

The debates on the sense of history between F. M. Dostoevsky and L. N. Tolstoy and the idea of “spiritual empire” as a form of historical development of the mankind*

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For citation: Evlampiev I. I., Matveeva I. Yu. The debates on the sense of history between F. M. Dostoevsky and L. N. Tolstoy and the idea of “spiritual empire” as a form of historical development of the mankind. *Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University. Philosophy and Conflict Studies*, 2022, vol. 38, issue 3, pp. 319–331. <https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu17.2022.304>

The article proves the hypothesis that F. M. Dostoevsky’s novel *The Raw Youth* expresses the conception of history directed against the model proposed by L. N. Tolstoy in his *War and Peace*. Tolstoy maintains that the course of history is determined by the spontaneous interactions of elementary biological powers acting within individuals and within nations; he firmly rejects the idea that individuals can influence history by means of their rational will. In his novel *The Raw Youth*, Dostoevsky defends totally contrary position: only few “higher personalities” can immediately influence history by means of their great ideas, among which the religious ones play especially important role. The article shows that Dostoevsky’s critique had probably an impact on Tolstoy; as a result, in his late religious teaching, he adopted the position which he had previously rejected. Now he thinks that only few “best people” living in the strong compliance with the Jesus Christ’s doctrine direct society towards the way of spiritual perfectness and thus they determine the course of history. This general model of historical development of society can be named as “spiritual Empire” which is contrary to the accepted western liberal tradition generated by the philosophy of the Enlightenment. Within the model of “spiritual Empire”, the aim of the development is represented with the more and more spiritual unity of people and with the fact that everybody serve to the highest values (the creation of culture); such society should be ruled by the “highest personalities” who achieved the highest spiritual development and influence the society rather with the help of their spiritual authority than by means of the material power.

Keywords: Russian philosophy of history, Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoevsky, liberalism and authoritarianism, empire.

1

The problem of sense and final aim of the history played a central role in Russian philosophical tradition. Beginning with Chaadaev, the common idea upheld by Russian philosophers was that history leads the mankind to the “the God’s Heavenly Kingdom” on earth, and these Kingdom is a state of common synthesis, i. e., on the one hand, it is a spiritual unity of people compelling them to strive for the same higher spiritual aims

* The research was funded by the Russian Science Foundation grant no. 21-18-00153 “The idea of empire and the idea of revolution: two poles of the Russian socio-political worldview in philosophy and culture of the 19th–21th centuries” (St Petersburg State University).

(to the highest spiritual perfectness), and on the other hand, it is a unity of the mankind with the material nature.

In its final form, such idea of the aim of history was expressed by F.M. Dostoevsky in his story *The Dream of a Ridiculous Man* from the *Writer's Diary* of 1877 and in earlier manuscript written in 1864 on the occasion of the death of his wife Maria Dmitrievna Isaeva. Dostoevsky realized that there are strong powers in man which hinder him to achieve spiritual perfectness and spiritual unity with the other people; that is why he maintained that harmonious social development is not possible as a spontaneous process, at least until people become smart enough to understand the necessity of the proper aim of development. For the developing to this highest aim, society should be ruled and directed by the "highest personalities", prophets, who are more advanced in spiritual perfectness. For Dostoevsky, Jesus Christ was an example of such prophet.

The passage from *The Brothers Karamazov* in which the heroes discuss Ivan Karamazov's article on the "church question" helps us understand more concretely which form of society Dostoevsky meant by this model [1, p. 56–62]. In his article, Ivan, whom many researchers consider an atheist, affirms that in the course of the history, state should be gradually absorbed by the church. The model of theocracy characteristic of the catholic church is often seen in this conception. However, the church Ivan discusses does not in fact coincide neither with the orthodox, nor with the catholic churches. The very spiritual rule over the society by the prophets who best know the final aim of the history is what is meant here. This rule is rather authoritative than authoritarian since it is based on the spiritual conviction, and not on the material power.

