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# The concept of the universal folk culture by M.M. Bakhtin in the optics of modern times

Olga V. Malyukova<sup>1</sup>, Irina A. Martynenko<sup>2,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Philosophy and sociology, Kutafin Moscow State Law University (MSAL), 125993 Moscow, Russia

<sup>2</sup> English language Department, Kutafin Moscow State Law University (MSAL), 125993 Moscow, Russia

\* **Corresponding author:** Irina A. Martynenko, [irineta@rambler.ru](mailto:irineta@rambler.ru)

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**Abstract:** M. M. Bakhtin, a 20th-century Russian philosopher and literary critic, brought his ideas about carnival and polyphony to the analysis of literature and art. And one of the unexpected examples in which the influence of his thought can be seen is the novel “The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin” by V. N. Voinovich. The story of Ivan Chonkin’s life and his prodigious adventures presents an interesting and multifaceted image that can be viewed through the prism of some ideas of M.M. Bakhtin. The reader watches the miraculous transformation of the hero—from an ordinary soldier to a lieutenant colonel. The paper analyzes Bakhtin’s famous concept of the universal folk culture originating from the folk laughter culture of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The authors trace parallels between the ideas of M.M. Bakhtin and the ongoing adventures of V. N. Voinovich’s hero and illustrate their theses with examples showing active interaction between culture and society of different time periods. The lack of controversial discussions on the concept of ‘folk culture’ in the 21st century has weakened the depth of its theoretical application; thus, the article contributes to elaborating on this vector of study.

**Keywords:** mikhail bakhtin; literature; carnival; vladimir voinovich; ivan chonkin

## 1. Introduction

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895–1975) is an outstanding Soviet philosopher, literary critic, and linguist whose work has had a significant influence on modern humanities. He was born into the family of a bank employee who worked in Orel, Vilna, and Odessa. Bakhtin showed interest in literature and philosophy in his youth. After graduating from high school, he entered the philological faculty of first Novorossiysk (Odessa) and then Petrograd University, where he studied Russian literature and history. In the 1920s, Bakhtin began his scientific career, dealing with problems of poetics and aesthetics. Bakhtin became famous for his concept of a universal folk culture of laughter and his analysis of speech genres. His works had a huge influence on the development of philosophy, linguistics, and literary criticism.

Currently, the philosophical and linguistic creativity of M.M. Bakhtin continues to be the subject of active study and interpretation (see, for example, [1–13], etc.). Since 2018, at National Research Mordovian State University named after N.P. Ogarev (Saransk, Russia), the journal “Bakhtinsky Vestnik” has been published, which accepts for publication original scientific research devoted to the legacy of M.M. Bakhtin and his circle and materials on the perception and development of his ideas and concepts. One of the main tasks of the journal is the publication of archival materials and coverage of events and discussions related to the history of the humanities or reflecting the current state of Bakhtin studies. In Brazil, where

Bakhtinian studies are now one of the most active in the world, since 2008 the journal “Bakhtiniana” has been published by the Catholic University of Sao Paulo.

The general characteristics of Bakhtin’s work are contained in three dominant terms, which were used to name another journal of his followers and researchers of his work, published from 1992 to 2010 in Vitebsk, Belarus—“Dialogue. Carnival. Chronotope”.

## **2. Materials and methods**

### **The concept of carnival laughter by M.M. Bakhtin**

The concept of carnival laughter was set out by Bakhtin in his Ph.D. thesis “Rabelais in the History of Realism,” which he submitted in 1946 in Moscow at the World Literature Institute. Today it can be found in a later edition [14].

