Politics and Poetics of the Novel: Using Domesticity to Create the Nation

Katherine Coric

A thesis submitted to the Department of English for honors

DUKE UNIVERSITY

Durham, North Carolina

2016

Acknowledgement

I would like to give thanks to all those who helped me complete this honors thesis, especially my advisor, Nancy Armstrong, without whom I most likely would never even have begun this journey. Her guidance and encouragement allowed me to fulfill one of the biggest accomplishments of my academic career, one that has been thoroughly interesting and engaging to me throughout the process.

Table of Contents

I. Introduction
II. War and Peace
III. Uncle Tom’s Cabin
IV. Waverley
V. Conclusion

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this honors thesis to my parents, Beth and Dom Coric, who have always supported me in all my academic endeavors, and who are responsible for teaching me the importance of faith, hope, and love.

Thank you for everything.

Epigraph

"As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes

the whole world in which we live."

-Pope John Paul II

I. Introduction

My distinction project explores how the family unit defines nationalism in the nineteenth century novel. I want to examine how the family can be viewed as a microcosm of the nation and how the family's structure provides a model for national identity. In analyzing three very different novels from distinct nations, I analyze how families collectively seek to maintain or challenge the unity of the nuclear family, what importance is placed on familial values, and how familial relations are affected by war and the state of the nation. I am especially interested in examining how the family exposes the values at stake under conditions of war and attempts to preserve them: How does it respond to the pressures of war and the new tasks of the nation that are forced upon its people in response to war? How does that pressure change the structure and values of family?

The family may appear to be subordinated to issues of nationhood during the high colonial period of the nineteenth century. My project will show that the great nation-making novels of Sir Walter Scott, Harriett Beecher Stowe, and Leo Tolstoy use the family to tell the story of the nation in a way that reveals the essential role of the family. I will focus on nationalism in Russia, Great Britain, and the United States as each used forms of family to maintain and reformulate nationhood under conditions of war.

Each of these nations has a particular narrative that unravels throughout the nineteenth century, and each of the novels that I am studying examines the relationship between national culture and family. I am especially interested in how the upper classes of Russia, the ethnic divides of England, and the slave plantations of the American south require quite different forms of family to reproduce their respective social systems. Generational

relationships will also have an effect on my research, as I would like to see how families sustained national traditions over time.

I use Scott's *Waverley* (1814) to examine the consolidation of Scotland and England at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) to explore the crisis of nationalism leading to Civil War in the United States, and Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1869) for a perspective of Russia later in the century. Finally, I question whether family values were reinforced or challenged by their portrayal in these novels. Specifically, I take a look at the characters of Natasha and Pierre in *War and Peace* and examine how they begin the novel in very different cultural spaces but end up in a unified ideal of Russian family. The Rostovs in general prove to be a fascinating subject for the study of family, since their intergenerational narrative is what ties the whole novel together. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* provides fodder for the study of how familial relations in both white and black families were destroyed by the institution of slavery. The dichotomy of Eva and Topsy sustains the argument, as the two girls are so different at first, not due to inherent differences but rather learned ones. Finally, Edward Waverley himself in *Waverley* is the perfect study for the division between Scottish and English roots as well as the role of political parties in family alliances. His lack of a unified moral upbringing leads to chaos in later years of his life, only furthered by the idealistic vision he has of life that is brought about by reading too many novels.

Overall, the topic of evolving nationalism as the roots of the Napoleonic Wars, the American Civil War, and the English and Scottish unification became visible is at the crux of my argument. I am fascinated by the interaction between economic classes and how the preservation of the family is inherently dependent on social status in some nations, while in

others, it is integral to daily life regardless of class. The backdrop of impending war only serves to heighten national differences, overturn the organization of the family hierarchy, and redefine the idea of the modern household.

My central question deals with the role of characters in novels as portrayals of domestic values that can be extrapolated to the whole nation. Interestingly, there are limitations in political theory's ability to define national identity through moral values, but fiction provides an answer where politics cannot. The novel theorizes this role and frames the basis of national family or household incompatible ethnos, which is how novelists take something apart in order to create a world. Superficially, the world that each of these novelists create is similar, but when broken into pieces, each one has roots in a very different national tradition. They each take apart the national identity of their respective nations, examine the effectiveness and morality of it, and recreate a world in the novel that explains the state of their nation in terms of the family unit.

II. *War and Peace*, Leo Tolstoy

War and Peace is acclaimed for displaying how thoroughly and intricately Tolstoy constructed the world of upper-class Russian citizens in the time of the Napoleonic Wars, especially considering that Tolstoy himself was not alive at the time that it was set. Readers of different social classes and nationalities have enjoyed the novel from the nineteenth century until the present day, becoming fascinated by the life of the Rostov family. Equally important and distinctive as the central narrative are his passages describing the historical details of war and the minutia of various battles that are so essential to the fictional story woven around them that the novel "makes modern war literature redundant" because, arguably, "writers coming after Tolstoy have told us nothing we do not find in Tolstoy."[1] By this statement in Mark Rawlinson's essay on the subject, he means to say that Tolstoy was not only an extremely well-informed historian and great writer of the wars that had already occurred prior to his lifetime, but also unusually prescient about the nature of wars to come.[2] However, Tolstoy's discourse on the origins of wars and great leaders, most prominently featured in the epilogue of the novel, would be relegated to the ranks of a great many other historiographers' treatises and war chronicles if it were not for the wonderfully crafted story that is put to work to place the readers into the story that it inhabits.

It is the family unit, the primary characters of the fictional noble Rostovs, that provides interest, cultural touch points, narrative, and significance within the novel. It is difficult to imagine following the story through to a historical accurate ending of the war without the trials and tribulations of the Rostov family that finally yield to the start of a new generation.Without interspersed scenes of young Nikolai Rostov going into battle and Pierre

---

[1]Rawlinson, Mark. "Does Tolstoy's *War and Peace* make modern war literature redundant?" *War and Literature*. 17 July 2014. Page 228.
[2]Ibid.

becoming lost in the confusion, as well as the indispensible character study of Napoleon himself, Tolstoy's detailed account of battle would fail to hold interest as time and governments passed. In other words, I am suggesting, it is the interplay between the chaos of war and the unifying factor of blood ties is what truly gives the war its significance in the novel.

Russians, especially those of the upper classes, are thrust into a new social situation by the war. With the destruction of Moscow, described in great detail in the novel, Russian nobility lost their homes, the unity and structure of their social circles, and the routine of their lives. Further still they are torn apart by the death of their family members in war, something we can feel acutely because of the intimacy with the Rostov family that the novel sustains throughout. Tolstoy is often criticized for his inaccurate portrayal of the historical characters in his novel; he appears to manipulate the personalities and motives of these men no less than he does his fictional heroes, and in doing so, plays fast and lose with facts that point to an alternative characterization.[3] In noting this problem, I want to ask, whether a novel *should* portray historical figures, even Napoleon, according to the historical evidence. Perhaps the novel has no intention of giving us an accurate account of history—it is a novel after all—and uses historical events and characters to convey something else.

