

American Journal of Social and Humanitarian Research

Vol. 7 Issue 10 | **pp.** 87-93 | **ISSN:** 2690-9626
Available online @ https://globalresearchnetwork.us/index.php/ajshr

Article

The Issue of the Dialectology of National Character in the Novels "Quiet Don" and "Shirashilar"

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Abstract: This article discusses at length the role of the geographical region, climate and season chosen for the plot in the novels "Quiet Don" by M. Sholokhov and "Shirashilar" by Sh. Seitov in revealing the national character and psychology of the hero. How the dialectology of national character influences the hero's psychology, and its relation to changes in the national character traits, values and notions formed in a person, are analyzed using the examples of the images of Grigory Melekhov, Panteley Melekhov, and Old Man Yesjan.

Keywords: Geographical determinism, dialectology of national character, psychology of the hero, symbolic pathos, psychology of the hero of the era.

Citation: Tlepbaevna J. B. The Issue of the Dialectology of National Character in the Novels "Quiet Don" and "Shirashilar". American Journal of Social and Humanitarian Research 2026, 7(10), 87-93

Received: 09th Jul 2026
Revised: 10th Aug 2026
Accepted: 20th Sep 2026
Published: 15th Oct 2026

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1. Introduction

The reflection of national distinctiveness in a work of literature denotes the reflection and generalization in the work of the ethnic commonality and national manifestations (for example, historical destiny, character traits and the natural environment) peculiar to the people who create that literature. When setting out to write, a writer does not think about his own nation, because his nation finds its expression naturally in his work [1]. In a work of fiction, especially in historical-realist works, the characters remain within the framework of their era and adapt to it, or adapt to their era while also living by their own national customs and values, without losing the outlook and notions formed on their basis. It is from this synthesis that the complex unity of national character arises: against the background of national peculiarities and notions, universal human qualities are also reflected [2].

2. Methodology

A literary character is, on the one hand, a complex of moral and psychological features that help distinguish a hero's personality from another personality, while on the other hand it implies individual traits formed on the basis of social conditions. But it must be especially noted that, however strong the influence of social conditions and external factors may be, the unchanging notion is the issue of national character. Ethnic differences find their reflection in a work of fiction through national character, and this poetic function may be assigned to a particular image or images.

National character is the sum of the distinctive psychological features, worldview, inner feelings and behavior of a people, formed in the course of its historical development

on the basis of its living conditions, occupations, customs and traditions. It includes qualities such as endurance, hospitality, industriousness, generosity, harmony with nature and humaneness. V.G. Belinsky says: "...A great talent makes a creator national, while nationality does not turn him into a great creator: the second is a necessity of the first. If a work possesses high artistry, it is by itself considered a national work," and the author adds to this thought: "From this one must understand that nationality in a work of art is not a virtue but a simple necessity of the creative process, which is carried out by the creator without any special intention".Is it possible to "set the norm" of the national and universal human aspects in a literary work? If they are directly connected with the vital problems of national existence, there is no place for artificially attributing universal human or national significance to them. National and universal human notions cannot be divided into two independent groups; moreover, considering that a person is formed in his own ethnic environment on the basis of a national core, the humanistic spirit cannot be torn away from its own national core. A work that does not embody the national spirit or distinctiveness cannot truly belong to humankind, and unless national life and national character are depicted, a work cannot attain realistic truthfulness.

Writers strive to create national character guided by several principles, which ensure that it is even more realistic. These find their reflection in creating the image of the hero, analyzing his psychological state, and constructing the plot. In a work of fiction, national character emerges by reflecting the hero's way of life and region, and the behavior formed on the basis of national norms of upbringing, customs and traditions.

Geographical location, region and topographic natural places influence human destiny. A number of theories on this have been formed in ethnopsychology, political science and literary studies.

3. Results

In ethnopsychology, the role of the place of residence in the formation of human character is expressed through the ideas of ecological psychology and geographical determinism (environmental determinism). The scholars and philosophers of ancient Greek philosophy, Herodotus and Hippocrates, expressed several fundamental views on the influence of the natural environment on human consciousness and behavior. Hippocrates, the founder of medical geography, advanced the general position that all differences among peoples — their behavior and customs — are connected with the nature and climate of the country [3] Herodotus, comparing the various ethnic groups and peoples he met in his travels, identified that differences exist. For example, he connects the industriousness and martial character of the Egyptians with the Nile River, while he tries to explain the qualities of the Scythian people — composure, insubordination and ruthlessness — by the lush land and full-flowing rivers of the country of Scythia [4].

