



EDUCATIONAL CONCEPT OF REAPPRAISING VALUES: LEO TOLSTOY AND THE SCIENTIFIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS OF HIS TIME

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ABSTRACT

The relevance of the research lies in a new approach to the study of the late creative activities of L. Tolstoy and his educational ideas, which focus on the nature of the paradigm shifts that had taken place in the writer's world outlook and on their efficient causes. A number of fundamentally new ideas and concepts were discovered that are characteristic of the great writer during his spiritual crisis, which greatly expands the boundaries of modern studies of Tolstoy. The article is aimed to analyze Tolstoy's world outlook and artistic and aesthetic vision at the later stage of his creative life.

Key words: educational concept; reappraising educational values; Leo Tolstoy; science; literary centrism; thanatology; discourse; postmodernism.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The logic of this research is determined by the topic and provides a review of the natural-scientific discoveries that were conceptually important for later Tolstoy's creativity concerning the physiology of man, his neuro-psychic features, the correlation of the biological and the spiritual, the problems of physical and spiritual death, in parallel with the embodiment of his ideological position in his literary texts.

The research hypothesis is that Tolstoy excludes the interaction of the biological and the spiritual in life, and this position is most clearly reflected in his later works. The writer openly opposed the desire to explain the vital meaning of human existence by scientific means; he could not reconcile the fact that human misfortunes, the torments of many people can have psychophysiological justifications. Reflections on death gave the writer the idea that these reflections are the most likely to stir up the metaphysical "passion" of a person, to awaken a true moral burning in him, and hence to make his being spiritual. For Tolstoy, the problems of the biological maintenance of life are unnatural. The popularization of natural scientific information is aimed, according to the writer, against the religious and moral interpretation of human nature, toward which he increasingly leaned.

The purpose of the article is to confirm the working hypothesis about Tolstoy's rejection of scientific-natural interpretations of the problems of life and death and the formation of his own model of being and the meaning of life in his artistic worldview at the later stage of his creativity.

The research tasks included the formation of a methodological apparatus for the most productive analysis of L. Tolstoy's texts; identification of the most interesting ontological topics for the writer and their scientific and natural interpretations; textual analysis of Tolstoy's later texts on the basis of the proposed methodological apparatus, which confirm the working hypothesis.

1.1. Literature Review

The choice of the research theme is determined by the unrelenting interest in the work of Leo Tolstoy, whose texts are not interpreted unambiguously in Russian and foreign literary criticism. The study is focused on the later period of his work, called the turning point and characterized by so-called reappraisal of values, a rethinking of his vision of the problems of human existence. The interaction of Tolstoy's world outlook, his moral and philosophical worldview with the popular and influential natural-scientific theories of the time was the starting point of the research. It should be noted that there are discussions in the space of the problems under study, and there are different approaches and points of view to consider them, which draw our attention during the research.

Attention of Western critics is mainly attracted by the moral conservatism of Leo Tolstoy and his exceptional interest in the issues of morals and mores. As known, all these issues acquire critical acuity precisely in the period of a tipping point, at the high noon of his later creative work. Feminist researchers, as a rule, keep the novel *Anna Karenina* at the center of their reasoning, while for another part it is important to interpret the stories of the latest period in more or less generally accepted psychological categories, first of all according to Freud (Mann, 1988; Koelb, 1984; Benson, 1973; Berlin, 2017; Adelman, 1990; Stem, 1984 and others).

Western critics of L.N. Tolstoy often emphasize the writer's dichotomous attitude toward the woman ("an angel and a devil"). In their opinion, "libido, animal craving for physical satisfaction" was the real basis for such a vision. Vladimir Nabokov practically joins this viewpoint in his famous "Lectures on Russian Literature". He characterizes Tolstoy as "a

robust man with a restless soul, who all his life was torn between his sensual temperament and his supersensitive conscience" (Nabokov, 2017: 138).

Speaking about the greatest Russian writer of prose fiction, he makes a very valuable observation, pointing out that the writer's duality is hidden inside one and the same man – Tolstoy: "Whether painting or preaching, Tolstoy was striving, in spite of all obstacles, to get at the truth (Nabokov, 2017: 140). According to V. Nabokov, this moving inner monologue is the main reason for the writer's entire creative work.

Another distinctive feature of the Western concept of Tolstoy's creativity is an emphasis on his sociological nature. It is not like this aspect was absent in the Russian tradition, but it has a more stable form in the West.