Tolstoy was proficient in both fiction and nonfiction writing and could have just as easily written a battle history of the war around the prominent leaders whom history remembers. He chose to write a novel instead, which suggests that the novel could do something with historical narrative that history could not. However, Napoleon is said to have fainted in the novel, but in the context of the description of the insufferable Prince Hippolyte,

---

[3]Ibid.

who "spoke with such self-confidence that his hearers could not be sure whether what he said was very witty or very stupid."[4] He tells a story at a party that opens the novel, and relates how he saw Napoleon at the house of a well-known actress "and that in his presence Napoleon happened to fall into one of the fainting fits to which he was subject, and was thus at the duc's mercy," which incorporates a characteristic of Napoleon into the initial characterization of a somewhat important figure in the novel, the brother of Hélène, future wife of Pierre.[5] Hippolyte's story is less impressive considering that he plays the role of spectator to the whole scene. In this manner, Tolstoy uses rather minor character traits in well-known figures in order to better describe his fictional characters, and so the importance of the scene is not its grounding in historical fact, but rather, its significant characterization.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the entire novel that fully takes advantage of its form as a work of historical fiction is Tolstoy's reinforcement of a return to traditional Russian family values. Despite the fact that Tolstoy himself at various points described his great work as a novel and alternately decried the descriptor, what is not in doubt is his intention to write a "psychological history" that dealt with the subjective experiences of small groups of men as much as the formative events of a nation.[6] He describes his nation in terms what Russian culture is and also what it is not in comparison with other cultures. The un-translated original novel includes dialogue in both French and Russian, as well as quite a bit of cultural commentary on the differences between Russian society, which Tolstoy and the main characters of the novel favor as the culture of their homeland, and French society that provides contrast to Russia but is nonetheless examined with a precise and judicious critique. Ultimately, Tolstoy firmly solidifies his esteem and respect for Russian values by

---

[4]Tolstoy, Leo. *War and Peace*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. Print. Page 14.
[5]Ibid.
[6]Mandelker, Amy. "Introduction," *War and Peace*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. Print. Page vii.

ending the book with a new generation of postwar Russians who succeed in starting a family of their own. That he does not do so at the expense of other cultures is demonstrated by the marriage of Natasha, the embodiment of Russian traditional values, and Pierre, a bookish and socially inept young man educated in France.

A primary example of Tolstoy recognizing the importance of the process of deconstructing the world in which he wrote in order to fully embody the spirit of the Russian people is his decision to write *War and Peace* in the first place. He originally set out to write a novel that took place during the time in which he grew up about the generation that lived with the effects of the War of 1812 and conducted the Decembrist revolt in 1825. However, as he sketched out ideas in preparation for the project, he realized that the roots of such a story were so entrenched in the Napoleonic Wars that he would have to explore the earlier time period in order to fully flesh out the characters and events of his original novel idea, which demonstrates his commitment to the task of deconstructing Russian culture. Soon, his research expanded incredibly to form the basis of *War and Peace*.[7] Eventually, he decided that he would write a novel that followed a single family during the events leading up to the War of 1812 and the war itself, and as he began working, the project grew to such proportions that the prequel consumed him, and grew into an epic. Upon finishing and publishing the novel, Tolstoy apparently had little desire to carry out his original plan to write the Decembrist Revolt novel since he instead penned the contemporary drama *Anna Karenina* that took place in the 1870s. Arguably, *War and Peace* made it more possible for him to write about the present than the Decembrist Revolt, since the world in which Tolstoy was living at the time, one marked by the appearance of railroads across the nation and the

---

[7]Ibid. viii.

effects of emancipation on all social classes, clearly had its roots in the national identity formed by the war.[8] He never did return to the novel that was the reason for *War and Peace,* but the fact that the idea of this novel existed in Tolstoy's mind and was the origin of *War and Peace* is undeniably present in the fastidiousness with which he approached the world building of the novel he did write.

Tolstoy confines his story to the events surrounding one family, a technique that enables the reader to fully understand, through a detailed and realistic yet archetypical portrayal of a close-knit family unit of multiple generations, the idealized form of the Russian nuclear family. Not only does the reader understand the family unit, but through this technique, the audience also is able to care about the importance of the family to the nation in a way that they would not if the focus was not on a single family. Although the story does focus on the Rostovs, this certainly does not mean that there are few characters – the list of "principal characters" from one edition of the book includes no fewer than thirty-eight people – or that the story does not seem situated in reality.[9] Many are quick to point out the political verisimilitude in *War and Peace*; with the exception of a few minor errors, Tolstoy was largely quite accurate in his inclusion of dates, battle chronology, and names of historical figures. Rather, such a concentrated focus on a fictional family within a historical context serves to illustrate the connection between the family and national identity.

Familial bonds are so important not just to the plot but also to the historical situation of the novel that the word "family" is in the very first line, and the first page reveals the constant flow of history and time that both marks the story in a specific period and addresses the fact that it will span time as well. The opening is a quote, a bit of political gossip spoken

---

[8]Ibid. xvi.
[9]Ibid.

at a party that situates the reader firmly and quickly in the time and place of the novel. At the end of the bit of speech, the first description in the novel comes not of the content of the first lines, but rather of its speaker. Tolstoy writes,

> It was in July 1805, and the speaker was the well-known Anna Pavlovna Scherer, maid of honour and favourite of the Empress Marya Fyodorovna. With these words she greeted Prince Vasili, a man of high rank and importance, who was the first to arrive at her reception. Anna Pavlovna had had a cough for some days. She was, as she said, suffering from *la grippe*; *grippe* being then a new word in St. Petersburg, used only by the *elite*.[10]

Anna Pavlovna is the sort of minor character who is undoubtedly Russian, but is identified more with prewar Russia, and thus with a way of life that, by the publication of the novel, has faded. Her receptions are the type of high society events that are rendered useless and impossible once the war is completely underway. As people like Anna Pavlovna try to cling onto these behaviors and routines until the bitter end when the French are marching into Moscow, they appear unsympathetic to the war effort, and thus not sufficiently patriotic. After the war, when a more unified Russia emerges after having supported years of combat, titles of nobility and the circles that the rich move in become less relevant, and the nuclear family moves to the forefront of society as a structure that upholds traditional Russian values.

Thanks to abundant minor characters like Anna Pavlovna, the action of *War and Peace* might be difficult to follow. However, the same descriptions or qualities about main characters are repeated throughout in a manner similar to the use of epithets, which are often explicitly or implicitly tied to commentaries on the given character's relative Russian identity. Closely noticing the descriptors that are associated with any given character and then following that character's story arc reveals Tolstoy's overarching argument about which qualities are most closely associated with traditional Russian family values.

---

[10] Tolstoy 4.

Tolstoy focuses much of the attention of the ideal family member on one character. One of the most dynamic figures of the novel, Countess Natalia Ilyinichna Rostova, or Natasha, is just a girl when the action begins, but she is already a vibrant character. Often ascribed with characteristics of traditional Russia, she is seen in many situations that are not entirely realistic for a countess during this time period, but that are nonetheless heavily associated with Russian culture. Natasha is first introduced along with her brother and her cousin, who are playing with her when they burst through the doors to the room in which her parents are hosting a visitor. Although all of the children enter at once, Natasha is the one who is addressed, and also the one who is the center of attention because the celebration of her name-day is taking place. She is described before any of the other children are even named, and the following paragraph appears before she first speaks to her mother:

> This black-eyed, wide-mouthed girl, not pretty but full of life, with childish bare shoulders which after her run heaved and shook her bodice, with black curls tossed backward, thin bare arms, little legs in lace-frilled drawers, and feet in low slippers—was just at that charming age when a girl is no longer a child, though the child is not yet a young woman. Escaping from her father she ran to hide her flushed face in the lace of her mother's mantilla—not paying the least attention to her severe remark—and began to laugh. She laughed, and in fragmentary sentences tried to explain about a doll which she produced from the folds of her frock.[11]

From this description in combination with the fact that Natasha is the ultimate heroine of the novel, it can be inferred that obvious aesthetic beauty, such as that which is associated with Hélène Kuragina, a character often described as being more French than Russian, is not to be valued more highly than vivacity. The end of the paragraph, with Natasha running to her parents, emphasizes the close relationship she has with them, despite being exposed to numerous teachers, governesses, servants, and distant relations as part of the nobility.