The ideas of these two philosophers were developed in modern psychology and philosophy by Ch.L. de Montesquieu and J.G. Herder. Montesquieu coined the term "geographical determinism," according to which the development of people, societies, states and civilizations is determined mainly by the contribution of geographical factors: climate, relief, natural resources, and natural places such as the sea, mountains and forests. In the scholar's opinion, among the many natural geographical factors it is precisely climate that influences the general spirit of a people: "those living in hot-climate regions are somewhat cowardly, lazy and not inclined to heroic deeds, but possess a strong imagination and are thoughtful, whereas those living in cold climates are brave and active, but not sensitive, and respond very slowly to any external influence" [5]. Although this theory seemed "unreliable" to the scientific community, it finds confirmation in various practical experiments. The German philosopher and psychologist J.G. Herder supported Montesquieu's theory and somewhat supplemented it. Noting that a person's individual spiritual features depend on climate and landscape, he also says that the influence of the

environment shaped by people — way of life and upbringing, social order and history — must be taken into account as well [6]. Acknowledging that it is difficult to study the spirituality of a particular people, the scholar notes: "...to feel even one distinctive feature of a nation, one must live in the same region and era as it." The theory of geographical determinism is also followed in political science, in Halford Mackinder' [7] sexplanation of differences in the political and economic development of states.

In literature, however, the approach to geographical determinism is different. Writers or poets use geographical landscapes, climate, seasons and toponyms for poetic purposes, in the form of landscape description. In such descriptions symbolic pathos predominates, and a picture of the geographical environment is drawn to reveal the conditions of the era and the psychology of the hero. National character is created in relation to the region in which a nation lives and its climate. The category of national character is directly connected with the artistic means of expressing national ideas and national views in national literature. The following explanation by the well-known scholar K. Kasyanova confirms our view: "National character is the artistic manifestation of a people's self-awareness; it is one of the important units of popular consciousness, a reflection of the ethnic 'I' of society" [8]. Thus, national character is a generalized image, formed by a particular national mentality, inherent in that people in an immanent manner and possessing the most familiar features [9]. On this basis, when a literary hero rises to the level of national character, through his actions, feelings and behavior he becomes an individualized, distinctive "symbol" of the nation. In particular, the significance of the hero's region of residence and his belonging to a particular geographical environment in creating national character is exceptionally great. It is from this perspective that revealing the hero's psychology and creating national character is a phenomenon characteristic of the creative experience of M. Sholokhov and Sh. Seitov. The writers succeeded in creating images that are true to life and psychologically convincing; the geographical place where the plot unfolds and every natural phenomenon united their typical national qualities [10].

4. Discussion

In the image of Grigory Melekhov M. Sholokhov, and in the image of Old Man Yesjan Sh. Seitov, created a national ethnic "I." In choosing the geographical place and the ethnic relations, a common general approach is felt in both authors: first, both M. Sholokhov and Sh. Seitov chose the outlying regions of the state in order to reveal the entire ideological meaning of the work. Second, both authors were representatives of the people discussed in the work; that is, as V.G. Belinsky said above, the reflection of national character was at the level of a natural phenomenon [11].

The common landscape setting of the two writers is the riverside. This in turn gives rise to common character traits. Since peoples living along a river tend toward a settled way of life, collectivism and a sense of openness in mutual relations predominate in their character. In the novel "Quiet Don" this trait is felt through the images of Panteley Melekhov and Miron Grigorievich. We see this in the episodes where the Melekhov and Astakhov families join together to catch fish or to gather the summer hay. Interest in the fate of not only one's own family but also of the other households around is known from the collectivist notion. And in the novel "Shirashilar" we see such a characteristic trait in Old Man Yesjan's gathering of the crops in the fields abandoned by his fellow villagers. Here, along with the influence of national values — fear of waste and respect for labor — we can see that, proceeding from the living conditions of a people living along a river, helping one another comes involuntarily, and the collectivist attitude reaches the level of a reflex in order to prevent the bad consequences of natural disasters. "Old Man Yesjan faced the hardest toil of all after his five neighbors next to him, having hoed and sown their crops with such torment, abandoned them just as they stood in full bloom and rushed off in a hurry, as though fleeing a flood from the river.