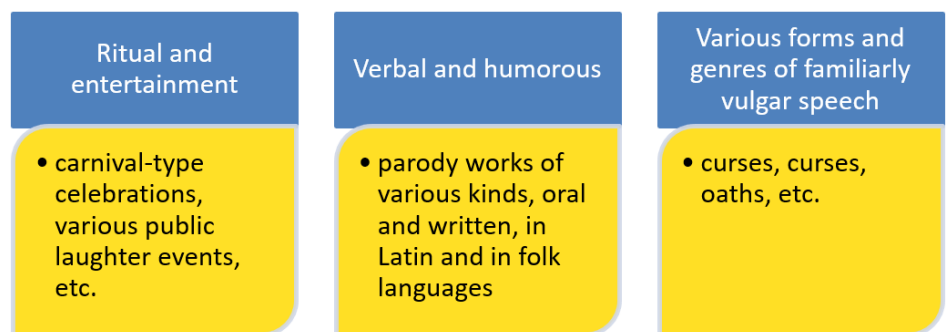
An academic degree allowed him to leave teaching practice in the outback Kalinin (now Tver) region and return to the university environment of the Mordovian State University in Saransk. Rabelais’s work is not accidental: Bakhtin completed the first version of the work in 1940, and in 1965 he published the monograph “The Work of François Rabelais and the Folk Culture of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance”. There is also a more complete version of this work—“The Work of Francois Rabelais and the Folk Culture of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Rabelais and Gogol”, published in the Collected Works of M.M. Bakhtin in 2010.

So why Francois Rabelais? Why did the laughter culture and carnival interest the researcher so much? The answer to the first question seems quite trivial. Firstly, knowledge of the French language, typical for the Russian intelligentsia (the educated, morally and spiritually enlightened part of society), was accompanied by knowledge of French culture, in particular, both the history of French literature and the literary works themselves. Secondly, from the first years of Soviet power, the analogy between the events of the Great French Revolution and the Great October Socialist Revolution was emphasized; analogies were seen in the transformation of culture and the creation of a new language. Thirdly, the work of Francois Rabelais was “unlucky” in Russia: it was well known, but normal translations appeared only in the 60s of the twentieth century; excerpts similar to fairy tales about giants were published, which led to the placement of the work in the category of children’s literature. All this made it possible for Bakhtin to design from Rabelais’ text an empirical basis for his theory of laughter culture. Laughter culture and carnival are classifiers for characterizing the corresponding cultural and historical periods, and this is the brief answer to the second question. A classifier is the basis for dividing the historical process into certain types. The classification of cultural and historical types is outlined by M.M. Bakhtin in “The Work of Francois Rabelais and the Folk Culture of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance” [15].

“Of all the great writers of world literature, Rabelais is the least popular among us, the least studied, the least understood and appreciated” [15, p. 2], - with these words Bakhtin begins his analysis of folk laughter culture. “Rabelais is difficult. But on the other hand, his work, correctly revealed, sheds back light on the millennia of development of folk laughter culture, of which he is the greatest exponent in the field of literature” [15, p. 7].

The folk laughter culture of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance is the main task of Bakhtin, because folk laughter and its forms are the least studied area of folk art, since the “laughing people in the square” did not become the subject of serious study within the framework of the New Age and the bourgeois worldview. As a result, “The deep originality of the folk laughter culture of the past still remains completely unrevealed. Meanwhile, both the volume and significance of this culture in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance were enormous. A whole vast world of funny forms and manifestations opposed the official and serious (in tone) culture of the church and feudal Middle Ages. With all the diversity of these forms and manifestations—square festivals of the carnival type, individual laughter rituals and cults, jesters and fools, giants, dwarfs and freaks, buffoons of various kinds and ranks, huge and varied parody literature and much more—all of them, these forms, have a single style and are parts and particles of a single and integral folk-laughing, carnival culture” [15, p. 8].

He divides all the diverse manifestations and expressions of folk laughter culture, reflecting a single laughter aspect of the world, into three types as it is shown in **Figure 1**.



**Figure 1.** Francois rabelais’s types of folk laughter culture.

Having analyzed in detail all these types, Bakhtin makes an inductive conclusion: folk laughter culture is movement, formation, initiative, and focus on the future, while official culture is peace, stagnation, officialdom, and focus on the past. In Bakhtin’s terminology:

“All these ritual and entertainment forms, as organized at the beginning of laughter, differed extremely sharply, one might say, fundamentally, from the serious official—church and feudal-state—cult forms and ceremonies. They provided a completely different, emphatically unofficial, non-church and non-state aspect of the world, man and human relations; they seemed to be building on the other side of everything official, a second world or a second life, in which all medieval people were more or less involved, in which they lived at certain times. And. This is a special kind of two-worldness, without which neither the cultural consciousness of the Middle Ages nor the culture of the Renaissance can be correctly understood” [15, p. 10].

The folk culture of laughter, embodied in Rabelais’s novel, ceased to be adequately perceived by the reader since the beginning of the 17th century.