---

[11]Ibid. 41.

Natasha's value of the familial institution is one of the cornerstones of the novel, and although she matures, she never loses her distinct submission to and respect for her parents. In this way, Natasha is already inhabiting Tolstoy's ideal moral traits, ones that can be seen in her relationship to the family and thus explain her relationship to the nation.

There are parts of Natasha's first description, such as her "black curls" and the fact that she appears to be "full of life," that are repeated throughout the novel whenever Natasha appears. Although she is thirteen and appears to be too old to be playing with dolls, her childishness is important. A sign of vivacity rather than immaturity, Natasha is most noted for her optimism and generally content disposition. This is emphasized even further by the shock with which her brief depression and period of mourning in the second half of the novel is met by the other characters. Tolstoy's affection for Natasha as a character is clear; although she is by no means perfect, the turn of events consistently seem to be in her favor, and in the end, she is happy and raising her own family, continuing the traditions of her childhood and passing them on to a new generation. Even though she is twenty years old at the conclusion of the novel, she makes her exit "smiling still more brightly" than ever and telling her husband of a "trifle" incident that happened in the nursery that day.[12] Fully occupied by the daily life of her family and unconcerned with trifles of high society, Natasha is the picture of, in Tolstoy's view, what a Russian woman should be in the postwar moment: devoted to both home and nation. Once again, the family is at the forefront of what Russians should value the most.

Tolstoy further sets Natasha apart from his other characters by putting her in unusual situations that reveal her purpose in the whole of the novel. At one point, Natasha and her

---

[12]Ibid. 1268.

brother Nikolai visit a small cabin in the woods in which an old man they call Uncle and a woman live, unmarried, and in the rustic setting of hunting, drinking vodka, and playing the guitar. One of the most iconic scenes of a novel full of memorable moments, this passage fully reinforces Natasha's role as an archetypical postwar Russian woman. Although there is a bit of suspicion cast on the occupants of the cabin due to the implication that they are not officially married – the woman is officially named Uncle's "housekeeper" – this is mostly ignored because, as members of the lower class and not relations of the Rostovs, they are not the focus.[13] Perhaps Tolstoy is hinting at a barrier in between the upper and lower classes; the poorer members of society do not have the luxury of possessing a legitimate and whole family. However, such little time is devoted to class differences in the novel – it is a subject explored in much greater detail in *Anna Karenina* – that it is difficult to tell exactly what Tolstoy meant by this.

The scene that takes place inside "Uncle's" dwelling directly follows a hunting scene, a rare Russian pastime that is rough and rustic, yet also suitable for nobility. Natasha is the minority of the party as a woman, and immediately draws the notice of the peasants she passes: "The presence of Natasha—a woman, a lady, and on horseback—raised the curiosity of the serfs to such a degree that many of them came up to her, stared her in the face, and [...] made remarks about her."[14] Although she fascinates the lower classes, the people who work the Russian land and are closely tied to its national identity, her designation as the "true Russian" character of the book does not allow her to acknowledge them as she revels in the excitement of the hunt. Prior to setting off, she stays true to character in her eagerness to hunt

[13]Ibid. 545.
[14]Ibid. 544.

and her teasing statement directed at the men: “I know a thing or two myself!”[15] Her independence, rather than being viewed as completely subversive as it might have been in many other European nations at the time, is portrayed as spirited and endearing. As in other sections of the novel, Natasha here is the perfect balance of loyalty to her family, with whom she hunts, and true connection with her nation, that is only to be gained with some contact with the land and natural environment. As she and her family enter the cabin following an exhilarating chase scene involving a vicious wolf, it is interesting to note that the children, Natasha and Nikolai, have been raised to call the old man “Uncle” even though he is of no relation to them, which further reinforces the positive associations with familial bonds and seems to imply that close friendship can do no better than to be compared to family ties.[16]

The entire episode in the cabin is a total aside that does little to further the overall plot, but it is incredibly important in solidifying the overall purpose of course Natasha. After the traditional serving of a bit of food, the couple sings and plays a traditional peasant song for the Rostovs, which sets in motion a rather unusual sequence of events that is not to be repeated in any subsequent section of the novel. Natasha is moved by the simple country music, called the balalaika, in a way that her brother is not, and she implores them to continue playing it to the point of being quite insistent that they perform better and longer than they have before. Suddenly, a change comes over her, and “Though Natasha has never before heard the folk song, it stirs some unknown feeling in her heart.” [17] She begins dancing perfectly in keeping with the spirit of the song: “Natasha threw off the shawl from her shoulders, ran forward to face Uncle, and setting her arms akimbo, also made a motion with

[15]Ibid. 532.
[16]Ibid. 544.
[17]Figes, Orlando. *Natasha’s Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*. New York, New York: Picador, 2002. Print. Page xxv.

her shoulders and struck an attitude."[18] She does not simply imitate what Uncle is doing, nor does she make up a dance that seems to fit with the beat. She is actually independently channeling the proper movements of the folk dance even though she does not consciously know them. Although there is no reason that Natasha should ever have learned such a dance or seen it being performed, she appears to naturally grasp the technique necessary to master a dance so unlike the waltzes she learned at home, which brings her closer to the cultural traditions of Russian than a girl from a noble family would usually be.

The reaction of the other characters present is quite telling. Uncle, who is most connected to the folk song, has seen what he "expected of her," whereas his housekeeper, as a woman, was so moved that she "had tears in her eyes" and the others were all "admiring her."[19] What is significant here is that none of the characters are shocked at something that should be shocking, which reveals their complete acceptance of Natasha's role as the embodiment of the Russian national identity, something that is youthful like Natasha herself and carries on to the new generation, yet is also traditional and, in a way, morally good because it is the custom of the people.

Tolstoy suggests that the reason for such an act that should really be out of character for someone of Natasha's age, background, gender, and social status is that she is the perfect representation of all that is Russian, and thus is intuitively at home with Russian traditions of all backgrounds. He is also subtly suggesting that lower class peasant families are, in fact, more Russian than the titled classes, since the higher the class of family, the more they associate with foreigners and attempt to model their society behavior on the customs of England and France. Real Russian national character, like Natasha's dance, cannot be

---

[18]Tolstoy 548.
[19]Ibid. 549.

imitated or taught. No matter how many French governesses she has had or "fashionable" dances she has been forced to learn, Natasha was born with the spirit of Russia "imbibed from the Russian air she breathed."[20] In this section of the novel, she embodies the Russian culture, and in later chapters, she will be prepared to pass the traits of Russian culture, morality, and identity on to a new generation.

In his book *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia,* Orlando Figes argues that the importance of Natasha's instinctual knowledge of the country dance lies far beyond her own characterization in the novel and moves to comment on "impressions of the national consciousness, which mingle with politics and ideology, social customs and beliefs, folklore and religion, habits and conventions, and all the other mental bric-à-brac that constitute a culture and a way of life" in Russia.[21] The novel does address all of these aspects, but Figes is in doubt as to whether it convincingly portrays a unified view of Russia in relation to each one. He concludes that Tolstoy intended to convey, "that a nation such as Russia may be held together by the unseen threads of a native sensibility," such as that which is found in Natasha, and spends the rest of the book examining the culture surrounding folk dances to explore whether this might be possible.[22] Although Figes regards the idea with much skepticism, there is certainly evidence that Tolstoy believed that every aspect of Russian culture contributed to the larger national identity. In his view, the Russian family formed a unified front that agreed on the primary traits a Russian woman should embody, and these traits would transcend class boundaries, just as Natasha's dance did.

