitation to the Tsar. At the same time, participants saw Jane as guilty of what happened.

Although critics evaluated Jane "completely free of moral restrictions or affections" (Stepnina, 2001) students attributed to Jane such motives as love, compassion, altruism, and feeling of guilt. Jane's 'manipulatory' intentions that are of priority for critics were not of particular importance for the students. The latter took Jane into account for cultural oppositions not only "their pragmatism" ↔ "our spirituality", but also "feeling of a free person being indignant at obvious injustice" ↔ "slavish obedience".

Critics described Tolstoi as a "person defenseless against fate strikes" (Stepnina, 2001). He feels "fatal inclination for fate breaks, burden of inexorable fatum, intolerance to offence of honor, and ontological unhappiness" (Iratov, 2001), or as a "psychopathic person" (Sokolov, 2000). On the contrary, students attributed sincere feelings, continuity and emotionality to Tolstoi. He is exalted like a "knight of ultimate line". The exaltation is fraught with frustrations. His young purity is opposed to pragmatism and greed. As a result, Tolstoi found himself condemned to penal servitude. Students had clearly preferred the impulsiveness of Tolstoi ("he did it without thinking"). The motives of jealousy, competition, and to take revenge over a reasonable solution to the conflict were attributed to him.

Tolstoi's "lack of core" and "uncontrolled passions" were repeatedly stressed by critics but students explained that as his "boyishness". Tolstoi is almost an officer and he is only eighteen. "He is just a boy in love", Jane says about him. His emotionality is not suppressed by the responsibility of a Russian army officer yet.

Students discerned a "conformist" line in Tolstoi's conduct too. It is not blind obedience to conduct as socially required, but his own wish to meet clear norms. The benchmarks established by the society are the hidden motives that led Tolstoi to his duel with Polievsky. Even after undeserved penal servitude and seeing enough human suffering and injus-

tice there, Tolstoi keeps the Emperor's portrait in his home. Obviously, it is conceived by script writer and director to evidence his patriotism and faith to military oath. Students interpreted this as a manifestation of Tolstoi's relatedness and conformism.

Critics described Radlov as "a charming drunkard and small ascal" (Iratov, 2001), "despot and habitual drunkard" (Stepnina, 2001). Radlov is governed not only by "despot" motives (i.e., hatred, revenged, capitulated to jealousy, envied or competed), but also he is revolted at deceit and self-protect against outside intrusion when he is manipulated. In students' view, of particular relevance are "family" values. Radlov takes Jane's coquetry in all good faith, starts to pay his addresses to her, trying to get rid of solitude and to bring an order in his life. Radlov is ready to make a serious step—introduce Jane to his mother. Like critics, students saw Radlov as a "habitual drunkard". However his hard drinking is more complicated than just alcoholism. Radlov likes his profession, service, and military school. Herein, he makes a career holding a perspective on those people at power who gained a high social status due to the right of birth rather than own giftedness or achievements (remember the weak-willed replication of the Great Duke).

Radlov's broad nature, probably battle-trying officer in the past, and his inclination to gain promotion leads to a deep conflict in his motives. Two seemingly opposite tendencies appear. First is obedience to social norms and second to go beyond the social norms. This is like Freud (1910/1957) called "an effect of conflicting Super Ego and Id". We do not pretend to do a psychoanalytical interpretation of Radlov's personality but just emphasize that the social norms for him clearly prevails. Herein the wide Russian nature (well expressed by actor Petrenko) remains and a tension appears. Later this leads to hard drinking.

Radlov's injustice is stressed by critics but is not a salient feature for students. Motives such as to strength, self-esteem, and social status are of particular importance for Radlov too. From the students' viewpoint altruism and patronizing other people are inherent in Radlov, as well as his career goals, material interest, and possessing power in order to improve his social representation. Still, students do not like Radlov as he lacks motives in the vein of comradeship, friendship, brotherhood, pity, compassion, moral or religious values. The lack of these motives in Radlov's conduct is conditioned by the film authors. We see no friends of his and are unaware whether he has some. Radlov functions in the coordi-

nate system "supervisor—subordinates". He feels no need for freedom or independence.