Such idea of the social development is totally opposite to the model of history which appeared in the Enlightenment philosophy and was realized in the liberal tradition. In a liberal state, the aims of the government are focused on the external freedom, i. e. material wellness and universal happiness, but it's totally different from the spiritual perfectness of all people serving to the higher spiritual aims. The enlightenment ideologists and western liberals created a conception of the society, which is spontaneously formed from below, through the chaotic interactions of the egoistic strivings of all people. This model means that society itself (without any direction from the side of any power center) follow the way of progress which is connected with the more developed knowledge and technology. However, as the history of the western liberal civilization shows it, such progress of the material sphere of society is accompanied with the constant simplification and impoverishment of both the spiritual content of the individuals and of the society as a whole. As a result, no progress as a whole take place; society finally arrives at a crisis because of the degradation of man as a spiritual being.

For the model developed by the Russian thinkers, spiritual progress of society directed by the spiritual elite appears to be the most important. The development of the spiritual sphere leads to the complication and to the true creativity of the personality; in the end, this fact should lead to the sustainable perfection of both spiritual and material sphere of society. Such idea of the structure and main factors of the social development can be called *spiritual empire* which is contrary to the liberal model realized in the West.

The above-described model is common to the philosophy of most of the well-known Russian religious thinkers. However, in the middle of the 19th century, L. N. Tolstoy argued against this model and stood up for the opposite one, which was generated by the Enlightenment. This position could have rest without the response, but the counterargument

was given in the form of art by another writer and thinker — F. M. Dostoevsky. The result of this debate appeared extremely important to the formation of the final conception of society in the Russian culture.

2

Two great Russian writers, F. M. Dostoevsky and L. N. Tolstoy, did not meet and never interacted with each other. Nevertheless, we can identify similar ideas and philosophical quests in their works. As early as in 1930s Alfred Boehm stated in one of his articles devoted to Dostoevsky that the novel *The Raw Youth* represented in its key motifs a reaction to Tolstoy's creative work, to put it more precisely, to *War and Peace*: "*The Raw Youth* was written under a certain influence of Tolstoy. <...> during his work on *The Raw Youth*, Dostoevsky was in the grip of Tolstoy's artistic images" [2, p. 549].

Boehm affirms that Dostoevsky did not admit the main idea concerning *War and Peace*, i. e., the idealization of the noble families which were depicted chiefly by the image of the Rostovs and which Tolstoy understood as an unshakable pillar of the Russian society. In his *The Raw Youth*, Dostoevsky straightforwardly asserts that Tolstoy depicts an ideal which no longer matters. This is the idea which a presumed reviewer of Arkady's memoirs, the main hero of the novel, expresses on the last pages of the novel. As the "reviewer" writes, if a novelist (who is explicitly called Leo Tolstoy in the manuscripts) aimed at depicting "shiny order" of the lives of the patrimonial nobility, he would be obliged of creating the ideal, or "mirage", which would be far from real life [3, p. 454; 4, p. 435]. In contrast with this mirage, Dostoevsky shows *ordinary* Russian families with the chaos of their lives, but which shall determine Russia's future, as Dostoevsky thinks it.

This opposition firstly identified by Boehm is obvious. Nevertheless, in Dostoevsky's novel, we can find deeper polemic with Tolstoy who raises a fundamental question about sense of history and main factors determining its course.

While finishing his great novel, at the end of 1867 — beginning of 1868, Tolstoy wrote a separate article "Some Words About *War and Peace*," devoted to the explaining of his project. As Tolstoy asserts, the main reason which compelled him to write the novel "concerns that little meaning which <...> so called great persons have in historical events" [5, p. 13]. In his article, Tolstoy explains the historical processes, having implied some spontaneous power which is close to nature and determines the grounds of history: "...it was necessary, <...> following it, people observed the spontaneous law, zoological one, which is fulfilled by bees when they kill each other before autumn comes, and according to which male animals destroy each other" [5, p. 14].