Natasha's happiness in the dancing scene is therefore directly related to the character of a domestic sphere that is capable of maintaining its continuity over time despite violent

[20]Ibid. 548.
[21]Figes xxvi.
[22]Ibid.

historical change. Accordingly, the lyrics to the song that is being sung refer to a woman who is in the process of doing daily chores such as fetching water. Although she and her family members have so much fun, when Uncle suggests that they need to find her a husband, she is suddenly troubled as she admits that she is already engaged to Bolkonsy because she wonders if he "would not approve of or understand [their] gaity."[23] She ultimately comes to the conclusion that he would fit in with their happy party well enough, but but Bolkonsky's eventual death in war prevents Natasha from marrying him, making it possible for her to marry Pierre. Perhaps Pierre would not have fit in this scene at the moment of its occurrence in the novel, but by the end, it is certainly possible that he would have enjoyed listening to the music just as much as his wife would and would be watching Natasha with rapt attention. The men's relative disposability in this scene puts the focus on Natasha as the culture bearer: the fact that she is a woman makes her more suitable to espouse the values of the family.

Performing a traditional folk dance away from her family estate is hardly Natasha's only display of national fervor that seems to defy her gender and class situation, as she has many other traits that allow her, as both a female and a member of the upper class, to uniquely represent Russian culture. Although it is fashionable to do so, she does not speak French nearly as much as other characters in the novel, such as Pierre. Before the war, many of the elite switch between languages when talking amongst themselves so as not to reveal their conversation to servants. However, after the war, it is quite dangerous to appear French like the enemy, and speaking French is much less common. Thus it is revealed that Natasha was on the right side of things all along. It is not just French culture that Natasha is contrasted against. Early on in the novel, Natasha is justaposed against her older sister, Vera,

---

[23]Tolstoy 549.

who marries a German, Berg. Vera is quiet, stern, and condescending, declaring to Natasha at the beginning of the novel: "there can never be anything wrong in my behavior" to Berg, at that time only a suitor.[24] Although Vera is family, she is in many ways considered a more distant relation than some of the Rostovs' closest friends because she has so many German mannerisms like her husband, and consequently, she leaves the scope of the novel quite quickly and completely soon after her marriage. This is not a total condemnation of internationalism by Tolstoy, but it is a cautionary tale: families that try to model themselves against the culture of another nation are in danger of losing all Russian identity entirely.

To fully understand Natasha as the personification of Russian womanhood, one must study her counterpoint, Pierre. His starting point at his introduction to the novel is so markedly different from Natasha's, yet ultimately they are married and together they close the narrative. He enters the novel well before the reader is introduced to the Rostovs, at Anna Pavlovna's reception that opens the book. His initial description is quite unflattering in terms of his physical appearance as well as his position in society:

> One of the next arrivals was a stout, heavily built young man with close-cropped hair, spectacles, the light-coloured breeches fashionable at that time, a very high ruffle and a brown dress-coat. The stout young man was an illegitimate son of Count Bezukhov, a well-known grandee of Catherine the Great's time who now lay dying in Moscow. The young man had not yet entered either the military or civil service, as he had only just returned from abroad where he had been educated, and this was his first appearance in society.[25]

Although Pierre is typically associated with the French cultural environment in which he was educated and ends up being one of the most celebrated and happiest characters at the novel's conclusion, it is important to recognize that Pierre undergoes much more of a cultural change than Natasha. While Natasha has much personal growth ahead of her at the beginning of the

---

[24] Ibid. 49.
[25] Ibid. 10.

novel due to her relatively young age and immaturity, she remains relatively stable in her overarching values and beliefs, with the exception of a brief period of religious fervor brought on by disaster in war. Pierre, however, never quite outgrows his antisocial tendencies and unattractive physical appearance, Pierre is the one who is emotionally altered by the end of the novel. Natasha completes the process of reintegrating him into the Russian traditional family life, because as the feminine ideal, her happiness is tied quite closely to the domestic sphere and also to her nationality. In the epilogue, Pierre begins speaking to Natasha, and "At that moment it seemed to him that he was chosen to give a new direction to the whole of Russian society and to the whole world."[26] It is a grand statement, but one nonetheless fitting for the husband of Natasha, the embodiment of Russia.

In Tolstoy's Russia, the family is preserved in all aspects of society. Although *War and Peace* spans decades, the familial bonds in the Rostov family are strong, and its members remain close throughout the novel. While he still holds his French tendencies, Pierre fails to produce any children and exists in a loveless marriage. However, when he embraces his Russian nationality, he is able to find happiness with Natasha, who has been the embodiment of life and goodness throughout the novel. French and German culture, as well as other influences from Western Europe, are not uniformly disparaged, but must be adopted with caution into pre-existing Russian traditions. The war only serves to bring the Russian noble family closer together, inspire patriotism, and reinforce the idea that the family is the cornerstone of Russian national identity and morality.

---

[26]Ibid. 1267.

II. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Harriet Beecher Stowe

Contrary to the closeness within the family seen in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, perhaps the most striking aspect of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is the sheer disregard for the maintenance of the family unit. Slave and slaveholding families are destroyed and broken up throughout the novel, and there is no satisfying resolution to this problem at the close of the novel. Stowe anticipates the American Civil War, something that was considered a strong possibility at the time of the novel's publication but was by no means a foregone conclusion. Of course, given the structure of the American south at the time and the laws of the slave trade, it is to be expected that slaves who were not born free have no rights to stay with their family, even if those family members are mothers and their small children or husbands and wives. However, Stowe doe not confine her broken-family narrative to the slaves themselves, extending it to their owners as well. The Shelby family is divided on the issue of selling two of their slaves, and the white, slave owning family of Augustine St. Clare and his daughter Eva is torn apart throughout the novel, even though the family structure of white Americans was not exposed to the same fragility as that of slaves. Ultimately, Stowe concludes that the family unit as a societal and national structure is not only insufficient to create a national morality, but in fact impossible to maintain at all in the prewar moment of the United States.

The book is divided into two main storylines, which are connected by the titular slave, Tom. The first family, run by the head of the house Mr. Shelby, begins with a separation when the slave owners are forced to sell two of their slaves, Tom and a child named Harry, because of financial troubles. Mr. Shelby's family has always kept the families of their slaves together, so this marks an especially dreadful departure. Tom is eventually

sold to a man named St. Clare, whose family is torn apart bit by bit as the story progresses so much so that the only family members left at the close of the novel are the cruel second wife of St. Clare, Marie, and his cousin Miss Ophelia who moves back to New England.

