



THE MORAL MEANING AND AESTHETIC MEANING OF THE FOLK STORIES OF L. N. TOLSTOY'S

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Article history:	Abstract:
Received: 30 th March 2021 Accepted: 14 th April 2021 Published: 30 th April 2021	The article addresses moral and aesthetic issues, which found expression in "folk tales" by Leo Tolstoy. Considerable attention is paid to religious and ethical comprehension of the concept of sin by Tolstoy and implementation of this concept in interpretation of the characters of these literary works. The author focuses on how Tolstoy illustrates these or those human vices basing on his principle of non-resistance to evil by force. This analysis is carried out from the point of view of possibility or impossibility of overcoming sins by the "folk tales" characters.
Keywords: Sin; evil; blessing; good; non-resistance to evil by force; principle of non-doing; free will; self-denial	

INTRODUCTION

Currently, a number of problems are noted in Russian society related to the determination of moral and ethical guidelines against the background of the crisis of traditional aesthetic values and the secularization of morality. Whether art can influence the moral development of society, building guidelines for its development, suggest the criteria for moral choice - these are questions that are important for contemporary art, especially for mass art. In this sense, it becomes relevant to refer to the literary heritage of L. N. Tolstoy, to those of his artistic samples that serve as an example of the expression of the religious and moral experience of the thinker, namely, to his "folk stories". The idea of the "folk stories" was in the transparency and simplicity of the presentation of the moral ideas of L. N. Tolstoy and the ethical interpretation of the actions of the characters, by the example of which any person could understand the content of such concepts as virtue.

MAIN PART.

The emergence of such works was associated, according to a number of researchers, not simply with the goal of creating literature for the people, as Leo Tolstoy himself mentioned. More important here was the comprehension by the writer of his philosophy of life, his worldview. Conventional genres of parables, legends, legends, which, according to LN Tolstoy himself, were closer and understandable to the common people, "concentrated moral concepts and ideals developed over the centuries" [1, p. 69]. That is why folk stories are original works that synthesize elements of Russian folklore and Old Russian literature. Researcher E. V. Nikolaeva sees the main feature of these works in the difference between the creative method of L. N. Tolstoy in comparison with his other works. He "combined a direct way of reflecting reality (that is, pictures of the real life of the peasantry of his day) with showing the ideal world and ... due" [4, p. 115] Such an appeal to the ideal world, according to the researcher, led to the use by the writer of such elements of ancient literature as didacticism, the processing of traditional literary and legendary plots, the inclusion of "demonic" characters in the narrative and the techniques of citing the Gospel texts. In general, folk stories in one form or another embodied the thinker's desire to teach ordinary people to live a righteous life, not to resist evil and follow the Gospel commandments.

The religious and moral component of Leo Tolstoy's commandments found expression in his system of sins, temptations, and superstitions. These concepts are considered by the philosopher as the main conductors of evil. Evil is understood here in the aspect of bringing a person to suffering. At the same time, the thinker believes that this kind of suffering is necessary for a person, since it allows him to know the true value of sins, temptations and superstitions, to start thinking about the transformation of his soul, to move away from evil.

A separate place is occupied by the problem of the realization of "sin" and its overcoming. Not all of the writer's stories contain the answer to this question, not all of his characters undergo evolution from a sinful life to a righteous one. Because this was not the only goal of L. N. Tolstoy, which he set himself when writing these works. So, his first story among the "folk", "How people live" contains the thinker's answer to the question posed already in the title. Through the lips of one of the heroes of this work - the angel Mikhailo LN Tolstoy emphasizes that people "are

alive only by love. He who is in love is in God and God is in him, because God is love "[7, p. 253]. The story "Where there is love, there is God" emphasizes a similar point of view of the philosopher that God is inseparable from love, and only a person who is able to love and give his love to other people can discover God in himself. Only good deeds, according to Leo Tolstoy, personify service to God.

As follows from the above, not all stories can be found directly referring to the writer's interpretation of sin and to those unrighteous actions of the heroes, which are an expression of his system. However, such a popular story as "The Penitent Sinner" directly expresses such a connection. The source for this work was the "Tale of a hawk maker", borrowed by L. N. Tolstoy from a manuscript of the 18th century. At the same time, the story was significantly revised by the philosopher. So, L.N. Tolstoy removes here the mention of the main sin of the character of the story - about mating. In the final version of the story, there is generally no listing of those negative actions that this person committed during his life. It is only emphasized that "he lived his whole life in sins" [Ibid., P. 351]. It is important to note that according to the key idea of L. N. Tolstoy, in order to overcome sin in oneself, a person must first of all realize it. The protagonist of the story realizes the sinfulness of his life and finds the strength to repent of this, which gives him a chance to be forgiven. It must be said that the writer here makes a reference to the Gospel story about how one of the robbers on the cross sincerely repented of his atrocities before God and received forgiveness. LN Tolstoy mentions the same story in another of his works - in the story "Fake Coupon". At the same time, the thinker in the story "The Penitent Sinner" draws a rather original way of a person entering heaven, namely by listing the unrighteous actions of those who guard the door to his gate. Thus, the sinner reminds the Apostle Peter that he disobeyed Christ during his lifetime, denied him three times. He tells King David that he desired the wife of the poor man Uriah and, in order to get her, went to murder. The conversation of the sinner with John the Theologian is important here, since it is he who demonstrates the author's point of view on how a person can deserve the remission of his sins. LN Tolstoy here again emphasizes the important idea for him that love is God and that only the one who does not love, in fact, does not know God. And love for a philosopher is inseparable from forgiveness, which he shows in his story.