2. METHODOLOGY

In Russian and foreign literary criticism, three leading methodological tendencies are being outlined in the study of Leo Tolstoy's work:

- 1) A line of research based on the principles of historicism;
- 2) The psychological line, which is developing more actively in Western European and American literary criticism (Gunn, 1971; Speirs, 1971; Lampert, 1973; Greenwood, 1975; Wasiolek, 1978; 1986; Gustafson, 1986; Rowe, 1986; Morson, 2007);
- 3) Philosophical and religious line, including an ethical-philosophical approach aimed at exploring the worldview peculiarities of Tolstoy as a thinker in the context of reflecting the writer's philosophical and religious views and ideas in his literary and publicistic work.

The authors believe that there is an urgent need to expand the methodological apparatus, in particular, to attract the analytical tools of thanatology and postmodernist theory of the text.

This need is conditioned by the emergence of new ideas about life and death in the artistic worldview of the later Tolstoy, and, in particular, by the fact that the power of Leo Tolstoy's talent, the planetary scope of his topics and problems, and especially – the inadequacy, even, moreover, the contradiction of the writer's views in different periods of his life exclude the possibility and productivity of one methodology of scientific research of his views and creative work in general. All the lines of research mentioned above intersect, to some extent, depending on the subject of the study. Each researcher studying the personality of the scale of L. Tolstoy inevitably encounters the need to consider his creativity in relation to the experience of the literary tradition and the national culture to which he belongs, in which he was brought up. Moreover, it is necessary to take into account the specific philosophical and philosophical views of the writer in each definite period.

In this study, the problem of L. Tolstoy's attitude to science is considered in the later period of his life and creativity, marked by a sharp change in his world outlook. In this case the historical approach turns out to be productive for comprehending the issue of the influence of science on the spiritual life of society in the 1880s and on the views of L. Tolstoy. The methodology of the psychological trend is no less productive in terms of studying the "heart-felt issues" that were vital to Tolstoy, as well as the problems of physiology and the carnal in human, which did not find Tolstoy's unambiguous understanding yet. The philosophical and religious approach in studying Tolstoy's creativity does not lose its productivity and relevance, because it is focused on the study of the writer's main ideas, concentrated in the sphere of religious, moral, spiritual foundations of life, as well as the phenomenon of death, no less important for a profound spiritual understanding.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. New Paradigms and Artistic Space of the Novel *Anna Karenina*

A.I. Herzen (2004) wrote in the Letters on the Study of Nature back in the 1840s about the need to generalize and popularize the achievements of natural science and saw this as one of the main needs of the time. In his speech "On the Current State and Significance of Universal History" of January 12, 1892 T.N. Granovsky (2010) told that history should reach the vast field of the natural sciences, and the great Russian physiologist I.M. Sechenov (1907) attended with interest lectures on history to the detriment of his medical studies.

It took only a decade for the issues of natural science to be at the center of the whirlpool of the second half of the XIX century. The works of natural scientists, especially the study of the body and its neuro-psychic functions by Sechenov caused a whole stream of articles in the Russian periodical press. In 1863 the Russian naturalist published his famous treatise *Reflexes of the brain* (1965). In 1866, his no less distinguished work *The Physiology of the Nervous System* came off the press. Since this period, works on neurophysiology have invaded the world of the human psyche.

Leader of Russian neurophysiology Pavlov started to talk about the inseparable links of general biological concepts with human ones, about the merger of the subjective and the objective. Later A.A. Ukhtomsky affirmed: "The soul's business – the elaboration of the worldview – cannot do without the knowledge of the body ... Physiology must be placed in the guiding ground when studying laws (in a broad sense)" (Merkulov, 1960: 27). Obviously, Ukhtomsky opposed science and morality in this statement, posed the question of character and correlation.

Moreover, this problem was raised by I.M. Sechenov. In a kind of epilogue to his *Reflexes of the Brain*, in the lines that the contemporaries of the scholar failed to read (as these lines were cut off by censorship), he wrote: "... I consider it my duty to reassure the moral sense of my reader. The developed previously teaching is destroying significance of the moral and good in man in no way: the grounds for our love for each other are eternal, just as a person will forever appreciate a good car and prefer it to a bad one from a number of homogeneous ... But this merit of the doctrine developed by me is still negative, but there is a positive one – only with the developed by me view of the actions of a man the highest love is possible in the latter, that is, utter clemency towards one's neighbor" (Sechenov, 1907). This philosophical epilogue in the scientific article sounds like a direct answer to the accusations brought against the natural sciences in the second half of the XIX century.