Stowe more often expresses ideals of morality through exposing the flaws in her characters, rather than presenting the reader with an abundance of morally good characters from the start. She uncovers the weaknesses in both the north and the south of the United States through her narration, which points to the sub-textual purpose of various events and figures. The narrator comments liberally on the characters throughout, making implicit judgments through descriptions of people and events. On the very first page, the narration opens with a very explanation standard of the setting: "Late in the afternoon of a chilly day in February, two gentlemen were sitting alone over their wine, in a well-furnished dining parlor, in the town of P---, in Kentucky. […] discussing some subject with great earnestness."[27] At this point, the reader discerns very little in the way of bias towards the narrator. The men who are speaking are discussing the details of the sale of two slaves, a common enough scene within the time period and in fact in the novel itself. However, Stowe's narrator does not stay unbiased for long. The action of the scene is interrupted by an interjection:

> For convenience sake, we have said, hitherto, two *gentlemen*. One of the parties, however, when critically examined, did not seem, strictly speaking, to come under the species. He was a short, thick-set man, with coarse, commonplace features, and that swaggering air of pretension which marks a low man who is trying to elbow his way upward in the world […] His conversation was in free and easy defiance of Murray's Grammar, and was garnished at convenient intervals with various profane expressions, which not even the desire to be graphic in our account shall induce us to describe.[28]

The man in question is Mr. Haley, the slave trader, and the opinions expressed about him stand entirely apart from the narrative. Clearly, he would not describe himself in such a way,

---

[27]Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. New York, New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2003. Page 3.
[28]Ibid.

and it is unlikely that Mr. Shelby would use quite those terms either. The one who holds the most disgust for his "profane expressions" and "commonplace features" is, in fact, the narrator.

One of the most salient points to make about the narrator is that a first person plural voice is used without any obvious explanation. In his essay, "The Multiplicity of Implied Authors and the Complex Case of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*," Patrick Colm Hogan uses the term "implied author" to discuss the fact that the novel seems to have an outside narrative voice that is a combination of Stowe's private views and an unknown speaker's opinion or, in some cases, multiple speakers' opinions.[29] This provides a platform for Stowe to expound upon her views on slavery, the family structure, and morality within the structure of the novel. Hogan explains the unusual narrative style by saying: "Rather than a single, consistent authorial or implied authorial intent, our cognitive architecture actually predicts that we will find partially contradictory ideas and attitudes."[30] In other words, the reader is prepared for the sentiments expressed and actions taken by the characters do not correspond with Stowe's personal beliefs, and in fact she might explicitly contradict them by using the device of the narrator. Hogan continues by saying, "These partial contradictions affect not only theme and emotional response, but even some story elements, such as characterization," an effect that is evident even from the very first page, after which the reader is given hints at the anti-slavery message of the novel from the negative characterization of the slave trader.[31] The chapter titles continue the use of narrator interference as they all provide fourth wall breaks in which the fact that they are dividing up the drama for reader consumption is acknowledged; for

---

[29]Hogan, Patrick Colm. "The Multiplicity of Implied Authors and the Complex Case of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*," *Narrative,* 20.1. January 2012. Page 25.
[30]Ibid.
[31]Ibid.

example, the first chapter is entitled, “In Which the Reader is Introduced to a Man of Humanity.”[32] This betrays the fact that the narrator is conscious of an audience and wants not just to be heard, but also to be understood. It is important to review this concept of narration before examining the characters and extrapolating Stowe’s view on family from them, because

In examining the Shelby family, it becomes clear that even “well-meaning” slave owners, or ones who do not treat their slaves in as horrific a manner as others, are unable to fully realize a state of unity in family morals because of the institution of slavery. First, it is helpful to examine the relationship of the father, Mr. Shelby, who makes all slaveholding and other important decisions, with the rest of his family. The novel opens with Mr. Shelby’s acquiescence to selling his slave Tom, who he has owned for many years and who is something of a father figure to the other slaves, because of money troubles. Not only did he never warn Tom or any of the other slaves that he was going to do so, he does not consult his own family in any way. His wife is a devout Christian woman who believes that slavery is morally wrong but has resigned herself to owning them because her family depends upon them so greatly and her husband is the only one with the legal right to free them anyway. She has a violently negative reaction to his admission that he has sold Tom along with Eliza’s small child, Harry:

> “This is God’s curse on slavery!—a bitter, bitter, most accursed thing!—a curse to the master and a curse to the slave! I was a fool to think I could make anything good out of such a deadly evil. It is a sin to hold a slave under laws like ours,—I always felt it was,—I always thought so when I was a girl,—I thought so still more after I joined the church; but I thought I could gild it over,—I thought, by kindness, and care, and instruction, I could make the condition of mine better than freedom—fool that I was!”[33]

---

[32] Stowe 3.
[33] Ibid. 35.

Mr. Shelby's decision to sell Tom and Harry has torn apart his family as well as Tom's family and Eliza's as well. The Shelby family has the most selfish of all reasons for keeping all of their slaves: they could not possibly function without the labor. This is the first sign from Stowe that the institution of slavery, even outside the realm of the novel, is an evil. This reasoning even appeals to those white readers in Stowe's own time who could not be persuaded on the basis of the humanity of blacks to abolish slavery. From the perspective of the white family, Stowe suggests that it is wrong for any family to be so dependent on others that the family cannot exist as an independent unit of society. This problem can be extrapolated to the whole nation, since the United States, especially the south, is dependent on a whole other "nation" of people, blacks, who are not citizens and not considered part of the "unit" and yet are responsible for allowing it to function.

Mr. Shelby's wife does acknowledge the tragic aspect of the sale of Tom and Harry in the separation of the slave families, and her actions ultimately aid in Eliza's escape with her son Harry, since she insists upon delaying the hunting party for them as long as possible. She also eventually aims to buy Tom again after Mr. Shelby dies, although she is too late to do so. The fact that her actions have more positive consequences than most in the novel validates her position on slavery: the most good will come out of abolishing it all together, and of taking any action necessary to keep families together. However, she is in no way the savior of the novel, because her efforts are not enough: Tom still dies alone and at the hands of a cruel slave owner. Initially, when his wife is confronted with Tom's inevitable departure, Mr. Shelby emphasizes to her that his reasoning is due to family financial troubles, and she offers to make sacrifices in order to keep all of the slaves they own together. However, he explains that there is no way around selling at least two of them, which suggests that making

sacrifices to maintain current life, or changing the details of slavery while keeping the institution, is insufficient to fix the lack of a unified American morality. It is only when she reaches that conclusion that she decries the institution of slavery altogether. She does not express any desire to sell all of the slaves – she sees that it is far to late to take such drastic measures that would surely ruin them financially, and she also knows that there is no way that her husband would decide on such a course of action, but she does know that possessing them is wrong, and in this way, Mrs. Shelby is one of the only characters that truly recognizes the connection between the evils of slavery and the importance of keeping families together.

