

**Title:** Charles Dickens in Leo Tolstoy's Universe

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Charles Dickens occupied a very special place in Tolstoy's spiritual universe. His reading preferences were not so stable: he tended to evaluate and re-evaluate many writers during his long life. But his appreciation of Charles Dickens was very permanent and unchangeable. Since his youth, *The Personal History David Copperfield* was his favourite novel. Although we do not know exactly when Tolstoy started reading Dickens, we know for sure that in the early 1850s he was reading *David Copperfield*. In the 1840–1850s in Russia Dickens was a very popular writer; many Russian literary journals used to publish his translations, the journal "Sovremennik" in particular. In the atmosphere of Dickens's fame in Russia Tolstoy was reading this author in English and in Russian during that period. There is a diary entry of 1852: "What a delight *David Copperfield* is." We have no doubts that he had been reading *David Copperfield* before he finished his first work, *Childhood*. The typological similarities of the two works are quite obvious. In *David Copperfield*, Dickens describes his own circle of reading of his youth, which in some ways similar to Tolstoy's. In 1854, while working on "Notes of a Fire worker," Tolstoy was reading Dickens's *Bleak House* in Russian in "Sovremennik." In August 1856, working on the third draft of *Youth*, he was reading *Little Dorrit* in the English magazine *Household Worlds*. In October 1856 – was reading *The Pickwick Papers*. Charles Dickens was always in his circle of reading. Tolstoy really admired him for the democratic and humanistic qualities of his writings. Even after his spiritual crisis, when he rejected most of his works of fiction – some of them inspired or influenced by Dickens – he did not change his attitude to this writer, and this is the problem we are trying to research in this paper.