“Then the idea of Rabelais as a purely entertaining, purely cheerful writer begins to take shape. This, as we know, was the fate of Don Quixote, which for a long

time was perceived as entertaining literature for easy reading. This happened with Rabelais, who, from the end of the 16th century, began to descend lower and lower to the very threshold of great literature, until he found himself almost completely beyond this threshold” [15, p. 77].

The transition from the Renaissance to the modern era turned out to be fatal for the culture of laughter.

“The attitude to laughter of the Renaissance can be tentatively and roughly characterized as follows: laughter has a deep worldview meaning, it is one of the most essential forms of truth about the world as a whole, about history, about man; it is a special universal point of view on the world; seeing the world differently, but no less (if not more) essential than seriousness; therefore, laughter is just as acceptable in great literature (and one that poses universal problems) as seriousness; some very significant aspects of the world are accessible only to laughter. The attitude towards laughter in the 17th and subsequent centuries can be characterized as follows: laughter cannot be a universal, world-contemplative form; it can only relate to some particular and particular-typical phenomena of social life, phenomena of a negative order; what is essential and important cannot be funny; history and the people who act as its representatives (kings, generals, heroes) cannot be funny; the area of the funny is narrow and specific (private and public vices); the essential truth about the world and man cannot be said in the language of laughter; only a serious tone is appropriate here; therefore, in literature, the place of laughter is only in low genres, depicting the life of private people and the lower classes; Laughter is either light entertainment, or a kind of socially useful punishment for vicious and base people. This is, of course, somewhat simplified, how one can characterize the attitude towards laughter in the 17th and 18th centuries” [15, pp. 78–79].

Bakhtin considers the main characteristics of laughter culture to be the universalism of laughter, its freedom, and its connection with unofficial folk truth.

“Seriousness in class culture is official, authoritarian, combined with violence, prohibitions, and restrictions. In such seriousness there is always an element of fear and intimidation. Laughter, on the contrary, implied overcoming fear. There are no prohibitions or restrictions created by laughter. Power, violence, authority never speak the language of laughter” [15, p. 104].

Of course, he talks about the fear of medieval man and about laughter as a victory over fear. It was felt “not only as a victory over mystical fear (“fear of God”) and over fear of the forces of nature, but, above all, as a victory over moral fear, which fetters, oppresses, and clouds a person’s consciousness: fear of everything sacred and forbidden (“mana” and “taboo”), before the power of divine and human, before authoritarian commandments and prohibitions, before death and afterlife rewards, before hell, before everything that is worse than earth”.

What kind of fear does Bakhtin talk about in such detail? Is it not the one that he himself experienced and that he is so competent in describing? Laughter, according to Bakhtin, cannot become a weapon of oppression and intoxication of the people; it cannot be made completely official; it always remains a free instrument in the hands of the people themselves, in contrast to fear and seriousness.

“In contrast to laughter, medieval seriousness was imbued from within with elements of fear, weakness, humility, resignation, lies, hypocrisy, or, on the contrary, with elements of violence, intimidation, threats, prohibitions. In the mouths of power, seriousness frightened, demanded and prohibited; in the mouths of her subordinates she trembled, humbled herself, praised, glorified. Therefore, medieval seriousness aroused distrust among the people. It was an official tone, which was treated like everything official. Seriousness oppressed, frightened, constrained; she lied and was a hypocrite; she was stingy and lean” [15, p. 108].

In Rabelais’s novel, according to Bakhtin, “medieval laughter found its highest expression. Here it became the form for a new free and critical historical consciousness” [15, p. 111].

Next, the process of degradation of laughter begins:

“Laughter loses its essential connection with the worldview, it is combined with denial, moreover, dogmatic denial, it is limited to the area of the particular and particular-typical, it loses its historical coloring; its connection with the material-corporeal principle, however, remains, but this very principle takes on the character of a low private life” [15, p. 115].

The degradation of laughter is associated with the rooting of a new world-historical structure, namely, the absolute monarchy, which found its embodiment in the rationalistic philosophy of Descartes and in the aesthetics of classicism. In rationalism and classicism, it clearly expresses the main features of the new official culture, different from the church-feudal one but imbued, like it, with authoritarian seriousness, although less dogmatic.

