

current American English phrase “This is he/she” used in answering the phone: it refers to the speaker and not to any third person.

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Daniel Rancour-Laferriere responds:

I am grateful to Alexander Zholkovsky for pointing out the translation error, which is mine (throughout my book—as noted on p. ix—I made slight changes in the Maudes’s translation). The Maudes’s original reads: “but here am I! And I am he.” The Rosemary Edmonds translation is: “but he is here in me, he is here in me.” Ann Dunnigan gives: “but here am I—and I am he!” Now we know that all of these are wrong.

Anna Tavis has misquoted page 1 of my book, where I wrote *not* about “the innate personifying powers of Tolstoy,” but about “the innate personifying powers of Tolstoy’s reader.” Quite a difference there, for one of my main points is that Pierre is so “real” that he belongs as much to the interior lives of countless readers as to Tolstoy’s interior life. Tavis is disturbed by the fact that many of Pierre’s personal attachments have homoerotic overtones (e.g. in a dream Pierre gets into bed with Osip Bazdeev). I hope this does not mean that Tavis is homophobic. There is nothing morally *wrong* with Pierre being bisexual, or with Tolstoy for having made Pierre so. As for Pierre’s narcissism, that too is not a bad thing, but an integral part of his appeal to readers. And on the relationship of his narcissism to my own narcissism, I refer the reader to my (edited) volume, *Self-Analysis in Literary Study: Exploring Hidden Agendas* (1994).

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Anna Tavis replies:

I cannot agree more with Alexander Zholkovsky’s observation that Daniel Rancour-Laferriere demonstrates a remarkable dedication to his subject matter. Indeed, he is consistently freudian and kohutian in his treatment of sexuality in Tolstoi. Nonetheless, freudian speculations and “object psychology” just do not answer Tolstoi’s most important questions and I choose to disagree with Rancour-Laferriere’s choice of critical method. His insistence on applying his model is to me a case of what psychology knows as an “escalated commitment to a failing cause.” On the subject of morality, I would like to add that there is nothing morally wrong with showing Pierre’s homoerotic tendencies. There is everything wrong, however, with denying his sexual and platonic desires and the organic complexity of which they are a part. In his opening remarks, Rancour-Laferriere promises a breakthrough in the treatment of Tolstoy’s “most beloved character.” What we end up with, however, is yet another case study, narrower than life and lesser than literature.

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