Since 1859, the Russian reading public was getting acquainted with the works of Charles Darwin with special interest. Already in 1861, Russian translation of a two-volume work by the great English naturalist, entitled *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* was published under the editorship of I.M. Sechenov. The journals "Herald of Europe", "Russian Herald", "Otechestvennye zapiski" regularly published articles on the evolutionary theory of Darwin. The mass media were flooded with a stream of one-sided and rectilinear doctrines with which Russian Darwinists came out, who saw the explanation of the purpose of human life in the processes of biology and physiology, and the harmony of progress in "natural selection" and "struggle for existence." However, in the early 1870's the large army of Darwin's admirers and papers of Russian physiologists began to be resisted by no less impressive number of opponents of the natural sciences. This criticism of science was represented by various and fairly large names in the history of Russian social and literary thought. Many of those who entered the discussion sought to turn the public's interest from biology, physiology, psychology to other fields of knowledge, which in their view could be considered the sciences of human life.

It is known that while working on the novel *Anna Karenina* Tolstoy showed a special interest in natural science thought (Tolstoy, 1981). And it is not by chance that in one of the scenes his main protagonist Levin, a naturalist with a university education, becomes a witness of a scientific dispute between his stepbrother Sergei Koznyshev and the Kharkov professor who came to visit him. Leo Nikolayevich wrote: "As he listened to his brother's argument with the professor, he noticed that they connected these scientific questions with those spiritual problems, that at times they almost touched on the latter; but every time they were close upon what seemed to him the chief point, they promptly beat a hasty retreat, and plunged again into a sea of subtle distinctions, reservations, quotations, allusions, and appeals to authorities, and it was with difficulty that he understood what they were talking about"(Tolstoy, 1981: 33).

That is where Tolstoy's open protest against the natural sciences in the 1880's and 1890's stemmed from. All these sciences, in his opinion, came close to the most important, then immediately retreated away. The character of Tolstoy's novel was concerned precisely with "those spiritual problems" and, apparently, finally gave up his hopes to solve these problems by means of science.

For the great writer, it made enough sense that his character, who had received professional knowledge in natural sciences, was not able to get a sense of a dispute that did not go beyond his education.

In the handwritten draft of the novel it is said that Anna Karenina read the works of Tocqueville, Carlyle, Taine. "She used to read these books, understanding perfectly well, but experiencing the feeling of excitement and dissatisfaction of thirst usually left by such books" (Tolstoy, 1984: 487). This was determined by the fact that for her, as for Levin, only "spiritual problems" were really important.

The final version of the novel reads: "She was sitting in the drawing room near a lamp, with a new volume of Taine, and as she read, listening to the sound of the wind outside, and every minute expecting the carriage to arrive" (Tolstoy, 1982a: 337). The carriage (with Vronsky) was to bring the solution of the agonizing suspense, and the sounds of the wind burst into Taine's book, the expectation of the long-awaited carriage, in short, this was the life, before which all the discoveries of Taine grew pale.

Moving from one tormenting disappointment to another, Anna, in the end, plunged into sheer and increasingly painful loneliness. In the course of the narrative, she lost all affections one after another, and with them - and that little bit of the sense that she had seen in the Existence previously.

Tolstoy's heroine was concerned with not only eternal Russian questions: what to do and who is to blame, but also with the most terrible one – what is next? "Well, I'm divorced, and become Vronsky's wife. Well, will Kitty cease looking at me as she looked at me today? No. And will Seryozha leave off asking and wondering about my two husbands? And is there any new feeling I can awaken between Vronsky and me? Is there possible, if not happiness, some sort of ease from misery? No, no!" she answered now without the slightest hesitation. "Impossible!" (Tolstoy, 1982a: 359). Abolishing the age-old taboos, Anna entered the world of passions and instincts, which were well known - eros and thanatos, pleasure and destruction.

Anna's nature that was open to the world and life significantly changed under the influence of passion. Her love was so strong that it left almost no room in her heart for anything else: "For me there is one thing, and one thing only - your love," Anna exclaimed, trying to understand her position to the end. "If that's mine, I feel so exalted, so strong, that nothing can be humiliating to me. I am proud of my position, because...proud of being...

proud..." She could not say what she was proud of. Tears of shame and despair choked her utterance. She stood still and sobbed"(Tolstoy, 1981: 349).

