

The theme of human humiliation in the Caucasian story of L.N. Tolstoy "Demoted"

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***Abstract:** The idea of the story dates back to the period of Tolstoy's stay in the North Caucasus. Stasyulevich personally told Tolstoy "the story of his misfortune", for violation of military discipline he was demoted to the ranks. In the Caucasus, in the position of being exiled as a soldier, Guskov continued to remain an aristocrat, "crooked, obliquely and immorally" looking at his surroundings. For Guskov, heroism is, first of all, external brilliance, glory, general admiration and posture. In his diary, Tolstoy pointed out that the reasons that develop vanity are "inaction, luxury, lack of care and deprivation."*

***Keywords:** humiliation of a person, L.N. Tolstoy, Caucasian War, story "Demoted"*

The impression and moments experienced by L.N. Tolstoy in the Caucasus, found their reflection in his military stories: "Demoted", "Raid", "Cossacks". The last story of L.N. Tolstoy about the "Caucasian war" "Demoted" appeared in 1856. The title "From Caucasian Memories. "Demoted" for censorship reasons replaced another name - "Meeting in a detachment with a Moscow acquaintance. From the Caucasian notes of Prince Nekhlyudov. " By this time, Tolstoy had parted ways with *Sovremennik*. The story was published by Druzhinin in *The Library for Reading* (book X11). However, even with the liberals, Tolstoy was not on the way, and therefore clearly outlined differences with them.

It is interesting to note that the "hero" of his story, Guskov, who was demoted, or rather, exiled to the Caucasus as a private, is a kind of liberal.

The idea of the story dates back to the period of Tolstoy's stay in the North Caucasus. On October 16, 1853, he wrote in his diary that the so-called decent people who put themselves very high in their own opinion soon leave their sphere and enter a sphere in which the conditional virtues of decency are not valued, fall much lower than dishonest people who not being proud of anything, they try to acquire good [1].

Such reflections of Tolstoy were led by observations of some Caucasian colleagues - exiled or demoted nobles. One of them - A.M. Stasyulevich personally told Tolstoy "the story of his misfortune", for violation of military discipline he was demoted to the ranks.

By vocation of Tolstoy A.M. Stasyulevich only partly served as a prototype for Guskov. "However, it's not really him," Tolstoy once said. "I also connected Kashkin, who was suing Dostoevsky" [4, p.61].

Kashkin N.S. (1829-1914) led one of the Petrashevsky circles, wrote a number of revolutionary works, waged a struggle against the idealism of Hegel and Kant from the standpoint of militant atheism and utopian socialism. Kashkin returned from his Caucasian exile in 1858, he was allowed to settle in Kaluga, where he became one of the organizers and leaders of the circle, which included the Decembrists G.S. Batenkov, E.O. Obolensky, P.N. Svistunov, N.S. Kashkin. Soon N.A. Serno-Solovievich, the future prominent figure of the revolutionary democracy of the 60s.

After N.A. Serno-Solovievich between him and N.S. A friendly correspondence was established by the Kashkins. On August 18, 1859, N.A. Serno-Solovievich wrote to N.S. Kashkin: "The time spent in Kaluga will not be blotted out of my heart, for the sake of a warm, sincere circle of people with whom I became akin in feelings and convictions and in which you occupied one of the first places" [6, p.27-28]. As you can see, N.S. Kashkin did not step down, did not retreat, but continued his social activities after exile, which cannot be said about Guskov.

Tolstoy's attempt to portray Petrashevist Kashkin in Guskov was unsuccessful. If we did not know the above statement of the author, then it is unlikely that we would have recognized in Guskov N. S. Kashkin. E.N. Kupreyanova writes: "In the image of Guskov, Tolstoy, as it were, dissociates himself from both liberals and democrats, and seeks to show that both are "not right". From this point of view, he portrays Guskov in the form of a politicking aristocrat and phrase-monger who turned out to be completely unable to endure the test sent to him by fate, in fact to prove loyalty to his convictions [3, p.91].

One cannot agree with the opinion that Guskov had revolutionary convictions. True, Guskov says: "I took everything bad to my heart, dishonesty, injustice, vice were disgusting to me, and I directly spoke my opinion, and spoke carelessly, too ardently and boldly" [5].

However, he calls his own participation in the circle "an unhappy, stupid story." Under arrest, Guskov "changed his mind a lot, a lot ... He began to look at everything with different eyes." The confession is more than frank. And a little lower: "I felt that I myself was guilty, careless, young, I ruined my career and only thought about how to correct it again [7, p. 108-109]".

