

**BAKHTINIAN DIALOGISM AND THE SUBVERSIVE POTENTIAL OF MINOR CHARACTERS IN THE TENANT OF WILDFELL HALL AND THE NIGHT AND DAY***Najiba Normuminova Dilmurod kizi**First-year MA student**Uzbekistan State World Languages University, Uzbekistan*

**Abstract:** This essay uses Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism to analyse the subversive potential of minor characters in Anne Brontë's Victorian novel *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) and Cholpon's Soviet Uzbek novel *The Night and Day*. By comparing seemingly "flat" characters—Victorian gossip and Soviet officials—it argues that their narrative exclusion hides their polyphonic capacity to subvert monologic control. By close readings and theoretical synthesis, the study reveals how these figures generate heteroglossia that resists patriarchal and authoritarian ideologies. Findings indicate minor characters, despite narrative concision in space, play crucial roles in subverting commanding discourses and offering a cross-cultural model through which marginality in literature might be understood.

**Key words:** minor character, polyphony, postcolonial theory, feminist approach,

**Introduction**

The representation of minor characters in literature is not a new phenomenon and has been a site for critical inquiry into how inferior voices reflect and resist societal oppression. In Victorian and Soviet-era novels, the everyday gossip, rumours, and bureaucrats often occupy the narrative peripheries, yet their presence underscores systemic oppression. The term "dialogism" was introduced by Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, who argues that inferior voices could interrupt monologic authority, and every "voice" in the text delivers the meaning. Bakhtin's assertion that the novel is inherently polyphonic—a "plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses" (as described in "Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics")—endows minor characters with substantial ontological significance. Even fleeting figures, such as the drunken peasant in "Crime and Punishment" or the gossiping neighbours in "Anna Karenina", introduce micro dialogues that challenge the protagonist's worldview or the dominant ideology of the text. For Bakhtin, these voices do not simply serve a subordinate role in the plot; rather, they inhabit a "zone of contact" with the protagonist, creating a heteroglossic interplay of social dialects. In this way, minor characters embody the "living heteroglossia" of the novel's social world, ensuring that no single perspective—including the author's—can monopolise meaning. In 2003, Alex Woloch's "The One and Many" analyses how the narrative structure replicates and critiques social hierarchies. At its core, Woloch argues that the novel's form inherently prioritises the protagonist while compressing or marginalising minor characters, creating a dynamic of narrative asymmetry that mirrors real-world power imbalances. The theory of "character space" highlights that when an author gives a description or lower class members gossip about the protagonist's actions and hidden intentions revealed.

**The Tenant of Wildfell Hall: Gossips as Heteroglossia Agents**

In the novel, gossip embodies a reflection of the oppression of the Victorian period by spreading collective gossip of Mrs. Markham and the villagers of Lindenhope as societal judgment. In the extract of dialogues between the tenants “Is she a widow? A runaway wife?”- situate Helen Graham as disobedient towards gender norms and the assumption that women’s behaviour should be monitored. This gossip is not merely background noise; it acts as a heteroglossic force, as described by Bakhtin, clashing with Helen’s introspective diary and creating a dialogic tension between public perception and private truth.

In chapter 7, the author uses the sentence, “She does not deserve such a husband!” These words belong to Mrs Markham and highlight the overall societal hypocrisy. While she critiques Helen's secrecy, she inadvertently highlights the patriarchal system that confines women to abusive marriages. The villagers' moral rigidity further intensifies Helen's isolation; however, their gossip unintentionally reveals the absurdity of Victorian double standards, where men like Arthur Huntingdon are excused for their vices, while women are vilified for seeking independence.

From this short set of events we can analyze how polyphonic voice helps:

- Plot development: the tenant’s gossip motivate Gilbert to investigate Helen’s history, help to revelation of diary and go towards to climax
- Critique of societal norms: the collective voice of tenants of patriarchal dominance, how women are obedient
- Bakhtinian perspective: “ dialogism” situation helps to understand the full picture of that society and revealing the subversive potential of the novel.