"The spiritual beauty" of the heroine, which had struck Vronsky from the first meeting, came into conflict with the shame in front of "spiritual nudity".

That is why Tolstoy did not miss a single opportunity to fix a physical manifestation of shame – flushing. Kitty, Levin, even Stiva flushed, and the deeper the penetration of love in Vronsky's heart, the more confusing and complicated the situation, going beyond the rules, the more often this protagonist flushes. Let us recall that Charles Darwin considered the phenomenon of flushing as the most characteristic and most human expression of emotions, calling shame "the embarrassment of the mind." Many psychologists share the point of view of the great natural scientist, directly linking flushing with a sense of shame. And Tolstoy convincingly demonstrated this link as an artistic law.

In religious metaphysics, sin is understood as "the moment of disintegration, breakdown and disruption of spiritual life." Pavel Florensky wrote that sin leads to a state when the "I" chokes in the "stream of mental passions". "No wonder that the last degree of the moral fall of a woman is described by the language as "lostness", frustration (...). Shame is a sign that, although legitimate and God given, - but must be hidden inside ... but when there is no pudency – it is impudence and cynicism appearing"(Florensky, 2003: 181).

Unaware of remorse and almost ashamed of nothing Stepan Arkadievich Oblonsky came to Alexei Alexandrovich Karenin with the aim of "arranging a connection" between Anna and Vronsky and "suddenly aware of "a sense of embarrassment unusual with him, feeling "with surprise an unaccustomed timidity." This feeling was so unexpected and so strange that he did not believe it was the voice of conscience" the author noted. And Stiva, embodying not only a certain layer of social life in the novel, but also the fullness of sensuous being, served as an indicator and means of direct authorial moral evaluation - "what he was meaning to do was wrong" (Tolstoy, 1981: 424).

It is appropriate to recall that Stiva Oblonsky was one of the most indiscriminating admirers of science in the novel Anna Karenina. He was a worshipper of Darwin, and he was quite satisfied with what he has absorbed from his acquaintance with Darwin's theory. At least he was sure that there was no point in asking himself painfully tormenting questions, and he was ready to accept without objection answers offered by science. And Levin being well-versed in numerous research articles in natural science " had never connected these scientific deductions as to the origin of man as an animal, as to reflex action, biology, and sociology, with those questions as to the meaning of life and death to himself, which had of late been more and more often in his mind" (Tolstoy, 1981: 34).

Even in a row of quarrels between Anna and Vronsky, Tolstoy indicated the rejection of "the girls' high schools" by the hero as one of the reasons for the big quarrel. And she recalled with deep resentment: "He had spoken slightly of women's education in general, and had said that Hannah, Anna's English protegee, had not the slightest need to know anything of physics" (Tolstoy, 1982a: 334).

Obviously, Tolstoy excludes the interaction of the biological and the spiritual in life. In this regard, the viewpoint of Ruth Benson (1973) is of interest: the woman for Tolstoy was "both angel and devil", and the problem of sexuality was the d Tolstoy's opinion of women. Meanwhile, as far back as in the 1870s, the questions of this interaction were increasingly posed in the works of Russian naturalists. Sechenov, for example, argued that the moral activity of a person could be explained in scientific categories, that scientific discoveries contributed to the rational deterministic understanding of one's own actions by the human.

Tolstoy could not have been unaware of the attempts of Russian naturalists to shield science from indiscriminate accusations of depersonalizing man, ignoring issues of ethics and morals. But already in the 1880s, when he had just completed *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy would act as an opponent of science, combining its serious criticism in publicistic articles with open ridicule over natural science and the people of science. In this respect, the works written in the 1880-90's are rather indicative: *Confession*, *What My Faith Is In*, *So What Should We Do?*, *The Kingdom of God Is Within Us*, *On Science*.

In the article *What is art?* he wrote the following: "It is only for people who have devoted their lives to this study that it seems that all those discoveries that are made in the natural sciences are very important and useful. But it seems to people only because they do not look around themselves and do not see what is really important"(Tolstoy, 1951: 188).