Tolstoy debunks the viewpoint that separate historical heroes determine concrete events and the course of history. Resignation in the face of the powers with which a person is not able to deal appears a right manner of action for those who are on the top of the political rule; Tolstoy clearly demonstrates it on the example of Kutuzov. The "ideal" of man which he shows in the novel by means of the image of Platon Karateev is intentionally directed against the concept of "higher person". Platon has neither clearly expressed personality, nor understating of the aims which exceed his primitive demands. Tolstoy considers him and ordinary persons who are like to him the most correct historical "heroes". This idea is explicitly expressed in the novel:

"Most of the people at that time paid no attention to the general progress of events but were guided only by their private interests, and they were the very people whose activities

at that period were most useful. / Those who tried to understand the general course of events and to take part in it by self-sacrifice and heroism were the most useless members of society, they saw everything upside down, and all they did for the common good turned out to be useless and foolish <...>. In historic events the rule forbidding us to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge is specially applicable. Only unconscious action bears fruit, and he who plays a part in an historic event never understands its significance. If he tries to realize it his efforts are fruitless” [6, p. 14].

Those who do not pretend to any historical meaning and pursue their egoistic interests and wishes finally create the spontaneous power which direct history. However, this very power is not directed by anybody.

This is the thesis of Tolstoy’s philosophy of history which is questioned in *The Raw Youth* in the image of Versilov. This fact seems especially obvious when the manuscript notes for the novel are taken into consideration. In the course of the development of Versilov image (which appears as a main ideologist of the novel), *his possession of the “great idea”* determining his domination over other people gradually becomes clear. This is the feature which clearly differs him from Raskolnikov — a hero of an earlier written novel *Crime and Punishment*, who wanted to become a “higher person” by means of rude force, wealth and power. In one of his notes to *The Raw Youth* Dostoevsky writes:

“...The MAIN aim of the narration is to keep to the idea of HIS undoubted excellence over the Adolescent and everybody, and, in spite of any comic features of HIM and his weaknesses, it is necessary to give a reader an opportunity to realize at the end of the novel that HE suffers from the great idea and that HIS sufferings are justified” [4, p. 43]. Versilov clearly asserts the historical meaning of the bearers of the great and higher idea: “...if the only bearer of the higher idea exists at least for 100 000, it means that everything is saved” [4, p. 38]. In the final version of the novel, this idea corresponds to Versilov’s thought that those like him account for merely a thousand in Russia, but this “thousand” determines Russia’s meaning in history.

The essential text of *The Raw Youth* has only implicit polemic with Tolstoy, but it is rather obvious in the handwritten notes for the novel. Dostoevsky almost scorns the “folkness” and “seemliness” of the noble families (chiefly of the Rostovs) which Tolstoy understands as an unshakable basis for Russian life:

“The idea of decomposition is in everything, because everything is separated and there are no connections left, not only in the Russian family but even simply between people. Even children are separated.

“Tower of Babel,” HE says. “Well, here we are, the Russian family. We speak different languages and do not understand each other at all. Society is chemically decomposed”.

— Well, not the people.

— The people too.

— There are families and terrible multitude.

“This terrible multitude is a miserable phantom,” HE answers, “it is all in between, routine, people without mind” [4, p. 16]. “A miserable phantom”, “being in between”, “routine” are the expressions used by Dostoevsky for description Tolstoy’s historical ideal. Some utterances of the main hero (Versilov in the future) seem sharply: “Since there are lots of swine, and people are rare,” HE says. “People go, and swine leave” [4, p. 55].

At first glance one can think that the author of these words does not agree with the hero’s viewpoint, but we have no doubts that here is the voice of Dostoevsky himself. To

prove this statement, it is enough to turn to *Writer's Diary* (1876). Here Dostoevsky published the story called *Sentence*; the hero of the story expresses the ideas which are similar to Versilov's: "Look who is happiest in the world and what kind of people *agree* to live? Just those that look like animals and are closer to their type according to the small development of their consciousness. They agree to live willingly, but it is under the condition of living like animals, that is, eating, drinking, sleeping, nesting and raising children" [7, p. 146–147]. Having received the reader's letters, who misunderstood what Dostoevsky wanted to say with this story, in one of the further issues he explicitly expressed and develops the idea by his hero:

"Oh, to eat, to sleep, to crap and to sit on something soft will attract human being to the earth, but not the supreme types. By the way, supreme types dominate the earth and have always dominated, and, at last, millions of people have followed them when time has come. What is the supreme word and the supreme idea? This word, this idea (mankind can't live without them) — quite often is spoken for the first time by dying unknown people, those who are poor, invisible, without importance and even often persecuted. But the idea, the spoken word never dies and never disappears without a trace, it can't disappear once pronounced — amazingly for mankind. This idea of genius covers everything and everybody, entails everything and everybody in the next generation or after 2 or 3 dozen years — and it's clear that neither millions of people, nor material strength, however terrible and immutable, nor money, nor the sword, nor power are triumphant, but an idea, initially imperceptible, often belonging to the seemingly most unworthy person" [8, p. 47].

In the novel *The Raw Youth*, Versilov appears as such "supreme type" determining world history. In his monologue with his son Arkady, he says about historical collapse of Europe and predicts Russia's great future, and he himself together with a "thousand" of the supreme types will shape this future. "Among us has been created by the ages, a type of the highest culture never seen before, and existing nowhere else in the world — the type of world-wide compassion for all. It is a Russian type, but since it is taken from the most highly cultured stratum of the Russian people, I have the honour of being a representative of it. That type is the custodian of the future of Russia. There are, perhaps, only a thousand of us in Russia, possibly more, possibly less — but all Russia has existed, so far, only to produce that thousand. I shall be told with indignation that the result is poor, if so many ages and so many millions of people have been spent to produce only this thousand. I don't think it little" [3, p. 376–377].

It can be said that Tolstoy, having clearly expressed in *War and Peace* his idea of "ordinary people" and their single life as a main factor of history, made Dostoevsky sharply argue that history is determined by the "supreme types" and their "great ideas".

However, could Tolstoy realize that the key ideas of *The Raw Youth* opposed his historical viewpoint? It seems impossible when we take into consideration that both writers paid a considerable attention to the criticism against their works. Therefore, the question is whether such criticism mattered for Tolstoy?

As it is known, at the late 1870s Tolstoy survived serious intellectual and existential crisis which led him to the deny from all the ideas which he previously expressed; he set totally new goal: to create a religious-philosophical teaching in which Jesus Christ's true doctrine would have been adequately expressed. This crisis in the great writer's life remains enigmatic; a plenty of conjectures are supposed concerning the fact what could provoke it; moreover, a considerable part of the researchers is convinced that we never

would know the its true reasons. However, this problem may have logical and simple solution: Tolstoy finally admitted the fallacy of the viewpoint proclaimed in his main novel and Dostoevsky's criticism expressed in novel *The Raw Youth* and in many passages of the *Writer's Diary* (1876 and 1877 years).

Tolstoy's late historical ideas are mainly contrary to the ideas expressed in *War and Peace*. In the novel, let us mention, the striving for the personal and family happiness which is characteristic of ordinary people is admitted as the most correct way of life. In the treatise *On Life* (1888), Tolstoy holds contrary position: ordinary viewpoint of every man directed to the happiness of the life is called here as false and destroying, as something which turns people from true way of life:

“The life of man as an individual, striving only for his own welfare amid an infinite number of similar individuals destroying each other and destroying themselves, is an evil and an absurdity — and the true life cannot be such” [9, p. 327].

And the further the same: “For an animal which has not reasonable consciousness to show it the wretchedness and finiteness of its existence, the welfare of its personality (and the resulting continuation of the species) is the highest aim of life. But for man personality is not life, it is merely the stage of his existence at which he discovers the true good of life — which does not coincide with the good of his personality” [9, p. 364–365]. It is not difficult to conclude that here Tolstoy understands as destroying the way of life to which he led his main hero (Pierre Bezukhov) in the epilogue of the novel, that is care of himself and his own family. Here Tolstoy states that “rude and ignorant people who hardly excel the animal state” can only understand life in such a way [9, p. 332]. Tolstoy almost repeated the terminology of the main hero of *The Raw Youth* and said that most people who confess such understating are like “rude crowd” and “rude majority of people” [9, p. 333].