…– So you're just going to leave, then why bother sowing crops! Unless you're a dog, where on earth do you mean to go, abandoning your home and homeland! Wandering about like a dog, when you come back one autumn you'll see that I've brought your crop to ripeness and gathered it in — whether you thank the Lord or not, mind you!..

…Worst of all, the old man's "compulsive malady" — that he could not pass by an unattended fruit tree or a withering crop without looking at it, and could not leave without turning back once his eyes fell on it — became a great hard labor for him" [12]. Panteley Melekhov, too, is seen to have the traits found in Old Man Yesjan, from his taking it upon himself to mow and gather the autumn hay set aside for his neighbor Stepan Astakhov when the latter left for military service:

"– Who will gather the hay and stack it, brother? – Dunyashka asked, embarrassed.

– And you, what else do you have to do?

– I can't manage by myself, brother.

– We'll take Aksyutka Astakhova along too. As he was leaving, Stepan said: help mow and gather our hay as well. We must help" [13]. Settled riverside farming work gives rise in people to the need to work together. This in itself demands collective labor. Through it, virtues such as respecting one another's labor and helping one another are formed. Thus, geographical place has a great influence on the formation of national character as well. Because among peoples living in mountainous and desert zones, features such as collectivism and the ability to reach mutual agreement are almost never encountered.

Grigory's spiritual independence, his refusal to submit to the ways of life that felt false to him, lead him to conflict with his father, to leaving home, and — after Podtelkov's shooting of the prisoners, an act against the people's moral truth — to turning away from the Reds. Grigory tries to defend his own truth outside the ideological framework as well. He is able to defend his position even before the Red Army soldiers quartered in the Melekhovs' house, and considers relations devoid of humanity to be wrong. He wishes to influence people's fates not on the basis of "discipline or law" but through the category of "mercy and compassion." All of this shows that Grigory accepts no class, patriarchal, social or ideological restrictions. Grigory evaluates the world and the people around him on the basis of their humane personal virtues, not relying on mass normative standards. For example, this can be seen in the episode where Grigory, abandoning his division and galloping his horse, did everything in his power to prevent the killing of his comrades — Mishka Koshevoy and I.A. Kotlyarov — although they were his ideological opponents: "An hour later Grigory Melekhov galloped into Tatarsk. As soon as he left Ust-Khoper he whipped his horse hard, and the horse, tormented, died on the road between two villages. Grigory, carrying the saddle and tack on his back, ran on foot, and after reaching a nearby village he found a horse there and set off. For that reason he was late..." [14].

Sh. Seitov is a writer who has conducted considerable research on creating the hero's character and possesses sufficient experience. In revealing national character, we see that along with an individual approach there is also a study of preceding experience. In the novel "Shirashilar," Old Man Yesjan saves from his pursuers a wounded Red Army commander he does not know, Kuminger (a Hungarian Bolshevik). Regardless of whether he is "White," "Red" or "Blue," he thinks first of all that he is a human being. The significance of human virtues for Old Man Yesjan is so great that the author has succeeded in depicting this quality of his as if innate. The old man's humaneness reaches the level of simplicity. Not regarding Kuminger as an enemy, he pays attention to his condition of need for help: "...Likely he is some stubborn lad who ran off without pity for his parents, like my Dosjan; whether the Whites see him or the Blues see him, they will kill him, won't they!.." — this thought flashed through his mind, and this flashing thought cast a ray of mercy into the old man's heart, and he lifted the young man by the armpit of his healthy arm and pulled him inside..." . The old man gives him shalap (ayran) according to his national tradition, treats the wound in the local way and binds it with his own turban.

Whoever he may be in the end, he wishes him to survive: "...whether you are a Bolshevik or whatever, it is all the same to me; as long as you are a decent human being, may you be safe in the end..." . The scholar D.S. Likhachev points out: "One of the most important features of national character is to take everything — thoughts, actions — to the level of educational-disciplinary maximalism, and to carry out any task to the very limit of one's ability" [15].