Another candidate that Stowe offers as the pinnacle of moral goodness is Eva, the child of Augustine St. Clare who convinces him to buy Tom after Tom saves her from drowning off a boat on his way to be sold. Often described as angelic, Eva is juxtaposed with Topsy, a black child that eventually comes under the ownership of her family. They are both little girls of similar age on opposing sides of the institution of slavery: one is a victim of it and the other is unknowingly privileged because of it. While Topsy's unruliness is contrasted with Eva's near perfect behavior, Topsy's lack of morals is blamed on her lack of a family, while Eva's goodliness seems a gift from God. The first description of Eva when Tom sees her on the ship introduces Eva as a young girl, no older than six years old. However, for such a young age, her description is nothing short of remarkable and nearly heavenly:

> Her form was the perfection of childish beauty, without its usual chubbiness and squareness of outline. There was about it an undulating and aerial grace, such as one might dream of for some mythic and allegorical being. Her face was remarkable less for its perfect beauty of feature than for a singular and dreamy earnestness of expression, which made the ideal start when they looked at her, and by which the dullest and most literal were impressed, without exactly knowing why. The shape of her head and the turn of her neck and bust was peculiarly noble, and the long golden-brown hair that floated like a cloud around it, the deep spiritual gravity of her violet

> blue eyes, shaded by heavy fringes of golden brown,—all marked her out from other children, and made every one turn and look after her, as she glided hither and thither on the boat.[34]

The narrator continues in this direction, contrasting Eva with all other children her age and pointing out that she is remarkably mature, yet not because of any tragic event or terrible life that has befallen her. She is just the right amount of serious with no sadness or anger in her. The idea here is that Eva is much more of a symbol than she is a real child – that much is clear, since she is far to prescient for her age, even if she were a very smart child. From the start, she sees the good in the people who deserve it, such as Tom, Topsy, and her father. She warms everyone's hearts individually, but as she is only a child, is unable to effect real change in her short time. Stowe shows the reader that even the angel is completely unable to keep her family together. Her father dies unglamorously in a freak accident and she does not live past childhood herself. Her mother never even entered the novel's timeline since her death had already occurred, and her stepmother, Marie, is a terrible mother, wife, and slave owner whose entire world is centered around her own ailments. The best intentions of a child arise from her innocence, and it is only when adults recognize such a point of view that the nation can begin to reform itself.

Eva as a contrasted to Topsy might seem at first to be a reinforcing of racial stereotypes, but it is actually more of a sign of the kind of person who Topsy could be if she had had a life more similar to Eva's. St. Clare gives Tospy to his cousin, Miss Ophelia, as a missionary project, but despite her sometimes-good intentions and spirited demeanor, she cannot seem to stop causing trouble even though she understands what is expected of her and has been taught about love and God through Eva herself. Stowe makes it clear that Topsy is

---

[34]Ibid. 143-144.

not bad because she is black, although at first Miss Ophelia and even Rosa, one of the more light-skinned slaves, seem to think so.[35] At the start, the audience is introduced to her in terms of her unkempt appearance, which initially appears to reinforce their beliefs:

> She was one of the blackest of her race; and her round shining eyes, glittering as glass beads, moved with quick and restless glances over everything in the room. Her mouth, half open with astonishment at the wonders of the new Mas'r's parlor, displayed a white and brilliant set of teeth. Her woolly hair was braided in sundry little tails, which stuck out in every direction. The expression of her face was an odd mixture of shrewdness and cunning, over which was oddly drawn, like a kind of veil, an expression of the most doleful gravity and solemnity. She was dressed in a single filthy, ragged garment, made of bagging; and stood with her hands demurely folded before her.[36]

In this description, Topsy's darkness seems directly related to the mischievousness of her demeanor. She responds the following instructions from St. Clare's "with sanctimonious gravity, her wicked eyes twinkling as she spoke,"[37] and the narrator already has ascribed demonic characteristics before Topsy has done anything to deserve them. However, Stowe's further treatment of Topsy reveals that Topsy is no more a demon than Eva is an angel: they are both simply children who are given these extreme characteristics by those around them who look to race to explain the imperfections in society around them.

The audience comes to understand Topsy's behavioral problems as a symptom of slavery rather than race. Later, when Miss Ophelia begins questioning Topsy as to her origins to better understand where she might begin in educating her and converting her to Christianity, Topsy admits that she did not have a mother and does not know where she came from or how old she is. After some more prodding on the part of Miss Ophelia, who thinks that the girl must be trying to trick her, Topsy says: "never had no father nor mother, nor nothin'. I was raised by a speculator, with lots of others" and continues by denying all

---

[35]Ibid. 236.
[36]Ibid. 235.
[37]Ibid. 236.

knowledge of God.[38] Stowe emphasizes that Topsy has no family to begin with, and thus her bad behavior, which includes stealing and directly disobeying orders later in the novel, is blamed on the lack of love in her life. Family is supposed to provide love and religious education, but Topsy has known nothing but disdain from cruel owners, and thus has no motivation to behave well. The institution of slavery is what made her misbehave, and freedom from its evils are the only correction and substitution for familiar love. Topsy is redeemed by the end of the novel, thanks in part to the efforts of Miss Ophelia.

The character of Miss Ophelia, St. Clare's cousin, demonstrates how the moral divide in the United States occurred along physical boundaries, as she prides herself on being from New England, where slavery does not consume lives, families, and society like it does in the south. However, Miss Ophelia is not without her flaws, and she is the perfect vehicle for Stowe to condemn all of America for letting slavery continue. The north is in no way blameless for slavery, and its inhabitants are more than a little racist. While it is not quite as economically beneficial to the north to have slaves since there are very few plantations, northerners are still responsible for the mistreatment of blacks and the cooperation with southern slavery laws. Miss Ophelia, although she experiences development throughout the novel, is quite obviously disgusted by Topsy at first, which makes her acceptance of her at the close of the novel that much more impressive.

Miss Ophelia's orderliness, called into action because Eva's mother is dead and she needs a woman other than her stepmother Marie to raise her, is her primary positive characteristic at the beginning of the novel, but it is also the reason why the slaves of the household disgust her. Whereas Marie does not hesitate to interact with the slaves because

---

[38]Ibid. 239.

she is selfish and lazy and is in constant need of their services, Miss Ophelia believes in the virtue of housework and would rather complete most tasks herself rather than assign them to slaves, who she regards as dirty and disgusting. She associates the slave's lack of individual motivation separate from their masters' orders with laziness, which she hates above all:

> The great sin of sins, in her eyes,—the sum of all evils,—was expressed by one very common and important word in her vocabulary—"shiftlessness." Her finale and ultimatum of contempt consisted in a very emphatic pronunciation of the word "shiftless;" and by this she characterized all modes of procedure which had not a direct and inevitable relation to accomplishment of some purpose then definitely had in mind. People who did nothing, or who did not know exactly what they were going to do, or who did not take the most direct way to accomplish what they set their hands to, were objects of her entire contempt,—a contempt shown less frequently by anything she said, than by a kind of stony grimness, as if she scorned to say anything about the matter.[39]

Stowe endorses the belief that everyone, even white women, should be occupied with some sort of labor to help support their family, which furthers the idea that slavery takes this purpose away from slaveholding women and does not let them achieve their purpose within the American household: usefulness. However, what Stowe does not support about Miss Ophelia's initial beliefs is her association with slaves and laziness. Miss Ophelia initially blames the slaves for the fact that they seem to take no initiative and have very little education in the Bible, although of course she comes to realize that they are only products of the system of slavery, and she takes it upon herself to love and educated them.

At the end of the novel, "Miss Ophelia took Topsy home to Vermont with her," which can be seen as a sort of penance for Miss Ophelia's previous mistreatment of and disgust for Topsy and the other characters throughout the novel.[40] While there, Topsy "showed so much intelligence, activity and zeal, and desire to do good in the world, that she was at last recommended, and approved as a missionary to one of the stations in Africa," just

---

[39]Ibid. 156.
[40]Ibid. 429.

as Eliza and her family end up fleeing to Africa as well.[41] The scattering of the remaining black characters to Africa further reinforces the fact that the United States, as it is before the Civil War, is completely incompatible with the idea of a nuclear family. Family values are not the basis of national morality, and there is no unified idea of national morality at all since morals are the basis of what is tearing the nation apart more visibly during the events of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Although Stowe could not possibly have known the exact outcome or nature of the war, at the time she wrote the novel it could be pretty well presumed that a civil war was a distinct possibility, and Stowe had to have known that if it came to that, the war would be a complete overhaul of the nation, and consequently, it would result in a necessary reshaping of national values.

