

“One peculiar feature of Tolstoy’s style is what I shall term the “groping purist.” In describing a meditation, emotion, or tangible object, Tolstoy follows the contours of the thought, the emotion, or the object until he is perfectly satisfied with his re-creation, his rendering. This involves what we might call creative repetitions, a compact series of repetitive statements, coming one immediately after the other, each more expressive, each closer to Tolstoy’s meaning. He gropes, he unwraps the verbal parcel for its inner sense, he peels the apple of the phrase, he tries to say it one way, then a better way, he gropes, he stalls, he toys, he Tolstoys with words.”

-Nabokov, *Lectures on Russian Literature*