Until the end of his life, Leo Tolstoy displayed an active interest in scientific discoveries and scientists, reading everything more or less significant about the achievements in science, attended various congresses. Thus, at the very beginning of 1894 a congress of Russian naturalists was held in Moscow. One of the writer's old friends, botanist A. Tsinger, recalled that he was very interested in the affairs of the congress and even attended the general meeting once. The speech of a young Russian physiologist V.Ya. Danilevsky "Feeling and Life" was a great success at one of the meetings. Having read this speech in the reports of the congress, Tolstoy was indignant: "What typical narrowness and self-confidence of a scientist. He examined some cells and nucleoli in a microscope, and for him there is nothing incomprehensible, everything is clear to him, he has no doubts ... "(Tsinger, 1973: 123). He openly expressed resentment against the desire to understand the vital sense of human existence by the means of science and could not reconcile himself to the fact that human misfortunes, the torments of many people could have psychophysiological justifications.

In front of the writer, natural science accumulated information about the human body; in his memory the Russian physiologist Pavlov took upon himself a gigantic task to study the behavior of the human body as a whole. But for Tolstoy, who was following the movement of scientific thought with an inquisitive interest, the only one thing was obvious: the accumulation of knowledge had not yet made any one person happy; science had not given a single answer to the endless questions of life. In the article *Progress and Definition of Education* he spoke directly about the social tragedy of knowledge that was unable to find contact with life.

In the writer's diary there is a lot of evidence of his vivid interest in the studies on physiology and biology. In March 1903 he wrote: "I read Metchnikoff's article again about the same: that if you cut out the rectum, people will no longer think about the meaning of life, they will be as stupid as Metchnikoff himself. No, without kidding. His idea that science will improve the human body, will free it from suffering, and then it will be possible to find the sense – the purpose of life. Science will open it"(Tolstoy, 1935: 157).

This refers to a well-known theory of Metchnikoff, explaining the causes of death and old age. According to the theory of the Russian biologist, there might be an optimistic understanding of life and death, which would ensure a full and happy destiny of life, ending with a calm natural death (the doctrine of "orthobiosis"). It is not revealed referring which Metchnikoff's article this entry was made in Tolstoy's diary, but a year before, in 1902, in the fifth issue of *Russkiye Vedomosti*, he had read Metchnikoff's correspondence stating the main provisions of his *Etudes on Human Nature*. Tolstoy's utterance on Metchnikoff's ideas is fully explained by the theory of the American researcher of Tolstoy's creative activity, E. Wasiolek (1978, 1986) who believed that the main problem for Leo Tolstoy's entire work was the search for forms of establishing "correct, true attitudes" to the world, which are achieved only

by "identifying" individual consciousness with the objective conditions of being – the general goals of the society or the very laws of life. The harmony of such "identification" is determined by the degree of internal awareness of its inevitability and the readiness with which the personality "dissolves" in others, without distorting their essence by projecting their own, false ideas about the sense and purposes of being. According to Wasiolek, in the philosophical and artistic activity of Leo Tolstoy his key conviction is that a person is unable just to accept or not accept it. Any attempt to change life is like trying to stop the very flow of life.

3.2. Fear of Death in the New Coordinate System

In recent decades, there has been a kind of rediscovery of the theme of death in culture, which acquires various substantiations. Thanatology has formed as a relatively new science, which became part of the humanitarian discipline. This term is defined as "the philosophical experience of describing the phenomenon of death" in the encyclopedia *Culturology. XX Century* (Levit, 1998). This term is interpreted similarly by G. Tulchinsky (2003) in an appropriate entry published in the *Projective Philosophical Dictionary*.

In the most famous modern Western fields of philosophical thought, and above all, in postmodernism (M. Foucault, J. Derrida, R. Barthes and others) science and rationality are generally recognized as instruments of power, a system of discourses – simulacra, aimed at enslaving the human. In all these systems, the rejection of any continuity, of any recognition of spiritual kinship, is striking. The history of the human race looks like a mechanical change of generations, gradually disappearing without a trace in the vast Non-existence.

In the humanitarian branch of thanatology literary experience is one of the key points. The semantic function of death for structuring a literary plot, for example, is considered by Yu.M. Lotman (1994). He wrote about the possibility of turning the idea of death into one of the universal languages of culture with the help of a certain formalized set of means of expression.

The postmodernist discourse of death acquires increasingly greater popularity currently; its fundamental principles manifest death as a "naked" argument of absurdity beyond any philosophical and moral comprehension. It is known that death, along with emptiness, the other world, refers to the main mythologems of the Russian literary postmodernism of the 1890s. Undoubtedly, Tolstoy's thought is present in the texts written by the writers of this trend – life as the overcoming of the fear of death. For example, all the heroes of the Serbian writer Milorad Pavić are susceptible to this fear; the hero of Voskoboinikov and Elizabeth by A. Dmitriev, Elizabeth's father, escapes from this fear as well. He, like the hero of Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, eventually would get rid of the fear of death and call it "a sweet dream after a hard day."

