

### **Research question**

•What are the implications of Natasha's singing and rejection of it? What does Tolstoy reveal through Natasha's singing in *War and Peace*?

### **Main points**

- Natasha's singing is sometimes not "art"
- Tolstoy uses Natasha's singing as a symbol of Natasha's rejection of artificiality

### **What is art?**

•My primary lens text is Leo Tolstoy's "What is Art?" In this essay, Tolstoy argues against numerous aesthetic theories which define art.

### **The lens text's argument**

- Tolstoy argues that "individuality of feeling, clarity of expression, and sincerity" are necessary for successful art. Art must also affect the viewer.
- Sincerity is the most important.  
—"[Sincerity] is a condition almost entirely absent from our upper-class art, which is continually produced by artists actuated by personal aims of covetousness or vanity. [...] If the work does not transmit the artist's peculiarity of feeling, and is therefore not individual, if it is unintelligibly expressed, or if it has not proceeded from the author's inner need for expression it is not a work of art" (155)

### **Natasha's singing through *War and Peace***

- "[Natasha] felt so merry herself at that moment, she was so far from grief, sorrow, [or] reproach" (342)
- "[Andrei] fell silent and suddenly choked with tears" (467)
- "Mama, I really don't want to!" (522)
- "Very rarely was the former fire kindled in her now. It only happened when [...] something chanced to draw her into singing" (1154)

### **Singing as a symbol**

•Symbol: "a word or phrase referring to a concrete object, scene, or action which also has some further significance associated with it [...] its application is left open as an unstated suggestion" (Baldick)

### **Conclusions**

- Tolstoy uses singing as a symbol of Natasha's growth as a character and her progression away from artificiality
- Natasha is not about this high-society life

### **Works Cited**

- Baldick, Chris. "symbol." Oxford Reference. Oxford University Press. . n.d. Web. 6 Dec. 2012
- Tolstoy, Leo. *War and Peace*. New York, NY: Vintage Classics, 2007.
- Tolstoy, Leo. *What Is Art?*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1904. Print.