Guskov had no true revolutionary convictions; he was brought up in the spirit of *comme il faut* (the art of being worthy). The manuscript contains the following description of his sister: "In her was developed to the highest degree that Russian, especially St. Petersburg aristocracy,

expressed only in servility to a certain world, through which they somehow crookedly, obliquely and immorally look at the world of God, and aristocracy, which no misfortunes, no influence can knock out of a person, if he has correct upbringing and, even worse, has been grafted into him with success in the world." This characteristic is directly related to Guskov himself. Tolstoy through the mouth of the narrator says: "...knowing the direction of my sister, I did not expect anything good from the young Guskov" [7, p.102]. And so it happened in practice. In the Caucasus, in the position of being exiled as a soldier, Guskov continued to be an aristocrat, "crooked, obliquely and immorally" [5] looked at his surroundings. In his opinion, the cadets are "the most depraved class of people in Russia", the soldiers are "some kind of beasts, in which there is nothing human," and military officers are "pigs" [3, p.92]

Guskov believed that the war would add "a cross, the rank of a non-commissioned officer" to his name, then "the fine would be lifted," and he would return to his environment "with this charm of misfortune." In an effort to get into the active army, Guskov hoped for the patronage of his uncle and the support of Pavel Dmitrievich. Among the Caucasian officers, he dreamed of taking one of the first places, but he had to gain authority. Tolstoy shows Guskov to exile. In the St. Petersburg aristocratic society, he was a successful young man. And although the narrator's keen gaze noticed negative features in him, the general conclusion was in favor of Guskov, he was considered a really smart and pleasant person.

When the conversation started about one common acquaintance who distinguished himself in the war, Guskov expressed the opinion that "courage" is a necessary consequence of intelligence and a certain degree of development"[7, p.103], that is, education.

Further events showed that Guskov was cruelly mistaken. What happened to him in the Caucasus? The hard life of a soldier has erased the gloss from him. While servants served him, he had a pleasant appearance, "was unusually neat, elegantly dressed" [7, p.103]. Now he was "a small figure with crooked legs and in an ugly hat with long white hair" [7, p.113].

Tolstoy painstakingly draws out Guskov's portrait details: "little red hands", a thin, sinewy neck, which is tied with a green woolen scarf. "The sheepskin coat was worn, short, with a sewn dog on the collar and on fake pockets. The pantaloons were checkered, ash-colored, and boots with short, unblackened soldier's bootlegs" [7, p.97].

Guskov does not consider himself a coward, although he is afraid to go into a secret until he loses consciousness, and once he simply fled from there, throwing down his weapon. For Guskov, heroism is, first of all, external brilliance, glory, general admiration and posture. "Give your dream a regiment, golden epaulettes, trumpeters, [7, c.116]," he says. To fight alongside ordinary soldiers, to expose himself to mortal danger along with Antonov, Bondarenko is above the forces of Guskov, because he considers soldiers to be animals, and himself to be an exalted

nature. Aristocratic individualism, hostility towards ordinary people, the ideology of the serf-owner generates cowardice: "And at the slightest danger, I suddenly involuntarily begin to adore this vile life and cherish it as something precious, and I cannot overcome myself" [7, p.117].

Guskov claims, and there is no reason not to believe him, that if he were an officer, then "in front of others," that is, in the presence of those whom he considers people, he would also become brave because of his pride. And in secret you have to go unwashed, in a sheepskin coat and soldier's boots, lie all night in a ravine with "some" Antonov and wait for a shot that can kill. "This is not courage - it's awful." Guskov, if we proceed from the classification of Tolstoy, is a representative of one of the types of "physical courage" inherent in aristocratic officers.

Tolstoy does not immediately pass the final verdict on Guskov. Looking at him, the narrator recalls that "he himself was recently a cadet, an old cadet, unable to be an indifferent, helpful junior comrade and a cadet without a fortune, therefore, knowing well all the moral severity of this situation for "an elderly and proud person" [7, p.97], the narrator seems to sympathize with Guskov and seeks to understand the hero.

Guskov seemed to the narrator "a very intelligent and extremely proud person" [7, p.97], truly and deeply unhappy. Guskov reveals himself most of all in his own lengthy statements. Sometimes sincere notes break through in his stories, in moments he takes a sober glance at his behavior and then pronounces himself a merciless sentence: "Yes, I finally died! There is no energy in me, no pride, nothing. There is not even nobility ... Yes, I am lost!" [7, p.116] But even in such sincere words there is a grain of hypocrisy. Telling so much about yourself to a new person, exposing spiritual wounds.

Guskov satisfied his own vanity, self-esteem, that he exposed himself. In his "diary of youth" Tolstoy noted that aristocratic education instills cowardice, vanity, thoughtlessness, weakness, and laziness. Tolstoy was sure that the problems of society are reflected in the life of the army. If society degrades, then the army also degrades [2, p.17].

And already in the Caucasus, Tolstoy characterized vanity as a moral illness like leprosy or a venereal disease. The vain one "loves himself not as he is, but as he is shown to others" [1].