Students saw Radlov not only as a person living in accordance with the principle "divide and rule" (Iratov, 2001), but also as a sensitive person who is not confident in himself. He tries not only to achieve a certain social position through his dishonest conduct but also to respond to an offence.

General Discussion

What is this film about, after all? What is the set of its art constructs? We can answer these questions, at least from viewers' position, as soon as we have character oppositions semantically analyzed and film art constructs highlighted. This is a film about human dignity and self-sufficient value of human feelings. Mikhalkov is right about it. The art construct "*Sincerity of feelings ↔ Using other people*" (factor 2) obtained in the study is evidence to this statement. The poles of this factor are characters marked with "Russian mentality" (Tolstoi, Russian role position, Duniasha, Andrew (as "origin Russians"), and Jane 2 (with Russified soul because of love for Tolstoi) in opposition to foreigners (Jane 1, McCracken, and American role position). In turn, Radlov, a Russified German, occupies the extreme position among "manipulators".

Film authors have obviously suggested an ethnopsychological construct relied on opposition between an open, uncontrolled and sincere "Russian soul" and the mercantile and rational West. This is what the offscreen voice says a peculiar prompt for the viewer: "Your mother tried to guess the mystery of this vast country, which does not yield to common sense. One can deceive, steal or rob in Russia, but a word given by someone can sometimes be valued more than any official paper, while a carelessly said word can lead to bloodshed". "I have the honor" is a phrase repeated by various characters many times during the film. The Orient guided by Confucius' ideas considers the "loss of face" (i.e., loss of social status and dignity in the eyes of other people) as a person's drama. If a Russian (a nobleman is in the first place) violates the inner code of honor, he suffers bad losses for him- or herself. However, is it the film about dignity solely?

Pomerants (1994) wrote: "Development stresses various extremes balancing each other in each historical nation. One extreme pulls another, the opposite one, after itself. For example, great value is put on spiri-

tuality in Indian culture, up to negation of the world. It means that one should look for exaggerated sensuality, and it will be found in tantrism. If respect for parents is brought to the top religious duty in China, then one should look for the opposite extreme, and find it in Buddhism chain. If increased tenderness strikes the eye in the Russian people and literature, then what is that it is linked to? Obviously increased ability to commit crime, unstable moral samples, and inclination to chasms that can be tracked in life and in literature..." (Pomerants, 1994, p. 270).

"I remember Leontiev write that it is easier to meet a saint than an ordinary honest man in Russia", and further: "I even think that tenderness is somehow directly linked to business unfairness. Sometimes, they are combined in a person" (Pomerants, 1994, p. 271).

We think that Pomerants' deep observation about dominant constructs inherent in some cultures is a key to cross-cultural and ethnopsychological studies, in particular to examine national character. One may only disagree with the last statement by Pomerants about presence of both poles in a person. Culture sets up extreme points of moral fluctuations that are similar to the pendulum. If a person chooses the pole of spirituality, then he/she can do spiritual work to maintain human being in himself and to avoid falling into the abyss. Some people manage to do it.

The Russian character also relies on other art constructs highlighted in our study. We already wrote about dignity. Other art construct comprises the opposition "*Sober pragmatic calculation* ↔ *Action governed by emotional impulse*". The emotionality, in the opinion of both film authors and viewers, is a typical Russian feature. "It seems that nothing can happen "slightly" in Russia". No less than in Russians though, emotional freedom is probably inherent in native Americans, descendants of pioneers. This suggestion would mean that minds of Russian and American people are closer to each other as compared to critics' estimation.