The conclusion of the novel and where each character is left at its close reveal Stowe's beliefs about the future state of the nation. Of course, many characters have died throughout the course of the novel, and, unlike those who died fighting the French in *War and Peace,* these characters died for seemingly no reason. Eva dies of an unspecified illness with the belief that her last act was setting Tom free, but as this never comes to pass, her wishes are left unfulfilled and the meaning of her life empty. St. Clare's legacy is completely destroyed by his wife's cruel actions following his death, and Miss Ophelia never finds happiness with Topsy until they move back up north. Furthermore, the black characters are not seen as truly happy until they have returned to Africa, which is not at all a satisfactory ending as it further establishes the incompatibility of the family network, especially that of the black family, with the United States cultural identity at the time. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* examines a society that is divided in so many ways. Americans are divided by race and their

[41] Ibid.

views on it as well as the support or condemnation of slavery, and these issues make it difficult to establish any kind of unified moral front on the basis of religion, traditional culture, or any other type of national identity.

III. *Waverley,* Sir Walter Scott

Sir Walter Scott's novel *Waverley* bears many similarities to *War and Peace* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the topic of preparing for as well as fearing the start of war as a necessary agent of change in society. Two sides of the same family support opposing political parties, and already the family is in a dubious position, just as it was in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. However, the main character of *Waverley* remains relatively unaffected by the events of the novel, and the family by no means seems to be in the same amount of danger at its close than at the start. Edward Waverley's struggle with his political loyalties and whether he aligns himself with the English side of his family or the Scottish is at the center of the novel, accompanying his romantic conflict with choosing between Rose or Flora. Scott makes a definite point about the role of the family and the necessity of a strong, unified moral identity in raising a member of society at the start of the novel, and by the end of it, has made a positive ending out of an outcome that is disastrous for many of the characters of the novel: the defeat of the Scottish rebels. In this way, Scott paves the way for a more unified national identity to arise once the two opposing groups have had time to adjust to the change.

The central conflict of the novel, which is much more focused on the contradictory familial ties of Edward than on the battles that take place throughout, is presented at its opening, after a brief discussion of why the secondary title "'Tis Sixty Years Since" was chosen. *Waverley,* unlike *War and Peace* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* has a clear main character that the reader follows uninterrupted throughout the whole novel. This man is the titular Edward Waverley, whom Scott describes as the "hero" of the book in the opening chapters. The action begins with Edward leaving the house of his uncle Everard, "the affectionate old uncle to whose title and estate he was presumptive heir" in order to join a regiment of the

cavalry.[42] Immediately, interfamilial division is introduced in the form of Everard's long-standing disagreement with his brother:

> A difference in political opinions had early separated the Baronet from his younger brother Richard Waverley, the father of our hero. Sir Everard had inherited from his sires the whole train of Tory or High-Church predilections and prejudices which had distinguished the house of Waverley since the Great Civil War. Richard, on the contrary, who was ten years younger, beheld himself born to the fortune of a second brother, and anticipated neither dignity nor entertainment in sustaining the character of Will Wimble. He saw early that, to succeed in the race of life, it was necessary he should carry as little weight as possible.[43]

Scott brings the division between the two brothers to the forefront of the novel because it is the force that will ultimately drive the story and determine Edward's fate. The entire plot of the novel, although it claims and changes the lives of many others, seems simply to be a diversion to Edward, and by the end of the novel he is, in many ways, exactly where he started. Having led a sheltered life, Edward is portrayed as naïve, indecisive, and immature. Many of his actions throughout the novel, whether in political alliances or romantic ones, are based on whims or the desire to live a more adventurous life. Troublingly, one of the only lessons Edward seems to have learnt by the end of the novel is that he no longer wishes to go on any more adventures, and he has settled down to resume the life that he should have led straight from the start of the novel. Perhaps, however, Edward has really learned the value of family, something that he was never quite sure of on his own but now intends to start with his marriage to Rose.

Edward's marriage to Rose, and consequent development of the desire to start a family, is at many points of the book left in serious doubt. He wastes much time pursuing Flora after being interested in Rose when he first takes leave from the cavalry, although by

---

[42]Scott, Sir Walter. *Waverley; or, 'Tis Six Years Since*. London: Penguin Books, 2011. Page 6.
[43]Ibid.

the end of the novel he has renewed his courtship of Rose and left Flora in grief and guilt to become a nun, apparently heedless of what consequences his actions have had for her. At various points in the novel he seems to switch alliances, abandoning the cavalry, getting into duels, and changing his political opinions without much thought. By the end of the novel, the reader has certainly observed the dangers of putting Edward in such a position that he might switch family, and thus political, alliances easily and at will, but since Edward concludes the narrative happily married to Rose, perhaps Scott is making the point that Edward has finally had the choice made for him: the battles are over, the alliances he formed with Fergus are destroyed when he is executed. The nation has moved towards a unity whether Edward is ready for it or not. Edward's life as a young man is not suited for the ideals of English unity; he is not even sure if he should align with the English or the Scottish, and he has been raised with virtually no sense of unified family.

Undoubtedly, Scott believes that one of the more prominent reasons why Edward brings chaos wherever he goes is his upbringing, during which he was not allowed to simply stay with his father. When his father was away on business for the better part of the year,

> Edward was transferred to Waverley-Honour, and experienced a total change of instructors and of lessons, as well as of residence. This might have been remedied had his father placed him under the superintendence of a permanent tutor. But he considered that one of his choosing would probably have been unacceptable at Waverley-Honour, and that such a selection as Sir Everard might have made, were the matter left to him, would have burdened him with a disagreeable inmate, if not a political spy, in his family. He therefore prevailed upon his private secretary, a young man of taste and accomplishments, to bestow an hour or two on Edward's education while at Brerewood Lodge, and left his uncle answerable for his improvement in literature while an inmate at the Hall.[44]

[44]Ibid. 12.

This manner of haphazard and contradictory education would negatively affect even the most strong-willed of protagonists, but Edward in particular falls prey to it because of his easily swayed mind. As a young child, he was spoiled due to supposed ill health, which the narrator implies did not actually stem from a real physical ailment at all, and as a young man, he is allowed to study the subjects that interest him. He particularly enjoys literature, and it is at this admission that the reader is first informed of Edward's tendency toward the romantic. He imagines himself a hero the books that he reads, and the consistency of the adventurous characters that he encounters in them provide more of a framework for Edward's moral beliefs and later actions than either of his father figures do. Before the narrative has proven it, Scott's narrator asserts that Edward has been greatly misled by his obsession with literature that lacks a strong foundation in real world events to complement it: "And yet, knowing much that is known but to few, Edward Waverley might justly be considered as ignorant, since he knew little of what adds dignity to man, and qualifies him to support and adorn an elevated situation in society."[45] This single line foreshadows the total lack of preparedness that Edward has to face a society in which he is responsible for supporting a position, a family, or an identity that affects many more people than himself alone.

In a way reminiscent of Topsy from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, though to a much lesser degree, Edward's education has been neglected by the people who are supposed to care for him, much to the detriment of his young adult self:

> The occasional attention of his parents might indeed have been of service to prevent the dissipation of mind incidental to such a desultory course of reading. But his mother died in the seventh year after the reconciliation between the brothers, and Richard Waverley himself, who, after this event, resided more constantly in London, was too much interested in his own plans of wealth and ambition to notice more respecting Edward than that he was of a

---

[45] Scott 15.

