

Title: In Defense of Katerina Maslova: Bakhtin and Resurrection

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Abstract:

Tolstoy's novel *Resurrection* seems to support Bakhtin's characterization of Tolstoy as a monologic author. Bakhtin ironically declares the novel a "perfect example of the socio-ideological novel" (Bakhtin, "Preface" 253), and he cites the Gospel passages at the end as an example of "authoritative text" that "always remains, in the novel, a dead quotation" (Bakhtin, "Discourse" 344). Despite his later criticism of the novel, Bakhtin played the defense attorney in a mock trial version of *Resurrection* in 1922 (Clark 50). Almost ten years later, a group of émigré lawyers in Paris staged another trial of Maslova (Rogachevskii 495). These literary mock trials were participatory affairs—the audience acted as the jury and voted on the verdict.

In this paper, I read *Resurrection* alongside mock trials of the novel in order to question what happens to Tolstoy's novelistic world when authority is dispersed among mock trial participants. What freedom do readers/jurors have to push back against the author's moralizing? How does reimagining the novel as a trial alter our reading of the original—who has the right to judge the characters? I argue that mock trials of *Resurrection* transform the arguably monologic novel into an open-ended forum for dialogue, and propose that Bakhtin's participation in a mock trial of Maslova can change our reading of the novel as monologic.

Bakhtin, M. M. "Discourse in the Novel." *The Dialogic Imagination*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981. 259-422.

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Clark, Katerina and Michael Holquist. *Mikhail Bakhtin*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1984.

Rogachevskii, Andrei. "Literary Trials: From 'People's Philology' to the Inquest Practice of the Repressive Organs." *Russian Literature* LXIII (2008): 483-511.