Now Tolstoy believes that man should detect the way to true life by means of his mind, which means that his mind should be enough developed and the way of life consists in the radical deny from the natural egoism of an individual and in absolute obedience to the love for others principle: “...the greatest good — and one capable of being infinitely increased — for every being can be attained only by this law of devotion of each to all and accordingly of all to each” [9, p. 372]. In this main thesis of his religious teaching Tolstoy agreed with Dostoevsky who in the 1864 draft asserted that “Christ's paradise” would come when people “destroy his *I* and give it away as a whole completely and devotedly to everybody” [10, p. 171].

Previously Tolstoy believed that the most important historical events were determined by some accident powers ruling huge crowds of people; this means that history cannot at all have any certain aim. But now, after his intellectual turn, he insists that people are able and even obliged to follow the teaching Christ gave them and when they do it, the perfect society called by Tolstoy as “Kingdom of God” will appear. Opposing this new conception of Christ's doctrine to that which he had earlier (its essence was in the idea of the end of the world and The Last Judgment, i. e. it has nothing to do with our lives and human history), Tolstoy writes: “Now the doctrine of Jesus, as I understood it, had an entirely different meaning. The establishment of the kingdom of God depended upon our personal efforts in the practice of Jesus' doctrine. <...> The whole doctrine of Jesus has but one object, to establish peace — the kingdom of God — among men” [11, p. 370]. Now the writer thinks that people are able consciously determine the course of history and they even know the aim for which they strive.

This striving depends on the degree with which people follow the Christ's doctrine and execute its precepts. But this very doctrine is a system of the great principles and ideas expressed by Christ and aimed at the transfiguration of life. Although their sense is utterly simple (especially in the Sermon on the Mount), very few people living since the times of Christ are able realize them in their lives. Tolstoy hopes that these people change society for the better. Tolstoy repeats Dostoevsky's idea from *Writer's Diary* about the "supreme types" "reigning" in the world (i. e. determine the course of history by means of "great ideas") almost word for word. Like Dostoevsky, he now divides people into the weak-willed multitude living like animals and the "best people" determining the future of the mankind.

"Fortunately, there is a remnant, made up of the noblest minds of the age, who are not contented with this religion <Church>, but have an entirely different faith with regard to what the life of man ought to be. <...> These people, as a general thing, know little of the doctrine of Jesus; they do not understand it, and, like their adversaries, they refuse to accept the leading principle of the religion of Jesus, which is to resist not evil; often they have nothing but a hatred for the name of Jesus; but their whole faith with regard to what life ought to be is unconsciously based upon the humane and eternal truths comprised in the Christian doctrine. This remnant, in spite of calumny and persecution, are the only ones who do not tamely submit to the orders of the first comer. Consequently, they are the only ones in these days who live a reasonable and not an animal life, the only ones who have faith" [11, p. 447–448].

Let us note here that this Tolstoy's thought attracted Friedrich Nietzsche. At the end of 1887, when Nietzsche prepared to write his new work *Antichrist* in which he wanted to express his final attitude to Christianity, he paid attention to Tolstoy's work *What I Believe?* In Nietzsche's diary, one can find nearly 20 notes from this book, including the above cited passage. Nietzsche in fact admitted the interpretation of Christianity proposed by Tolstoy. With his criticism of the Church (here he repeated Tolstoy's ideas), Nietzsche understood that Christ gave a great doctrine of the possibility of perfection of man in the world. This thought borrowed by him from Tolstoy is clearly expressed in the *Antichrist*.

However, let us go back to the concept of the "best people" expressed in Tolstoy's phrase. Tolstoy defines human personality as a form of appearance of the God in the conditions of limited and incomplete world: "Man is appearance of the All — the God — in the limited conditions" [12, p. 29]. Hence, man is turned into animal, if he does not know God in himself and tries to be independent individual, and vice versa, his life becomes sublime and spiritual, it acquires high aims, if he finds divine being in his limited personality and fully subjects himself to the divine destiny which leads him to true freedom. It is such people who are the "best people" determining the future of society.