In addition, the servants plays a role of reflection the setting and historical period of that time. In the novel, Rachel, Helen’s maid, symbolizes the victim of the Victorian period. Throughout the narration, the author does not emphasize her background, but she is the archetype of a “saver” who helps Helen escape an abusive marriage and the destroyer of forced marriage. . As the help, she does not have a voice to speak her thoughts but communicates through gestures, such as “her lips tightened at Arthur’s drunken rages” (Chapter 29), fulfilling the role of a restrained aristocratic family representative struggling with the moral rot of the Killingworths. Implementation of Alex Woloch’s theory of character space, she embodies societal subjugation through her character, representing the servant whose work is vital yet culturally invisible and whose life is without identity, social context, and history. As the archetype of a “saver”, she helps the narration go to climax by protecting Helen’s diary and sustaining Helen’s autonomy. Here, Rachel’s subordinate position is used to demonstrate how Brontë critiques the realities of social class stratification and gender hierarchies, showing that when employed with power, silence can confront the systems designed to suppress it.

The study of minor characters in Uzbek literature is a less explored research area compared to those focused on narratology. Uzbek literary critics argue that the issue of minor characters can only be examined within a structural context. However, the Western school of literature demonstrates that minor characters reflect the prevailing era and play a crucial role, much like protagonists. Analysing “The Night and The Day” by Cholpon (translated by Christopher Fort) can shed light on the concept of minorness and its impact on readers' responses. In the climax,

the author introduces Jadid Sharafuddin Xo'jayev as a minor character, steering the story in two directions. Miryoqub and Maria(a prostitute) on the train attempt to escape Central Asia, and the introduction of Sharafuddin Xo'jayev reveals the protagonist Miryoqub's inner dark intentions. Additionally, from the perspective of this character, we can observe the sentiments and opinions regarding the Soviet empire.

In my opinion, the minor character Sharafuddin conveys his thoughts on Stalin's regime and the impact of Russian culture on the colonial community.

"We hate those people. They are our enemies! They are our enemies in every sense! It's not so often that we find a friend from among them. But those that we do find are good. Very good friends. But when we embrace them, we're always ready to escape their clutches!"

In this extract, the Jadids present their political views, blaming the Russian Empire for introducing alcohol and prostitution, which they believe are major reasons for poisoning Turkestani youth. Attacks on Russians like Xo'jaev's above are characteristic largely of the jadids of the Soviet imagination. Hasanov similarly embodies an anachronistic Soviet impression of jadids. He belittles Akbarali mingboshi for his blind adherence to the tsarist state, hinting that the mingboshi's loyalties should lie instead with Turkestani's coethnic and coreligionist Ottoman Turks. In reality, jadids had sympathies for the Ottomans, but the majority of them remained steadfastly faithful to the Romanov Empire. They felt their show of allegiance would raise the status of their community in the empire, which would then permit more Turkestani participation in Russian political life.

### Conclusion

Bakhtinian dialogism could demonstrate narrative marginality to enact polyphonic resistance against hegemonic discourse in the novels "The Tenants of Wildfell Hall" and "The Night and The Day". In the Victorian period written novels, the act of gossiping or intemperate Lord Lowborough reflects the Victorian male dominant situation; the minor or fragmented voices criticize gender oppression and moral erosion. But in Cholpon's work, the minorness is observed on the surface of the community's political situation, how new intellectuals or servants are portrayed as colonial power.

Through protagonist decentralization both works demonstrate polyphony's disruptive power where marginal voices break dominant narratives to reveal social hierarchies' fragility. The Tenant showcases minor character dialogues that reveal respectability as performance, whereas The Night and the Day presents collective traditional and dissenting voices that challenge Soviet utopian ideals. These works redefine "flatness" by presenting it as a deliberate artistic choice that avoids definitive meaning, prompting readers to examine which voices receive amplification or suppression.

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