Indeed, in the image of Old Man Yesjan the trait of fulfilling a task demanded by his occupation beyond what is required stands out. Even though he senses that Kuminger is a fugitive, having taken on the obligation of "taking him across to the other side," his sense of honor does not allow him not to carry it through to the end. This, too, is considered a general trait characteristic of national character. Because the Karakalpak people are demanding in carrying out any task entrusted to them. We encounter this trait among the Cossacks too, and in particular M. Sholokhov confirms this view of ours through the image of Grigory Melekhov. Although Grigory is unstable and capricious in his thoughts and inner experiences, he does not violate the rules of order that military discipline and the battlefield demand. He does not flee the battlefield, does not commit acts of disobedience against his commanders-atamans, and is loyal to his horse and saber. This is proof that the Cossacks have been a warrior people from ancient times. Chubaty reminds Grigory, who has fallen into despondency for having killed an Austrian soldier, of his national character: "You are a Cossack, your duty is to charge and kill without asking questions. You become a ghazi for killing the enemy in battle. For every person you kill, God forgives one of your sins; killing a snake is also a good deed...". The scholar Ya.V. Soldatkina, who studied the problem of national character in M. Sholokhov's work: "Grigory seeks the highest virtue — a disciplined truth, the most just social order. To reveal this trait of Melekhov, the author tests him from the standpoint of conformity with norms of order and discipline. To give Grigory the right to call his age to account, he portrays him as a person who can recognize that his actions were wrong and can feel these mistakes from the heart". The argument cited by the scholar strengthens especially at the time when the popular uprising begins. Grigory, deeply feeling the inappropriateness of his actions, considers himself responsible for the wrong direction of society and of his whole life: "Our life has taken a wrong path, perhaps I too may be a cause of this..." , — he says in a dialogue with Natalya. In this way, M. Sholokhov, through the influence of Grigory's national character and the historical-social conditions, enters his psychology and creates the image of a "truth-seeking" hero. Although this is a typical image, through the collision of three elements — national character, historical circumstances and inner psychological state — M. Sholokhov reveals the tragedy of that "man of the era."

Sh. Seitov also takes this position. The beliefs and values in which Old Man Yesjan believes, the conditions created by the historical order, and the contradictions within his inner psychology intersect, putting him in a state of strong "psychological storm." While Grigory struggles with the warrior spirit and strictness of discipline in his national character, Old Man Yesjan struggles with the mercy, compassion and honesty formed within him. Detesting strife and war and living by one's own labor are also national character traits characteristic of Karakalpak elders. He supports none of the warring sides, thinking only of people's safety and his own work (his shirashi calling): "...Why should he draw a saber — it is not as if I would touch anyone, or as if I were Red or White or Blue!...", "...I will not go to that bank or to this bank, nor will I run off to the sea, I will die right here in this village...". Old Man Yesjan's ability to think that others are like himself brings out his tragedy. Sh. Seitov reveals the political struggles between Tsarist Russia and Bolshevism and the ideologies instilled in the people's consciousness through intimidation and violence through the image of Old Man Yesjan, a simple man living far from the city who thinks only of everyone's safety. It may seem that Old Man Yesjan's age naturally demands that he have such traits, but what Old Man Yesjan has in common with what Grigory Melekhov's inner spiritual world dictates is the comprehension of universal truth

and an inner struggle against war and injustice. This is directly connected with the dialectology of national character. Both authors sought to link the destinies of the heroes with the destiny of the nation.

It may be thought that Old Man Yesjan's feeling of sympathy toward Kuminger's views was written from the standpoint of the political demands of that period. But in our opinion, Old Man Yesjan had passed a verdict on his own simplicity, ignorance and extreme honesty. Until the end of his life he was neither "White," nor "Blue," nor "Red." Creating the image of a hero who was unable to recognize himself was later given in literature through sharp psychological methods of depiction. And we think that creating the image of a hero by combining the collision of national character and inner psychology with the influence of external historical-political factors is considerably more effective and more convincing from the standpoint of the demands of the era.

5. Conclusion

In general, both M. Sholokhov and Sh. Seitov have mastered the creation of national character. Against the background of historical events and ideological pressures, they were able to skillfully depict the union of national character with a real psychological state, and into what kind of identity crisis it brings the hero. Although Grigory Melekhov succeeded in escaping the influence of his "patriarchal" order, his feeling of attachment to the home in which he grew up under national norms of upbringing is strong. Although in his youthful cruelty he was indifferent to the fates of Natalya and Aksinya, he later came to feel a sense of "responsibility." Although he strictly obeys the warrior spirit and military discipline inherited from his ancestors, he is an image able to understand later that his actions were mistaken. And the image of Old Man Yesjan is an image loyal to universal humanist ideas and devoted to his values and beliefs. The characters of both images did not match their historical era and the pulse of that era, and therefore breakdowns occurred in their psyche, and they arrived at a state of difficult inner psychological crisis. The images of Grigory Melekhov and Old Man Yesjan fully reflected the spirit of the "man of the era".

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