The more people manage to become closer to this aim, "giving a place for God in themselves", the more they feel that they are not separate individuals but are the members of the spiritual unity of the divine being. "The human souls separated from each other and from the God by the bodies strive to be united with that from which they are separated, and by means of love they achieve this union with the people and by means of consciousness of their divine nature — with God. The sense and the good of the human life consist in such higher and higher union with the other people's souls — with the love and God — by means of the consciousness of the divinity" [13, p. 13].

Thus, according to Tolstoy, the true way of life means *mystical transfiguration* of life, since man going this way understands the meaninglessness of his ordinary individual aims and rights and feel himself in the union with the whole world and the God. His life will be directed by the higher patterns and not by the norms to which simple people are accustomed. The principle of resist not evil is among such patterns. All this means that generally accepted interpretation of Tolstoy's religious doctrine as "formalism" and "moralism" is totally false. Late Tolstoy's Christianity is the same as Dostoevsky's mystical Christianity which most clearly expressed in the image of Kirillov in the novel *The Demons* and in the image of Zosima in the novel *The Brothers Karamazov*.

The social ideal proposed by Tolstoy also appears to be very close to the model of the "spiritual empire" which we can find in Dostoevsky. Moreover, in comparison with Dostoevsky, Tolstoy more firm in underlining the meaning of the religious ideas and religiosity as a such for the development of the mankind to the "the God's Heavenly Kingdom" on earth. It is totally clear that this religiosity cannot coincide with the traditional Christianity; in traditional Christianity, man is acknowledged to be a radically sinful being, therefore he cannot achieve perfection in the earthly world. The God's Heavenly Kingdom is beyond the earthly world, and man can achieve it only after death and only by God's grace, not by his own activity.

The theme of the immortality appears to be in the center of the religious conceptions of both Dostoevsky and Tolstoy for another reason which is directly determined by the idea of "spiritual empire" as correct form of the historical development of the mankind. Dostoevsky expressed this reason in his story *Sentence* from the *Writer's Diary* (1876). The hero of the novel clearly formulates the idea that if a man does not trust in the immortality, he cannot work for the coming perfection of the mankind since he himself will not be able to participate in it. Thus, Dostoevsky proves "by contradiction" that the idea of the immortality is an indispensable condition for the progressing to the historical ideal. At the same time, this idea should not be understood in the way how it is accepted in the church tradition, i. e., as a transferring of the person after her death into the Heavenly Kingdom beyond the earthly world — such idea cannot be the basis for the work for that perfection which should be achieved in the history, in earthly reality. In his works, Dostoevsky declares the understanding of the idea of the immortality as a continuation of the person's life after earthly reality, i. e., together with the developing mankind [14, p. 435–490].

If Tolstoy in his late years abruptly changed his views on the factors influencing the course of the history and admitted the conception of the final aim of the history which we called the idea of "spiritual empire", he should have understood, like Dostoevsky, its ties with the idea of immortality conceived as a continuation of the person's life in the earthly world. But one cannot affirm that it is expressed only in this late works. In the case of Tolstoy, this theme leaves to be arguable, therefore we scrutinize it in detail.

3

However, a religious teaching is impossible without the idea of immortality. Tolstoy is often ascribed to deny this idea. This viewpoint partly has the grounds, if we speak of the book *What I Believe?* in which Tolstoy sharply criticizes the Church doctrine and, therefore, opposes the idea of the immortality of soul understood as a transposition of a soul to the Kingdom of God after death. But we can find that in many other works Tolstoy definitely acknowledges the immortality, although in an unusual form.

