

Title: Tolstoy's Prince Nekhliudov and Schopenhauer: A Failed Marriage  
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Schopenhauer's influence on Tolstoy has been noted by critics such as Boris Eikhenbaum and Donna Orwin, particularly in terms of Tolstoy's views on aesthetics and the manner in which they are explicated in *War and Peace*. Less attention, however, has been paid to Schopenhauer's influence on Tolstoy's attempt to develop a highly moral character capable of positively impacting those around him. Prince Nekhliudov in Tolstoy's last novel, *Resurrection*, for example, can be viewed as an example of Schopenhauer's doctrine of the necessity of denying the self to achieve a life of moral supremacy and virtue (as set forth in *The World as Will and Representation*); Nekhliudov's process of moral regeneration very closely aligns with Schopenhauer's plan for moral action through the renunciation and even mortification of one's individual will. However, because Maslova does not agree to marry him, Nekhliudov fails to realize the main goal of his atonement. Accordingly, this paper argues that the literal failed marriage can also be understood as a failure of the marriage of ideas between Schopenhauer and Tolstoy.

Tolstoy's attempt to create a completely realized moral character through the process of self-renunciation is called into question when Nekhliudov's motives are examined and it becomes apparent that he never quite rids himself of egoism or his own individual will. Specifically,

Nekhliudov's failure centers around two aspects of his behavior: first, a series of self-deceptions that are exposed in the text and, second, his inability to truly provide for Maslova. Because Nekhliudov must sacrifice a significant portion of human warmth and sincerity in order to renounce his will, Tolstoy's experiment proves unsuccessful; ironically, that failure derives precisely from his creation of a hero who endeavors to be wholly selfless. Tolstoy's enactment of will-renunciation thus suggests that in the final analysis, Schopenhauer does not provide the solution to the problem of how a character can live a completely moral life while simultaneously acting to benefit others.