The new official culture strives for stability, completeness, seriousness, and the priority of high genres of classicism. The culture of laughter is preserved in low genres, such as satire, fable, and comedy, and acquires a stable oppositional meaning. This opposition has a great bourgeois future.

“During the era of the French Revolution, Rabelais enjoyed enormous authority among its leaders. They even make him a prophet of the revolution. Rabelais’ hometown of Chinon takes the name “Chinon-Rabelais” [15, p. 133].

The era truly felt the deep revolutionary spirit of Rabelais, embodied the culture of laughter in anti-religious activity, in which laughter took the form of mockery and terror. Further events in French history will again lead to the officialdom of the Napoleonic era.

As a result, the world-historical process, according to Bakhtin, is determined by two obvious factors, namely, *laughter culture* and *official culture*, which characterize a particular era in varying proportions. Empiricism in the selection of facts and the inductiveness of conclusions characterize Bakhtin’s own philosophical position as something in between positivism, phenomenology, and historical materialism; he repeatedly refers to the works of the classics of Marxism. But the conclusion about the decisive role in history of the relationship between humorous and official cultures does not seem to be the result of an inductive inference.

As an analogy, we can give an example about the prerequisites for the creation of heliocentrism by Copernicus: it was not the shortcomings of the geocentric system that prompted him to astronomical research, but the ideas of Pythagoreanism about the

beauty and perfection of the cosmos, lost in the complex epicycles and deferents of Claudius Ptolemy. It can be assumed that Bakhtin’s attitudes were based not on an analysis of Rabelais’s work, but on the picture of the Soviet universe (mainly in the field of literature), which he could observe in the 20s and 30s of the twentieth century in Petrograd/Leningrad, and then from the “beautiful, distant” city of Savelov, the final station of the Savelovskaya railway, but only 125 km of direct communication with Moscow.

The methodology for analyzing social life created by Bakhtin was either envisioned by him or formulated on the basis of well-known circumstances of Russian history and Russian literary history. As an example, we can cite some events of the second half of the 19th century. The liberalization of public life associated with the great reforms of Alexander II gave rise to a number of satirical works, such as “The History of the Russian State from Gostomysl to Timashev” by A.K. Tolstoy, written in 1868 (A.E. Timashev became Minister of Internal Affairs that year); the satirical poems and aphorisms of the literary mask of Kozma Prutkov (the same A.K. Tolstoy and the three Zhemchuzhnikov brothers), created in the 50s and 60s and in 1884 published in the Complete Works; a cycle of various satirical essays, plays, and fairy tales by M.E. Saltykov-Shchedrin; etc. Some works of this period will become narratives in Soviet times: the city of Glupov will become the city of Ibansky in the works of A.A. Zinoviev; a poem by A.K. Tolstoy will give rise to a poem by A.D. Fleitman, “The Year One Thousand Nine Hundred Anniversary”, with a description of the rulers of Russia of the twentieth century, starting with the lines “Tsar Nikolashka once lived in Rus” and ending with the iconic generalization “And we are still all moving forward, and if anyone ever dies, that’s why it’s history, the one that won’t lie, not a word, not a word”. By the end of the 19th century, this relatively free-thinking satirical intensity had been decreasing, and works that painted a positive image of people’s lives and state power became more popular. Free thought is put on pause because revolutionary events will soon begin, etc.

As a second example, we should consider some events in the field of literature, of which Bakhtin was a contemporary. The atmosphere in the fields of literature, science, and philosophy after the Great October Socialist Revolution initially seemed encouraging. However, already in 1922, more than 80 representatives of the scientific and philosophical community were expelled from Soviet Russia. The situation in the field of literature was quite complex: there were a number of writers’ organizations that were fiercely at odds with each other over either “proletarian culture,” “studying from the classics,” or “calling shock workers into literature”. Against this background, the figure of Demyan Bedny (Efim Alekseevich Pridvorov, 1883–1945) seems extremely curious; his satirical work was extremely popular in the 1920s. The simplicity, stereotypedness, amateurism, and superficiality of his poems are clearly visible in the following lines (see **Table 1**):

**Table 1.** Example of demyan bedny’s poetry.

«Вот настали времени, что ни день, то чудо, Водку гонят из дерьма по три литра с пуда ...» 1926	“Now the time has come, every day, it’s a miracle, they distill vodka from shit at three liters per pound...” (translated by authors) 1926
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The popularity of Demyan Bedny ended in the 30s, when the Bolshevik Party took a new course, combining the patriotic ideal with the class ideal. The poet fell into disgrace; they stopped hiring him. That is, they were expelled from the Writers' Union for "moral corruption".