Ivan Ilyich, too, succeeded to finally merge with his tormentor – the fear of death, and get rid of it. He does what he dreamed in the process of dying for himself as of a supreme good: he pitied his family members, not only his little son, "a little schoolboy with terrible blue circles under his eyes," but also his hated wife whom he tried to say "forgive" with his chilling lips.

Reflection on mortality is the most likely to ignite the metaphysical "passion" of a person, to awaken a true moral burning in him, and hence to make his being spiritual (McLean, 1989).

The Death of Ivan Ilyich is a programmatic work in terms of conceptualizing the idea of mortality in the later works of Tolstoy which he called "the simplest and most ordinary and most terrible story". His hero is one of those people who lived by inertia, habitually, "conventionally" ("the Kingdom of God is within you"), according to the writer.

It is interesting that according to one version, the term "thanatology" was introduced in the use of medical and biological sciences at the suggestion of I. Metchnikoff, and in 1925 Professor G. Shor (2002), his student, published the work "On the death of a human. Introduction to thanatology" in Leningrad. Thus this word first got into the headline and, perhaps, Shor was the founder of this branch in science.

Of course, the Professor's study was mainly addressed to physicians, but his assertion that the theme of death is "overlooked" is quite remarkable even for scholars. Shor created a kind of typology of death: "casual" and "violent", "sudden" and "ordinary", he formed a terminological apparatus ("thanatologist", "thanatological thinking", "thanatological tasks", "thanatogenesis") (Shor, 2002: 72).

According to Tolstoy himself, the life story of Ivan Ilyich Metchnikoff, the prosecutor of the Tula District Court, who died on June 2, 1881 from a serious illness, provided the basis for his story *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. In memoirs about the death of his brother, Ilya Ilyich Metchnikoff reproduced his reflections, "full of the greatest positivism", about the fear of death and, finally, about reconciliation with it. T.A. Kuzminskaya (1958) passed on the conversations of Ivan Metchnikoff "about the futility of his life" to Tolstoy, as told by the widow of the deceased.

The fear of death and end confronted the character of Tolstoy, Ivan Ilyich, with the need to understand life's reality as something thought-out. The search for the meaning of his life became for the Tolstoy's hero a deadly poison that he could not bear rather than awakening of his consciousness: "And his professional duties and the whole arrangement of his life and of his family, and all his social and official interests, might all have been false. He tried to defend all those things to himself and suddenly felt the weakness of what he was defending. There was nothing to defend" (Tolstoy, 1982b: 104). Consciousness of the revealed truth "intensified his physical suffering tenfold," hatred for everything surrounding him from clothing to the appearance of wife was diminishing his exhausting forces. The premonition of irretrievably departing life plunged Ivan Ilyich into a panic, irrational, metaphysical horror.

In this regard Gaito Gazdanov (1994) interprets the creative nature of the Russian writer V. Rozanov in an interesting way. Gazdanov considers him explicitly in an existential manner: "Rozanov is a process of dying", and finds his merit in the fact that he embodied this process. It is not by accident that the author of the article recalls *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* in connection with Rozanov. He explains the mystery of Rozanov's human and artistic nature by the tragic feeling of death: "There are no laws for the agonizing person. There is no shame, no morals, no duty, no obligations – there is not enough time for all this." The absence of hopes and illusions, according to Gazdanov, is fraught with immorality (Gazdanov, 1994: 73-78).

That is why with the course of the hero's illness the image of death became more and more physiological, causing disgust: "a torment from the uncleanness, the unseemliness, and the smell", "enfeebled thighs", hair "clung to his pallid forehead." Ivan Ilyich looked at his wife with such a look and marks with hatred "whiteness and plumpness and cleanness of her hands and neck, the gloss of her hair, and the sparkle of her vivacious eyes." The hero's gaze sharply grabs the signs of carnal health, and this look is directed at all the heroes: the butler's assistant, Gerasim, the daughter and her fiancé with "an enormous white shirt-front and narrow black trousers tightly stretched over his strong thighs." The expectation of death loses all existential significance because of these physiological details.