That is why Guskov talked about himself so much that he seemed different, he could not somehow show himself to be in the shadows, he lacked the character to be modest, so he drew attention to himself by the message that he was writing an order for an upcoming offensive. He was shy, afraid of ridicule, and still talked. No one asked Guskov to flunk, but he "hastily took a glass" and carried it to the adjutant, stumbled and fell, causing laughter from those present and irritation of the adjutant. On the face of Guskov, as the narrator noted, "there was always one prevailing expression of fear and haste" [7, p.97], that is, in the words of Tolstoy's diary,

cowardice and thoughtlessness. One of such rash actions of Guskov was participation in the "political case". It is most likely to assume that vanity was the driving lever in this case too.

In his diary, Tolstoy pointed out that the reasons that develop vanity are "inaction, luxury, lack of worries and hardships" [1]. It becomes clear that it was not the Caucasian exile that spoiled Guskov, but his *comme il faut*, aristocratic upbringing. Having found himself in a difficult situation in the Caucasus, unaccustomed to labor, deprivation, independence, the aristocrat Guskov lost the ground with his feet. Among the military Caucasian officers, "the conditional virtues of decency are not valued," but true decency is highly valued. It was this change that contributed to the exposure of Guskov's inner world.

As was correctly noted in the literature, the image of Guskov is to a certain extent related to the image of Count Turbin, the younger from the story "Two Hussars", written in the same 1856.

The Caucasian story "Demoted" seems to suggest that true courage is actually acquired not by education, not by the fact that someone belongs to an aristocratic environment, but by labor education, but aristocratic education instills cowardice, vanity, laziness and other then obscene qualities.

In the story "The Demoted", behind Guskov there is a "high" society. "I was disgusted," says the narrator, "that, because it is true that I knew French, he assumed that I should have been outraged against the society of officers, which, on the contrary, having spent a long time in the Caucasus, I had time to fully appreciate and respect a thousand times more than the society from which Mr. Guskov came out"[7, p.109].

A liberal phrase-monger, a politicking aristocrat did not find a place among the soldiers, who naturally showed modest courage in the most difficult conditions.

The story takes place in a military detachment on the slope of the Kochkalykovsky ridge in Checheno-Ingushetia. "Business was already over, they were cutting the clearing and every day they were expecting an order from the headquarters to retreat to the fortress" [7, p.95]. It was then that Guskov appeared. He crawled out into the white light in order to instantly disappear at the first sounds of the enemy's core.

In the story Batman Nikita says with contempt: "I saw them, nightingale, I'm not afraid, but the guest who was here, the chikhir drank, as he heard, he gave a quick stretch past our tent, rolled like a beast what a bent! " [7, p.118].

True to yourself, Tolstoy turns to the opinion of ordinary people and thus clarifies the true essence of people and phenomena. "... how a beast bent!" [7, p.118] - in these words a merciless and just sentence.

Painting the situation in which the detachment was, Tolstoy uses contrasting colors and creates a picture sharply outlined in the contours. "The evening was clear, quiet and fresh" [7, p. 95]. Everything around was illuminated by the pink rays of the setting sun, "on the black trampled ground the tents were white, and behind the tents the bare trunks of the plane tree were blackened" [7, p.95], "all sounds were heard especially morally, - and far ahead along the plain they were clean, rare air" [7, p.96].

Some of the soldiers finished cutting the clearing, the other rested in tents, the officers started a children's game in the towns. It was then that "a small man with beautiful legs" appeared [7, p.96] and with senseless hasty movements of his hands... The night in the mountains is also beautiful and impressive, but the unexpected meeting of the narrator with the drunk Guskov, who came out of the tent, beat off any hunting to admire the beauty of the landscape. The story ends with a short phrase: "I did not answer and silently got out onto the road" [7, p.120].

The reader sees Guskov through the eyes of the narrator, who hardly speaks about himself, but the sincere story about the meeting with the demoted allows the narrator himself to be examined.

The narrator is an officer who has been serving in the Caucasus for a long time, his own man in the detachment among ordinary officers, although he himself came out in the detachment among ordinary officers, although he himself came out of an aristocratic environment. He is characterized by serious curiosity and observation. Ordinary soldiers come into his field of vision, about whom he writes with warmth: "More than once I decreased my step, passing by a soldier's tent, in which a fire was shining, and listened either to the fairy tale told by the joker, or to the book read by the literate and listened to the whole squad, jammed in and around the tent, interrupting the reader from time to time with various remarks, or simply talking about the campaign, about the homeland, about the chiefs" [7, p. 109].

The story we have considered completes a kind of trilogy about the "Caucasian war". As a result, it is indisputable that L.N. Tolstoy was an opponent of the war in all its manifestations [2, p.17].

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