The largest figure of this time is M.M. Zoshchenko (1894–1958). It was in the 1920s that he created the comic image of a hero-everyman with a naive morality and a primitive view of the environment; this everyman is a typical face of the reality of that time. In the 20s and 30s, Zoshchenko's books were published and republished, the writer traveled around the country giving speeches, he was awarded the Order of the Red Banner of Labor, etc. Everything ends abruptly in 1946 with the Resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks (No. 274 of August 14, 1946), which states that "Zoshchenko portrays Soviet orders and Soviet people in an ugly caricature form, slanderously presenting Soviet people as primitive, uncultured, stupid, with philistine tastes and morals". The persecution that followed did not stop until the death of the writer. The state of the 40s and 50s did not need to critically illuminate reality.

A short essay about the satirists of this period cannot be completed without mentioning Ilf and Petrov, authors of the famous novels "The Twelve Chairs" of 1928 and "The Golden Calf" of 1931; the authors also created at least two more novels in the same style, but they didn't become famous. The breadth of coverage of satirical pictures of Soviet life made novels classics of Soviet satire. Fate was almost kind to the authors: Ilf died in 1937, Petrov died in 1942 during a business trip to the front, and in 1947 the writers were classified as "rootless cosmopolitans", banned from reprinting, and removed from libraries. The collected works of Ilya Ilf and Yevgeny Petrov were reprinted after 1939, published only in 1961 during the Khrushchev thaw.

So, the satirical tendency of Soviet literature, an indicator of folk laughter culture and freedom of creativity, ends in the 30s and 40s; formally, it ended in 1934 with the creation of the Writers' Union of the USSR, at which the method of socialist realism was defined as the main method of Soviet literature and literary criticism. Gradually, literature goes into official mode and becomes positive and very serious. This seriousness was especially evident in the works of children's literature, for example, V.P. Kataev (elder brother of E.P. Petrov) or L.A. Kassil and others. M.M. Bakhtin will live to see the next reincarnation of laughter culture, i.e., before the Khrushchev thaw of 1957–1964 and its literary events, which will be a good confirmation of his concept.

The result of Bakhtin's research, which began with the Rabelaisian world of absolute monarchies and the Inquisition of the late European Middle Ages, is the conclusion that the more terrible and harsher the material and spiritual power of the state, the greater will be the energy of protest. The more disconnected the authorities are from real life, the more active the energy of protest will be. The more complicated and ritualized official life is, the simpler and more commonplace protest actions will be. And these protests will begin with publicity, satire, ridicule, debunking, and parodies. All these are carnival practices and folk culture of laughter, which represent an action against the official world, against the power of the "tops" and the rules established for the "bottoms", and against the alienated and serious world.

In the USSR, during the era of prosperity and progress, there was a kind of carnival—Soviet folk culture. Moreover, folk in this case does not mean primitive, exclusively folklore. In terms of the rigidity of its political and ideological structures and the organization of official spiritual life, the Soviet Union could well compete with late medieval monarchies. The ridicule and carnivalesque inversion of the official forms of the Soviet world during glasnost, the purification and creation from laughter and through laughter of a different truth, seemed a necessary step into the world of freedom. But in fact, it has led to a situation of “pseudo-carnival” as an imitation of social creativity, which destroys everything positive that it brings with it, turning criticism into criticism, ridicule of outdated common sense into preaching immorality, and parodic destruction of the social hierarchy into general poverty. This is the real weakness of Bakhtin’s empirical methodology: carnival should not be turned from a step towards social transformation into a self-sufficient phenomenon; ridicule of everything and everyone will ultimately lead to social tyranny.

### **3. Results and discussion**

#### **Analysis and interpretation of the ideas of M.M. Bakhtin on the example of a modern literary work**

M.M. Bakhtin proposed an innovative concept of artistic speech based on the idea of dialogicity and polyphony. His works trace the creation of a “life word”, which allows one to reveal the deep qualities of human existence. One of the striking examples illustrating this idea is the novel by V.N. Voinovich, “The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of the Private Ivan Chonkin”. Bakhtin’s ideological principles, based on an understanding of man as a continuously developing and communicative personality, are reflected in the life of the soldier Chonkin.

