



The Concept of Soul in the Poetics of L.N. Tolstoy's Novel «Resurrection»

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Abstract

However, among all the works by L.N. Tolstoy the novel "Resurrection" occupies an exceptional place in this aspect. The authors of the article proceed from the fact that the "Resurrection" shows the fall, awakening and salvation of two souls: Nekhlyudov and Katyusha Maslova. L.N. Tolstoy shows the complex, painful process of the soul resurrection, cleansing it of filth, gaining a new spiritual dimension. The concept of the soul in the novel is not at all autonomous. It correlates with the writer's thoughts reflected in numerous diary entries. Thus, it expresses the author's views on the soul problem. This view is closely related to certain features of Russian culture as an integral system. The constituent elements of the Russian understanding of soul are "conscience", "God", "world", and "man". Tolstoy's assessment of the soul is a special version of the traditional Russian attitude to the soul as an important part of the spiritual origin in a person.

Keywords: Soul, Poetics; Concept; Resurrection; Spiritual Dimension.

1. Introduction

The term "concept" in our work is understood as a kind of "clot of culture in a person's mind; the phenomenon by which culture enters the mental world of a person" (Stepanov, 2004).

As a rule, the soul of a character, its evolution, the vector of its change, which also determines the obligatory moral assessment of the author, are the main subjects of artistic research in all the works by L.N. Tolstoy. The concept of "soul" is one of the key concepts of Russian culture. The study of the concept "soul" in Russian folklore showed that it is most often used in the function of "applications with evaluative semantics" (Prokhorov, 2002). In ancient Russian literature, "most of the metaphors representing the concept of "soul" have a pronounced religious connotation, which is conditioned by the peculiarities of the medieval man mentality and the peculiarities of the historical and cultural situation of that time (Pogrebnyak, 2015).

The concept of "soul" played a huge role in L.N. Tolstoy's work. After the publication of his first works, N.G. Chernyshevsky noted the "dialectic of the soul" as one of the main features of the young writer's poetics. The very introduction of the "soul dialectics" concept into scientific use meant that the soul concept, its changes, evolution are the main object of artistic research in L.N. Tolstoy's early prose. Almost sixty years of creative work by L.N. Tolstoy showed the critic's ingenious insight, since the concept of soul, turned out to be a key concept of Tolstoy's world from the novella "Childhood" to the last works of the 1900-ies. Thus, a modern researcher states the following: "The Human Soul is the main sense of the epic world by L.N. Tolstoy, whose interpretation reflects the worldview concept of the Russian thinker, the desire to comprehend life and death, good and evil, love and faith" (Miliukov, 2020). At the same time, perhaps, the concept of "soul" played the most significant role in the last novel of the 19-th century - in "Resurrection".



1.1. Research Objective

In Tolstoy's interpretation of the content of the novel *Resurrection*, this article is dedicated to the study of the soul phenomenon.

2. Material and Methods

The methodological basis of the study is the synthesis of traditional approaches that have stood the test of time (historical-literary, system-typological, comparative-historical) with the involvement of relatively new study practices.

The methodological principles of the listed areas are used depending on the specific material and the tasks set (Rinat F. Bekmetov, Tzan, Rad, & Yunusova, 2019; Rinat Ferganovich Bekmetov, 2015; Miliukov, 2020; Nigmatullina, Pashkurov, Razzhivin, & Dulalaeva, 2017).

Besides, the article takes into account the research results of Western Slavists who used similar methodological developments (Bayley, 2018; Donskov, 2019; Gillespie, 2017; G\l\ab, 2016; Kokobobo, 2012; Medzhibovskaya, 2009; Moulin, 2008; Patterson, 1991; Toland, 2012).

3. Results and Discussion

If in "*Anna Karenina*" Konstantin Levin admitted that "all these considerations about the significance of the Slavic element in the world history seemed to him so insignificant in comparison with what was done in his soul", then the problem of the soul salvation becomes dominant in "*Resurrection*". From the point of view by L.N. Tolstoy, of course, the relationship between people is important (the social, "horizontal" aspect of being), but the relationship of each person with God ("vertical" ties) is much more important. The writer puts his idea that God is expressed in every person in the form of conscience in the speech of an old man who does not believe in traditional God, who accidentally met Nekhlyudov on the ferry: "Faiths are different, because people believe others, but do not believe themselves. And I believed in people and fornicated like in the taiga. And Old Believers, and New Believers, and Subbotniks, and Khlysty, and Priests, and atheists, and Austrians, and Molokans, and eunuchs. Any faith alone praises itself. And so, they all crawled out like blind kittens. There are many faiths, but one spirit. In you, and in me, and in him" (Tolstoy, 1954). Here, perhaps, in a somewhat simplified manner, without L.N. Tolstoy's detailed argumentation and extensive use of material from the history of human thought development, the ecumenist idea of the commonality of all faiths is carried out, the unifying principle of which is the spirit, the soul of each person. At the same time, it is characteristic that a conversation about faith arises in a simple, everyday situation, when Nekhlyudov's coachman asks this old man why he does not pray. Here, like F.M. Dostoevsky, "Russian boys", as if meeting in a tavern, start a conversation about world problems, about God and the soul. The Englishman Stephen Graham, who studied simple Russian life, wrote in the book "*The Way of Martha and the Way of Mary*", "a conversation ends about sports with the British, about a woman with a Frenchman, about Russia with a Russian intellectual, and about God and religion with a peasant" (Lossky, 1957).