Leo Tolstoy's story "The Godson" is synthetic in its genre, since it "combines elements of historicity, realism and" religious fiction "" [2, p. 120]. Here, the bi-planar narrative widespread in folk tales is also embodied as a synthesis of the real and the ideal, in other words, the combination of everyday life and the world, subject to the action of the Higher Forces. The sources for this work were the folk legends "The Godfather", "Sin and Repentance" borrowed from the collection of the Russian historian and collector of folklore A. N. Afanasyev, as well as the apocryphal story about the godson of a wretched man who was baptized by God himself. The protagonist of this story, the godson, makes a journey in search of an answer to the question of how he can get rid of sin and save his soul. LN Tolstoy here emphasizes that the godson sinned in that he put himself in the place of God, began to respond with evil to the evil done. Trying to help his parents and godmother, the hero thereby only aggravated the situation. Here the writer demonstrates that evil in itself is not yet the greatest disaster, that it is precisely the resistance to evil that is a much greater sin. But not all researchers even during the life of the philosopher agreed with this point of view. In particular, the Russian publicist and literary critic N. K. Mikhailovsky asked the question when analyzing this story: "Is it possible to help people by standing up for the right and punishing the guilty?" [3].

L.N. Tolstoy adds three parables to his story, tk. the hero in his wanderings takes part in three stories. He becomes aware of them after atoning for his sins. In an allegorical form, the writer here demonstrates what he considered necessary for a person to live a righteous life. This is "a kind attitude towards people, cleansing the heart from superficial dirt and reliance on God, keeping his commandments" [2, p. 120].

Elements of a folk tale can be traced in the behavior of the protagonist - the godson, in his desire to commit acts at all costs in the name of atonement for his sins, regardless of any obstacles. The character's appeal to the elder for advice, the execution of which can change his life, also brings the story closer to folk tales.

The story "Candle", according to Tolstoy himself in a letter to the publisher V. G. Chertkov, was "better than the previous ones" [7, p. 527]. One of the commandments of Christ became the epigraph to this work: "You have heard that it is said: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. And I tell you: do not resist the evil one" [Ibid., P. 309]. It should be emphasized that the philosopher makes the same commandment an epigraph to the story "The Godson". A number of researchers have noted the inconsistency of the plot of the work "Candle" with the theory of non-resistance to evil by violence. N.K. Mikhailovsky, in particular, emphasizes in this connection that here the desire is fulfilled, not of a good peasant, but of an evil one, and it turns out that strength is not in good, but in sin. "Good rose to a miracle and still did not achieve what was desired, and sin only spoke a word, and by this word it was fulfilled with amazing accuracy" [3]. V. G. Chertkov was also opposed to such a cruel ending of the story, noting that such a terrible death of the clerk, after he realized the triumph of good over evil, this fulfillment of the bad wishes of the peasants reminded him of the "Old Testament story of the prophet who took revenge with death on children who laughed at him "[7, p. 527].

Leo Tolstoy's story "The Roots of Vasiliev" refers to later works in comparison with the previous ones, created at the beginning of the 20th century. In its compositional features, language, style, it differs significantly from the samples of "folk stories", in particular, its three-part structure. The first part of the work is devoted to a retrospective depiction of the hero's former life before his break with his wife, the second - to the return of Korney to his homeland after 17 years of wandering, during which his relatives considered him dead, and finally, the last part is completely devoted to the description of the character's cleansing sufferings. The main character of the story commits a sin by

succumbing to feelings of anger and indignation at his wife who cheated on him. Thus, L.N. Tolstoy demonstrates how evil in turn gives rise to new evil and how dangerous such a symmetrical response can be, and makes one involuntarily wonder whether it is right to answer with an eye for an eye. Root goes through two crises throughout the story. The first was connected with how the hero, shocked by his wife's betrayal, leaves home, refuses family and material well-being, becomes a drunkard, a wanderer, a wanderer, a holy fool, visits holy places, but, what is important, is not yet a righteous man, since he is not can forgive his wife. The second crisis occurs already before the death of Korney, when, having seen an aged wife and grown-up children, the hero "gets rid of his feelings of resentment, hatred, forgives his wife and begins to feel a feeling of love for all people" [5, p. 194].

The researcher I.O. Burdina in his article "Folk stories in the genre system of L. N. Tolstoy of the 80s" quotes the French writer and public figure R. Rolland about folk stories: "These stories are unique in their kind, they are not with what to compare in contemporary art. Reading these stories, who thinks about literature? They contain not only the spirit of the gospel, the chaste love of people-brothers, but they are filled with good-natured folk humor and the wisdom of the people. Tolstoy does not mechanically transfer images, plots, motives of Old Russian literature and folklore into stories, but resurrects in them the "spirit of the gospel" and "folk wisdom" "[1, p. 76].

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that Leo N. Tolstoy in his folk stories tried to portray sins and virtues in an understandable, accessible form to everyone, guided by the conviction that sin is ignorance of virtue. The moral value and aesthetic meaning of folk stories lies in the didactic task that the thinker set himself before writing these works, namely, in teaching virtue, carried out through the literary depiction of sins, temptations and superstitions.

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