This work has been studied in detail from various angles by literary scholars from all over the world (see, for example, [16–28], etc.).

Let’s consider the novel by V.N. Voinovich, “The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of the Private Ivan Chonkin”, through the prism of the ideas of M.M. Bakhtin.

The relationship of the punitive system to individuality, the dialogic interaction of the hero with other characters, and the diversity of voices and linguistic practices—all this will be considered from the point of view of Bakhtin’s approach to literature. Using these concepts, we will try to reveal the deep meaning of Voinovich’s work and show how he connects his protagonist with the complex reality of time and space.

Through the prism of the ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin, the life and extraordinary adventures of soldier Ivan Chonkin are displayed as a special world full of carnival events and fabrications. In the novel by Vladimir Nikolaevich Voinovich, “The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of the Private Ivan Chonkin”, we are immersed in the world of adventurous events and heroic deeds of the protagonist.

The specified aspect of M.M. Bakhtin is presented in a variety of masks that the hero puts on in his quest to escape the trap of Soviet reality. From under hidden jokes and crazy humor, through satire and irony, ideas of individual self-expression and free personality development break through. The concept of carnival is reflected in the

change of roles and tasks, freeing the hero from the shackles of everyday life. The life and adventures of Ivan Chonkin confirm the concept of carnival as a temporary liberation from the everyday world, where the lines between folk dramas, crazy games, and reality are blurred.

V.N. Voinovich, in his work, shows us the pre- and post-war times. The genre of the dystopian anecdote novel, the interaction of myth and anecdote. The anecdote is analyzed as the main genre-forming component of the novel.

Voinovich shows the shadow sides, negative trends, and existing problems in a totalitarian state, inevitably leading to tragedy in the life of an individual and the people as a whole (ridiculing the order of those years; depicting the meaningless appearance of the state order; focusing on the problems of those years; demonstrating a hopeless situation; depicting a natural person under the yoke of a rigid system in which one can lose oneself; praising the Russian natural type).

Soldier Ivan Chonkin is a hero who has become a symbol of extraordinary adventures and unpredictable twists of fate. His life path, described in Vladimir Voinovich's work "The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of the Private Ivan Chonkin", is excellent material for analysis through the prism of the ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin.

Ivan Chonkin, the main character of the novel, is a worthy example of an anti-hero, whose fate reflects not only personal development but also the ideas promoted by the author. Chonkin, at first an awkward and dependent soldier, however, over time, goes through a difficult path of transformation and becomes a person taking an active part in public life. With the help of his character and unconventional actions, Chonkin encounters different situations that help him realize his individuality and place in society. In his ideas, Bakhtin calls for each person to realize their role and fight against social norms and prejudices. Therefore, understanding the life and adventures of Ivan Chonkin through the prism of the ideas of M.M. Bakhtin allows us to understand the hero's lifestyle and actions in the context of the need of every person to be free and original.

Thus, in the study of the life and adventures of soldier Ivan Chonkin, using the concepts of M.M. Bakhtin can offer a unique perspective. It is possible not only to consider Chonkin as a hero of the Soviet era but also to use his story to explore ideas about carnival and chronotope.

We see Chonkin as a typical carnival hero who finds freedom and liberation from social restrictions in a military context. It should be emphasized that Chonkin not only violates norms and roles but also mixes various subcultures and genres, creating the characteristics of a carnival. However, also noteworthy is the fact that the idea of carnival is present not only in the life of the hero but also in the texts about him:

"And so, in a certain village by the Volga there once lived a certain Mariana Chonkina, an ordinary country woman, a widow. Her husband, Vasily Chonkin, perished in 1914 in the Imperialist War, which, as everybody knows, later turned into the Civil War and went on for a very long time. During the battle for Tsaritsyn, the village where Mariana lived became a military crossroads used alternately by the Reds and the Whites, both of whom showed a liking for Mariana's spacious and empty house. At one point a certain Ensign Golitsin, who had some rather unclear relation to the illustrious family of Russian princes by

the same name, was quartered for an entire week in Mariana's home. Then he left the village and probably never gave it a second thought. But the village did not forget him. When, a year later or maybe more (no one kept track), Mariana gave birth to a son, the whole village had a good chuckle, saying that it couldn't have happened without the aid of the prince. True, the local herdsman, Serga, was also suspected, but he vehemently denied everything. Mariana named her son Ivan and gave him the patronymic Vasilyevich, after her dead husband, Vasily" [29].