> very bookish turn, and probably destined to be a bishop. If he could have discovered and analysed his son's waking dreams, he would have formed a very different conclusion.[46]

Edward is largely ignored as an adolescent, and his morals are not shaped in any definite way because of his lack of an involved family and strong cultural ties. This leads to his ambivalent attitude that pervades the novel.

Edward does not show much reason when it comes to making decisions. Even towards the end of the novel, after the rebel army has given up and turned back in defeat, Edward is still indecisive as to whether to choose Flora or Rose. Although this level of indecision would be considered ridiculous even with the most comparable of ladies, the two women are very dissimilar in personality and appearance and, perhaps most importantly, Flora does not share his affections while Rose does. In fact, Flora has rejected him quite firmly several times throughout the novel, and yet Edward still narrowly avoids having to duel two different times because of his general ineptitude in courting women. Both times he is saved by men his senior, which happens many times throughout the novel. Edward met Rose and fell in love, albeit a tenuous and fragile love, with her fairly early in the novel. She is described as possessing beauty but also being very unobtrusive, almost to a fault. Edward, although he knows somewhere within himself that Rose is a good match for him, fails to be impressed by her to a degree that would match that of his favorite novels, with their imaginative and passionate romances:

> She was indeed a very pretty girl of the Scotch cast of beauty, that is, with a profusion of hair of paley gold, and a skin like the snow of her own mountains in whiteness. Yet she had not a pallid or pensive cast of countenance; her features, as well as her temper, had a lively expression; her complexion, though not florid, was so pure as to seem transparent, and the slightest emotion sent her whole blood at once to her face and neck. Her form, though

[46]Scott 15.

> under the common size, was remarkably elegant, and her motions light, easy, and unembarrassed. She came from another part of the garden to receive Captain Waverley, with a manner that hovered between bashfulness and courtesy.[47]

Edward is instead entranced by the uniqueness he sees in Flora, something he is drawn to without any sort of real sense of why. Continually, he is led astray by what distracts him because of his lack of a strong moral background.

By the end of the novel, Edward has lived through intense conflict and the loss of several people with whom he was close. He comes to a sort of realization about the fact that he should have been more realistic in understanding exactly what he was undertaking at various points rather than electing to act without thinking. He knows that he was not instructed in morality and the importance of family, but he is ready to move on with his life and start a family that will be united. His future and the future of his family has been determined for them because of the outcome of the uprising, and he is saved from his endless cycle of indecision. Edwards now knows to which political parties and family members he should remain faithful, however, the fact that he has not arrived at this conclusion on his own means that he is still left with some of his early romanticism, something that seems to be in contrast with the end of Scott's novel. In his essay concerning romanticism in the novel, Paul Hamilton addresses this contradiction by saying, "*Waverley* is ostensibly critical of romanticism, the romanticism of its young hero, Edward Waverley, and of the Jacobite cause constitutionally attractive to someone of this disposition. Yet romanticism turns out to be [...] the deep truth for which the narrative must find an image."[48] Hamilton is confirming that Scott in no way makes the point that romanticism has no place in the English ideal of family

---

[47]Scott 43-44.
[48]Hamilton, Paul. "*Waverley*: Scott's Romantic Narrative and Revolutionary Historiography". *Studies in Romanticism* 33.4 (1994). Page 613.

and morality. Rather, the entire novel is a tribute to as well as a critique of romanticism because it was the cause of some pain for Waverley but without it, the story could not have moved forward. Ultimately, in Edward, Scott has created a figure that expresses the duality of the time period in England, one that has not yet formed a distinctive national identity built around the family structure, but has hope for something like it in the years to come.

V. Conclusion

Overall, Tolstoy, Stowe, and Scott all come up with very different theories of family and national identity in their novels, yet all three are tied up in characterization and the evaluation of moral goodness. While in *War and Peace* Tolstoy ends up with an ideal Russian family woman in Natasha, Stowe tests all of her characters and watches them all fail to significantly unite behind the cause of abolitionism in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Scott's protagonist in *Waverley* falls somewhere between the two, since he is forced into belonging to a national identity by the end of the novel, but since it is not organically formed, there is still much work to go before it reaches an ideal. All three novelists share the ability to translate the state of affairs in their national moment into a single, compelling narrative that makes readers from disparate time periods and cultural backgrounds understand and care about the shaping of a national identity.

Family is at the center of all three national identities, because ultimately each author takes a wildly different path to arrive at the same conclusion: the family unit within a single domestic space is what determines the morality and identity of future generations. The family is the microcosm of the whole nation, because a collection of families that all teach the same moral lessons ultimately shapes the moral and cultural identity of the entire nation. Within the Rostov family, it was clear that the parents did all that they could to instill strong moral and cultural values in their children in a difficult time, and Natasha ended up combining their influence with a sort of inherent Russian spirit to become the culture bearer and embody the ideal Russian woman within a family of her own. Neither Eva, St. Clare, Miss Ophelia, Mrs. Shelby, Tom, nor Topsy, all vastly different characters from the farthest social situations possible in the United States, could ultimately prevail and form a unified national moral

identity because the institution of slavery was ruining families. By separating blacks and allowing whites the excuse of not being responsible for their own households and their own relationships with each other, slavery bred an environment of hate, not love, in which Americans were unable to relate to one another and incapable of feeling connected to other Americans because of the vast differences in treatment of races and opinions on slavery. Edward Waverley was caught in between two opposing sides of his family at the same time that England and Scotland were in conflict with one another. Scott proposes a possible national identity that is not quite reached in *Waverle*y but is not as far away as it is in *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* one that combines both English politics and Scottish loyalty into one single influence that can be passed on to families more unified than young Edward's, such as the one he starts with Rose, in later years.

The war moment figures in all three novels as something that is the focus of *Waverley* and *War and Peace* and is the inevitable result of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The nation in a time of crisis seems to be a particularly significant time for change to occur, whether that change harkens back to older traditions, proposes the end of an institution that supports a nation, or creates a temporary sense of security out of a scene of disorder. The war or, in Stowe's case, the abolition question, throws the events of each novel's plot in motion, allowing the characters to interact with one another in a way that they would not have without the war. The idea of the war being used to create something new out of the nation mirrors the way that each author deconstructs the world that they live in and discover the roots of the national identity they know.

Ultimately, Tolstoy, Stowe, and Scott all succeed in making their points about the institution of family and its connection to the formation of a national identity. Each of them

does so within the form of the novel, which they use to their advantage to display an entertaining narrative that weaves themes of nationalism in with character and plot in a way that any political nonfiction writing could never accomplish. All three novels are excellent examples of what it means to deconstruct a nation all the way down to its smallest component, the family, and uncover the significance of the connection between the domestic sphere and the national sphere.

Works Cited

Figes, Orlando. *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*. New York, New York: Picador, 2002. Print.

Hamilton, Paul. "*Waverley*: Scott's Romantic Narrative and Revolutionary Historiography". *Studies in Romanticism* 33.4 (1994): 611–634. Web.

Hogan, Patrick Colm. "The Multiplicity of Implied Authors and the Complex Case of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*," *Narrative,* 20.1 (January 2012).

Rawlinson, Mark. "Does Tolstoy's *War and Peace* make modern war literature redundant?" *War and Literature*. 17 July 2014. Page 228-248

Scott, Sir Walter. *Waverley; or, 'Tis Six Years Since*. London: Penguin Books, 2011.

Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. New York, New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2003.

Tolstoy, Leo. *War and Peace*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. Print. Page 14.