In the article "*Appeal to the Russian people*", along with the denial of power by the Russian person and by his inherent "natural, most moral and independent agricultural life", L.N. Tolstoy saw religiosity "which, according to both Russian history and the observation of foreigners who studied the Russian people, and most importantly, according to the own consciousness of the Russian people, was and is an exceptional trait of the character of the Russian people" as the third feature of the Russian character that (Tolstoy, 1954). In the same article, he continues: "From the earliest times to our time, the Christian understanding of life has manifested itself and still manifests itself in the Russian people in the most diverse features inherent for the Russian only. It manifests itself in recognition of brotherhood and equality of all people <...>, and incomplete religious tolerance, and in non-condemnation of criminals, <...>, and in the custom of certain days of asking each other for forgiveness, even in the usual expression "goodbye" and "sorry" (Tolstoy, 1954).

It is not for nothing that "*Resurrection*" is based on a humane, Russian story about the repentance of "a robber and a harlot", and it ends with mutual Russian forgiveness and the final idea of all Russian literature of the nineteenth century: "What is revenge? God will punish us all ..." (Tolstoy, 1954). Researchers have long drawn attention to the similarity of the plot about "*Eulogia the Monk and the Relaxed Beggar*" with the central theme of "*Resurrection*", the theme of saving one's own soul at the expense or in the name of another soul. It is no coincidence that "the dispute between Eulogia and the "relaxed" ("because of me you want to save yourself") is almost literally repeated in the scene of



explanations between Nekhlyudov and Katyusha Maslova when the hero announces his intention to marry her and thus atone for his guilt (Brown, 1982; Dukkon, 2019; Heller & Fengming, 2020).

In the novel "Resurrection" the most basic, signalling word is the word "soul". In various versions, it is used more than 50 times in the novel. What is meant by the word "soul" in Russian?

According to the "Dictionary" by V.I. Dahl: "A soul is an immortal spiritual being, endowed with reason and will; in a general sense, a person, with spirit and body; in a specific sense: a man without flesh, after his death; in the closest sense: a vital human being, imagined separately from the body and from the spirit, and in this sense, it is said that animals also have a soul" (Dal, 2007).

Long before "Resurrection", in 1865, L.N. Tolstoy wrote down his understanding of the word "soul" in his diary: "I found that the state of half-drowsiness, in which everything vain, absent-minded, freezes and the soul speaks more clearly <...>. The soul, that is, the strongest, the most important thing in me and one thing". But even after the release of the novel L.N. Tolstoy admitted "in Levinsky way" in his diary entry: "Yes, it is not Russia that needs to be saved, but one's soul that a million times dearer than the imaginary being of Russia" (Tolstoy, 1954).

For several decades, the issue about the soul was the main issue for the writer, and of all the major works by L.N. Tolstoy "Resurrection" makes it most actualized. A. Vezhbitskaya, albeit indisputably, believes that "the features of the Russian national character are revealed and reflected in three unique concepts of Russian culture to the fullest extent. I mean such concepts as soul, fate and longing" (Vezhbitskaya, 1996). But for us it is more important than it, following the Slavophiles, emphasizes the difference in Russian and English mentality: for Russian-speaking people, the main "organ" in the human system is the soul, for English-speaking people - intellect. Hence the heightened attention of the Russian people to moral problems.

In Tolstoy's "Reading Circle" there are the lines that are directly related to the problems of "Resurrection": "It seems to us that the most important work in the world is the work on something visible: building a house, ploughing a field, feeding livestock, harvesting fruits, and the work on your soul, on something invisible, is not a big deal <...>. Meanwhile, this is one thing, work on the soul, to do better and kinder every day, only this work is real, and all other work is useful only when this main work is done on the soul" (Tolstoy, 1954).

The "Resurrection" shows the fall, awakening and salvation of two souls: Nekhlyudov and Maslova. Nekhlyudov's soul is in the first place. The number of lexemes derived from the word "soul" in respect to Nekhlyudov is three times higher than the use of these words in respect to Katyusha Maslova. It is the soul, its life, its evolution that becomes the focus of the artist's attention.