If we analyze the various speech genres used by the author, we can show how they reflect carnivalism and a mixture of subcultures.

"His tongues hanging out, Peskov came dashing up to the warehouse, sank down beside Dudnik on a barley crate, and asked: "Have you seen Trofimovich?"

Once again Dudnik slammed against the table, then looked dazedly over at Peskov.

"What?"

Peskov gazed with respect at Dudnik's chin, which could withstand such blows.

"Your teeth all in one piece?" He asked.

"The teeth are all right," replied Dudnik, shaking his head and yawning. "I'm just afraid the table's going to have to be repaired. Who you looking for?"

"Has Trofimovich been here?"

"Ai, Trofimovich. Trofimovish was here," said Dudnik, closing his eyes and once again propping his chin on his hand." [29, p. 35].

In addition, we pay attention to the chronotope, or spatio-temporal context, depicted in the novel about Chonkin. During his military service, Ivan Chonkin encounters many incredible situations and unusual events. He finds himself drawn into frenzied skirmishes and large-scale battles, experiences war and heroism, but at the same time does not lose his human dignity and humor. The most incredible events occur in his life, which are closer to a miracle than to ordinary reality.

Bakhtin emphasized in his writings that each person is a polyphonic subject with his own unique individuality. The concept of polyphony described by Bakhtin also applies to Chonkin. Ivan Chonkin is a vivid example of such a subject, with his own unique character traits and unique appearance.

To analyze and interpret the ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin in the novel "The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of the Private Ivan Chonkin", it is necessary to turn to the theory of carnival and the dialogic nature of literature, developed by the philosopher. Bakhtin believed that literature reflects social reality and its deep polyphony. In V. Voinovich's novel, through the adventures of the main character, Ivan Chonkin, we see not only a reflection of military events and political realities of the era but also a wide range of voices and opinions that unite into a polyphonic chorus.

The concept of carnival proposed by Bakhtin finds its multifaceted reflection in the novel. Carnival, according to the researcher, is a time interval when, by dealing with norms and rules, you can literally turn them upside down. In the novel, Chonkin comes into conflict with the army, violates established orders, and copes with everyday problems in extraordinary ways. This approach in itself demonstrates the influence of the Bakhtinian-cosmic style.

In the novel, Chonkin, a character in a difficult situation, tries to find his place in the world and maintain his identity under the Stalinist regime. The concept of

polyphony and dialogicity permeates all spheres of the hero's consciousness, his every word, thought, and action. In addition, the presence of a carnival element is noticeable in the novel, which allows Chonkin to break out of the restrictions of Soviet reality and experience a kind of carnival of freedom.

The idea of carnival proposed by Bakhtin can be applied to Chonkin's life in the army. In conditions of rigor and formalism, he adapts, facing the contradictions and absurdity of military life. He is forced to play the role of a soldier, but at the same time, individual freedom and defiance remain in his heart and thoughts.

#### 4. Conclusion

The role of M.M. Bakhtin's ideas in the novel "The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of the Private Ivan Chonkin" cannot be underestimated. It is an indispensable element that determines the main storylines and the development of the main character. The idea of M.M. Bakhtin's carnival as a special form of transmission of public spirit was reflected in the life and adventures of the soldier Chonkin. The main character experiences events that often contradict established norms and stereotypes. He rejects cruelty and indifference to life, recreating his own version of the carnival—a reverse world where justice and humanity reign. Bakhtin's idea of the paradigm of laughter permeates Chonkin's entire life. Through the prism of laughter and irony, he ridicules the senselessness of war, authoritarianism, and the stupidity of our bureaucratic structures. This allows him to maintain his individuality and independence of thought, drawing other soldiers into his circle of fun and laughter. In addition, the ideas of M.M. Bakhtin about polyphony are reflected in numerous characters in the novel.

Vladimir Voinovich's magnificent story about the unusual fate of a Soviet soldier touches on various aspects of Chonkin's life. And viewing it through the prism of Bakhtin's ideas allows us to see a different level of meaning and interpretation.

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