The naturalistic picture of the three-day agony, pain and continuous screaming "Oh, ooh... Oh! Oh, ooh!" involuntarily draws us to the scene from *War and Peace*, when Prince Andrew recognized his rival Anatole Kuragin in a piece of human flesh wriggling and twisting under

the doctor's scalpel. He sobbed like a woman, and groaned unceasingly: "Oh! Oh, ooh!!" (Tolstoy, 1980: 266).

All these facts look like a reference to Kierkegaard's "to die by death." This is what Kierkegaard called despair, the "sickness unto death" implying that a person feels as if he is dying, or, if anything, that he is dead while alive (Orlovskaya-Balsamo, 2003).

The metaphor of transfer from the life journey to the , deadly, journey is connected in the story with the image of the train, with the "sensation one sometimes experiences in a railway carriage when one thinks one is going backwards while one is really going forwards and suddenly becomes aware of the real direction." Another metaphor is the image of a stone falling downwards with increasing velocity, faster and faster towards the end that the writer called the most terrible suffering. The mythologeme of a hill (eternity, upward direction) received its quite justified place: "It is as if I had been going downhill while I imagined I was going up. And that is really what it was. I was going up in public opinion, but to the same extent life was ebbing away from me." (Tolstoy, 1982b: 102).

The mythologemes of the hill, the top, eternity are also habitual in the postmodern aesthetics. The hill is one of the main images of A. Dmitriev's story *The Turn of the River*; the hero of his *Closed Book* (2000) departs from the primitive Lake of the Saami along the smooth hillslope. The hill is one of the backbone images for Milorad Pavić, as well.

Tolstoy found a wide range of additional impulses for the development of the theme of dying, fading. Many mythologemes and metaphors today are habitually common for the postmodern discourse of death. The postmodern element of reflection is present and will be present in contemporary works devoted to the phenomenon of death. It is much more interesting that in the development of this problem it is not so difficult to find the points of intersection of traditional classical literature and postmodernity. According to Andrei Dmitriev (2000), "death is not a kind of punishment, and disease is not a kind of punishment, but rather a kind of edification." These words could serve as a kind of epigraph to Leo Tolstoy's story *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*.

In the 1870s Tolstoy did not yet expressed himself openly against resorting to the natural and biological existence of man, but the studies of life and death in such a direction aroused his mockery. Judging from the entries in his diaries, the great writer was aware of Metchnikoff's researches and probably knew that he was trying to combine the natural scientific explanation of life and death with the moral and philosophical ones. But Tolstoy also noted another thing: the spiritual aspects were there in the background. They were in the background not only in Metchnikoff's works, but also in Mendeleev's viewpoints, with whom the writer talked a lot.

Everything that Tolstoy read of the Russian naturalists in the 1880s-1890s provoked his anger: "I read in Mendeleev that the purpose, the ideal of human is reproduction. It's awfully ridiculous. This stupidity (not a property, but an act of a word) is a consequence of self-confidence. Animals eat each other and therefore they need to reproduce, and reproduction is mutually limited. In humans, who had freed from descent, reproduction cannot be limited by anything other than the comprehension of good, by perfection. Perfection involves chastity. It is something that limits. How terrible and immoral and just stupid is Mendeleev's reproduction" (Tolstoy, 1935: 157).

Any problems of biological life maintenance, claims to create gerontology for him were nothing more than a game of the mind. A pronounced scientific interest in immortology acquired ever greater danger in the eyes of the writer. An avalanche flood of natural scientific information was directed, in his opinion, against the religious and moral interpretation of human nature. Elie Metchnikoff, for example, in *The Nature of Man: Studies in Optimistic*

Philosophy (1903), set out the views of the greatest minds, including Leo Tolstoy, and opposed his ideas to them. In turn, Tolstoy also noted that science turned into a kind of faith and replaces, in his opinion, the true faith, that is, religion, and this was for him one of the main dangers of the scientific interpretation of life and human nature. In many respects, it was precisely the inability to answer the question of the interrelation of moral problems with scientific ones that led him to the demand to "break with science." Not only Tolstoy, the artist and thinker, faced this dilemma, but the naturalists themselves did this also. There was a great difficulty in combining the ideals gained through suffering with the nature of scientific discoveries, suggesting and often even imposing a person with other ways of self-realization, other forms of social action.

Heinrich Mann (1988) recalled the impact exerted by the works of the Russian writer on the German intelligentsia, turning out to be a kind of remedy against the poison of Nietzscheanism. Mann considered that people, experienced in spiritual values, quickly realized that the demand for chastity was only a particular aspect of a more general problem. This referred to the integral purity of man, to life, consistent with moral rules, about the truth, despite everything, at whatever cost.