Once upon a time during the first Nekhlyudov's stay in the village "the sacrifice in the name of moral demands" was "the highest spiritual pleasure" for him, he was a pure, enthusiastic young man. By the time of his second visit to his aunt's estate, Nekhlyudov had changed. "Then he considered his spiritual being to be his real I, - now he considered himself a healthy, animal I". Now "in the depths of his soul <...> he had a bad intention against Katyusha, which was whispered to him by the unbridled animal man", "in the depths of his soul he knew that he had to go, <...> he knew that nothing good could come of it". But the spiritual man continued to resist. So, on the day of Christ's Resurrection in the church, Nekhlyudov's soul sang, and it seemed to him that "exactly the same thing that sings in his soul, sings in her (Katerina's) soul". And when she rejected his attempt to hug her around the waist, Nekhlyudov "felt for a moment not only awkward and ashamed but disgusted with himself". According to Leo Tolstoy, "there were the kindest feelings of his soul" in this awkwardness and shame. And nevertheless, "that animal man who lived in him not only raised his head now, but trampled under his feet the spiritual man he was on his first visit and even this morning in church, and this terrible animal man ruled in his soul alone now". After Katyusha Maslova's seduction "he knew in the very depths of his soul that he had acted so badly, meanly, cruelly, that with the consciousness of this act it was impossible for him <...> to look people in the eyes". It would seem that this story was gradually forgotten. However, a new meeting with Katyusha Maslova in court 12 years later introduces a feeling of emotional anxiety again: "Meanwhile, in the depths of his soul, he already felt all the cruelty, meanness, baseness not only of this act of his but of all his idle, depraved, cruel and self-satisfied life" (Tolstoy, 1954). From this moment, intense inner work begins in his soul.



After that, he sees the Korchagins' house in a different light: everything here seems disgusting to him because of its unnaturalness. It seems to the owners and guests of this house that Nekhlyudov is "out of sorts." But Nekhlyudov understood that disgust for these people was disgust, first of all, for himself. And the recognition of his meanness pleased and reassured him in its own way. "What he called "cleansing the soul" has happened to Nekhlyudov more than once in his life. He called such a state of mind the purging of the soul, in which he suddenly, after a long period of time, realizing the slowdown and sometimes the stoppage of his inner life, began to clean up all the rubbish that, having accumulated in his soul, was the cause of this stoppage". This time, the pollution of the soul seemed to him so strong that he did not hope during the first minute for the purification success. But when he made the decision to break off false relations with Missy, obey Katyusha, marry her, then "God who lived in him woke up in his mind". Tears came to his eyes. "I feel so good! So good, my God, so good!" - he spoke about what was in his soul". This path - the path of cleansing the soul - was not easy. Nekhlyudov managed to save his soul. After all the excitement, "remembering all the ugliness of our life, he clearly imagined what this life could be <...>, and the delight that had not been experienced for a long time seized his soul" (Tolstoy, 1954).

Katyusha Maslova travelled the same difficult path. The resurrection of her soul was manifested in the decision to stay with the person who needs her, and not with the person whom she needs, let this person be loved by her.

It is significant that common people in the novel equally feel the voice of the soul. So, the peasants agreed to accept the extremely advantageous offer by Nekhlyudov only on the third day, and that is because their "master began to think about the soul and does so to save it". Taras tells about Fedosya, who tried to poison him, that now they live "as one soul" (Tolstoy, 1954).

L.N. Tolstoy wrote the story "Conversation with a Passer-by" (1909). It uses the word "soul" 9 times. The narrator was shocked by how the mere mention of the word "soul" transformed, spiritualized the simple peasant. The story ends with the following words: "How can you not rejoice, living among such a people, how can you not expect all the most beautiful from such a people?" (Tolstoy, 1954).

The author talks about the state of mind of many other heroes of the novel. For a Russian person, the state of peace, the peace in his soul is the most important thing.

4. Summary

The very name of Tolstoy's novel - "Resurrection" - presupposes the actualization of the three most important and interrelated concepts: "death", "soul", and "life". Without much exaggeration, we can say that artistic analysis focuses on the soul of the heroes in all the works by L.N. Tolstoy. But none of his major works has a situation similar to "Resurrection", when the souls of the main characters - Nekhlyudov and Katyusha Maslova - were already "lost" at the beginning of the novel and, therefore, needed salvation. The novel "Resurrection" is a story about the salvation and resurrection of two souls. All this predetermined the key role of the concept "soul" in the poetics of the novel by L.N. Tolstoy.

5. Conclusion

When it comes to the "dialectic of the soul" as one of the main features in L.N. Tolstoy's poetics, then this does not imply the obligatory use of "soul" concept. This word, in general, may not be used in the literary text by L.N. Tolstoy. However, the fluidity and ambivalence of the character's feelings and thoughts will certainly be shown, which serve as a kind of markers for the state of mind. In "Resurrection" L.N. Tolstoy, in addition to the traditional use of "soul dialectics" method, placed the story of the salvation of two souls at the centre of the work problematics, actively using the lexeme "soul" for artistic purposes.

5.1. Contribution

The idea of the soul is not at all autonomous in the novel. It coincides with the thoughts of the writer expressed in various diary entries. It thus reflects the views of the author on the issue of the soul. Certain aspects of Russian culture as an essential structure are closely linked to this view. "Conscience," "God," "earth," and "man" are the constituent elements of the Russian understanding of the soul.

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