Increased emotionality, inclination to "give a horse the reins" is a feature inherent not only in positive film characters. General Radlov conducts outrageously during hard drinking, devoutly crosses himself and bathes in an ice-hole, is a grotesque person. His "Russian nature" affects the Russian audience. Peasants and merchants, young educated aristocrat count Polievsky, and a harmonist from ordinary people splash out emotions in common outburst.

"Generally, everything is extremes in this surprising country: semi-naked peasants beat each other within an inch of their lives on the river

ice, and then beg pardon from each other, they go to war with songs, and go to wedding in tears, and everything they do is done seriously, everything is done to the end" (an offscreen voice).

The next art construct is the opposition "*Ability to sacrifice oneself* ↔ *Calculation pursuing one's own interests*". As was mentioned, this construct comprises the opposition of Tolstoi, Jane 2, and Duniasha on the one hand, and McCracken, Radlov, and partially Tolstoi's Mother on the other hand. In our opinion, the sacrifice as a feature of Russian national character is not very articulated in the film. Departing from Russian bipolarity sacredness would oppose impulse and violence of feeling. This subject is weakly expressed in the film. The sacrifice looks like a worldly rule ("one may not defile a lady") rather than taking compassion itself. This is why the Orthodox line is not manifested, although for Mikhalkov it is of very importance (at least, this subject appears many times in the film). By the way, McCracken is shown as an antipode of Russian spirituality. He is maybe the only person who is keen on a creative work. In the framework of Protestant ethics (Weber, 1930), he can be seen as very religious and to sacrifice oneself. However, this perspective is not for the present. It would be referred to the XX and XXI centuries.

The most powerful construct (factor 1) "*Ability to actively resist injustice* ↔ *Fatalism*" is very important to capture viewers' understanding of the film. In viewers' opinion, an active resistance is inherent in Jane, Terrorist, and Andrew. It would seem the Russian characters are located at the opposite pole or in neutral positions in this factor. True, in case of obvious injustice with respect to Tolstoi, only Jane took courage to express indignation and to try to do something. Cadets and Mokin's indignation in the form of throwing newspapers with a version of the attempt at the Great Duke can hardly be called an active protest. The scene of cadets saying goodbye to Tolstoi, Mokin in civilian cloths saluting the prisoner, and a crowd of prisoners' relatives rudely pushed by the police only stress weakness and resignation of the power.

Tolstoi served out his sentence in a prison and likely saw people's troubles and suffering there. Notwithstanding the Emperor's pictures cover the walls of his village home. Viewers discerned the Emperor's role brilliantly played by Mikhalkov. Except self-presentation they spotted the Emperor as held no ideological context. No pole of the constructs comprised him. In a polyphonic play of character's voices (in vein of Bakhtin, 1979b; see also: Hermans, 1996) the voice of the Emperor is quite muted.

Unlikely, Mikhalkov sympathizes with the Terrorist character. Mikhalkov invited an actor with obviously a non-Russian appearance to play this role. On the other side, Mikhalkov as a politician and ideologist and Mikhalkov as a director and artist are in dissonance here. The monarchic Russia praised by Mikhalkov is apparently ill. It suffers from authoritarianism and lack of feedback through the people. This is the power where cadets, young ladies from the institute of noble ladies, and tsar's family indulge in a fake world of the idyll of Mozart's vaudeville. The threatening rumble of forthcoming tragedy is felt in the extremely emotionally presented scene of convict movement through patriarchal Moscow. It will blow up Russia "that we lost" from inside.

Some critics and Mikhalkov's colleagues graciously appraised the feature film 'The Siberian Barber' as a well-made vaudeville, a cheap popular film. We remind the reader without discussing the peculiarities of the genre although Dostoevsky's (1865-1866/1991) "Crime and Punishment" can be called a detective story too. 'The Siberian Barber' would seem a complicated and highly artistic work. It is resonant to nowadays, relies on world views, and presupposes interpretations yielded by the audience itself.

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