The ethical-philosophical approach, characteristic of Russian literature, gives the most profound spiritual comprehension of the phenomenon of death. The experience of Russian culture and literature clearly shows that death is not a norm, and fixes its morally negative essence. According to Yu.M. Lotman (1994), a literary work, introducing the theme of death into the plot, in fact must at the same time subject it to negation (Lotman, 1994: 417-430).

V.F. Asmus (1969), analyzing the philosophical views of Tolstoy, wrote: " There was the contradiction of faith between the finite and infinite existence of the world at the center of the issues of Tolstoy's worldview, and therefore at the center of the concept of faith <...>. Tolstoy realizes this contradiction, which captures the deepest core of his personal existence and consciousness <...>. The desire to strengthen the root of life, shattered by fear of death, Tolstoy draws strength in the religious tradition rather than in the power of life itself".

It is hard to disagree with this statement, but the western researchers of Leo Tolstoy's creative activity point to a significant difference between the thinking of Tolstoy the poet and Tolstoy the preacher. Thus, according to Karl Stern (1984), for Tolstoy the artist, as he was before his rupture, faith was a direct, subconscious inner conviction of genius; for Tolstoy the preacher, as he became after his spiritual crisis, religion passed on to the level of conscious, intellectual reflection. An interesting idea was expressed by W.W. Rowe (1986). The American scholar, adhering to the concept of the through integrity of creativity, came to the following conclusion: the crisis of Leo Tolstoy in the 1880s was not an unexpected change in his worldview, but a transition prepared by all his previous creative work.

It is appropriate to recall that in his famous novel Tolstoy's concept of death is translated into many modern scientific and philosophical concepts. For example, M.K. Mamardashvili (1995) insistently stressed that the indispensable condition of the "true existence" of person is the comprehension of the inevitability of death: "without the symbol of death, without living in the shadow of this symbol, nothing can be understood, nothing can really be experienced".

4. CONCLUSIONS

No wonder that Leo Tolstoy rejected the ability of science to indicate the main thing, namely, the path to salvation. The appearance of the demand to supplement the scientific and technological revolution with a moral revolution is just as clear and legitimate. And today the clash of scientific knowledge and the church world outlook, so familiar to us from history, is very popular.

The whole course of science, the mentality of that age led to the development of positivism, the justification of anti-religious sentiments. Darwinian evolution with its occasionality, which arose almost in the same years, won many enthusiastic admirers around the world. But for Tolstoy there was nothing triumphant in Darwinism, such views for the one who professes them are the source of endless despair. The problems that formed the core of his reflections centered on different areas.

It is not difficult to establish the interconnection of Tolstoy's views of the period of his spiritual change with the views of that age. In the minds of many of the writer's contemporaries, socialism, materialism and Darwinism were blended in full, as in Lev Nikolaevich himself. That same Kharkov Professor in *Anna Karenina*, who came to Sergei Koznyshev, led a heated polemic against materialists in the press. In fact, today one can state that the widely spread ideas about the imminent triumph of the "irreligious" future were not justified by the end of the 19th century. According to modern philosophers, the double motivation of human behavior in the history of culture remained unchanged, although the divine level of motivation in connection with the change in the language of culture was transformed into a moral one.

The textual analysis, comparative-historical, psychological, ethical-philosophical methodologies, as well as the tools of thanatology and postmodern theories enabled to reveal under-researched tendencies in the writer's artistic picture, caused by his close attention to the discoveries of natural sciences in the 1880s – to Darwin's theory of evolution, Mendeleev's chemical experiments, studies on neurophysiology, and Sechenov's research into the neuropsychological functions of the human body.

It was found that owing to the interest in the scientific ideas of his time, the writer discovered other spiritual meanings of the tragedy of life. With regard to the literary centrism of Russian culture, one should consider the fundamental importance of the invasion of scientific discoveries in this space. In the works of Leo Tolstoy the search for the meaning of this "invasion" reached the highest concentration. The writer came to the conclusion that the reason for the occurring shifts was in the simplification, the distortion of the spiritual filling of life.

The theoretical significance of this research consists in approbation of the comprehensive approach, including analytical tools of thanatology and postmodernism to the study of the texts written by Tolstoy at the later period of his life.

The practical significance of the article is seen in the expansion and deepening of the possibilities for analyzing Tolstoy's later texts.

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