In main Tolstoy's novel, the idea of immortality appears three times. Andrey Bolkon-sky's conversation with Pierre Bezukhov on the ferryboat is the most important: Pierre thinking Andrey as atheist tries to convince him to believe in the immortality: "You say you can't see a reign of goodness and truth on earth. Nor could I, and it cannot be seen if one looks on our life here as the end of everything. On earth, here on this earth" (Pierre pointed to the fields), "there is no truth, all is false and evil; but in the universe, in the whole universe there is a kingdom of truth, and we who are now the children of earth are — eternally — children of the whole universe. Don't I feel in my soul that I am part of this vast harmonious whole? Don't I feel that I form one link, one step, between the lower and higher beings, in this vast harmonious multitude of beings in whom the Deity — the Supreme Power if you prefer the term — is manifest? If I see, clearly see, that ladder leading from plant to man, why should I suppose it breaks off at me and does not go farther and farther? I feel that I cannot vanish, since nothing vanishes in this world, but that I shall always exist and always have existed. I feel that beyond me and above me there are spirits, and that in this world there is truth" [15, p. 116–117]. Prince Andrey notes that Pierre renders Herder's doctrine which understands immortality as a transformation of the imperfect creatures into more perfect, particularly, posthumous man's transformation into the higher creature (the conception of palingenesis). Andrey says that this abstract idea does not solve the problem concerning the death of a relative or a lovely person. But Pierre insists that acknowledgement of the idea of immortality understood as a continuation of life in the world can be useful for solving our problems:

"If there is a God and future life, there is truth and good, and man's highest happiness consists in striving to attain them. We must live, we must love, and we must believe that we live not only today on this scrap of earth, but have lived and shall live forever, there, in the Whole," said Pierre, and he pointed to the sky" [15, p. 117]. In the end, prince Andrey feels that his soul undergoes good changes after this conversation.

This philosophical line was extended in the novel. The idea of the immortality understood as a form of palingenesis appears in the conversation of the Rostovs house. It is very important to note that here the idea of immortality is discussed in connection with the problem of memory and reminiscence. Natasha Rostova says, "that when one goes on and on recalling memories, one at last begins to remember what happened before one was in the world..." [15, p. 279]. The following conversation is thus:

"That is metempsychosis," said Sónya, who had always learned well, and remembered everything. "The Egyptians believed that our souls have lived in animals, and will go back into animals again."

"No, I don't believe we ever were in animals," said Natásha, still in a whisper though the music had ceased. "But I am certain that we were angels somewhere there, and have been here, and that is why we remember..."

<...>

"If we have been angels, why have we fallen lower?" said Nicholas. "No, that can't be!"

"Not lower, who said we were lower?.. How do I know what I was before?" Natásha rejoined with conviction. "The soul is immortal — well then, if I shall always live I must have lived before, lived for a whole eternity" [15, p. 279]. Nevertheless, the most detailed development of this topic is presented in the drafts to the novel. Initially Tolstoy wanted to trust the detailed explanation of the idea of the immortality of soul to Trushin. The brief passage that at the second encounter with Trushin prince Andrey perceives from him the

reflections concerning immortality is the only trace which remained in the final text. In the manuscripts these Trushin's reflections are rendered with more details. He says that he read Herder's article about immortality and then renders its idea:

"But Herder says that there is a scale of the creatures according to which the creatures are higher and higher and that if they do not perish, this means that man also does not perish and his soul will be transformed into something another. <...> My soul was previously in a worm, in a frog, in a bird, it was in everything and now is in a man, then it will be in an angel. <...> Well, an organism is transformed into another, higher one, and never disappears, this means that man will not also disappear and will transform into a higher organism" [16, p. 367–368]. Then Trushin develops Herder's idea in his own manner: "Why do we all love everything: both grass and a small creature and people, and sometimes we like even your colonel? Has it ever happened to you that you are in the bed and feel like becoming a grass, you look at the clouds or at the water, and you think that you would like to become either grass or water or even a worm. You know, the worm is so nice and tight, and it turns round and round. This is because we were already everything. I think that we lived millions and millions of years ago and were everything at the time" [16, p. 368].

The topic of immortality of soul was not totally expressed neither in *War and Peace*, nor in other Tolstoy's fiction. But it became very important component of Tolstoy's late religious doctrine. Moreover, in his late doctrine this idea was shown in more close connection with a specific understanding of memory.

In Tolstoy's late doctrine, memory is not psychological but metaphysical capacity of person; by means of memory a person can restore all its life as timeless and eternal wholeness. According Tolstoy, we live on two levels: in lower, material, sphere man exists in empirical time which divides his being into separate states which have weak connections with each other; in the sphere of higher, spiritual, being person can achieve wholeness and full unity of all moments of his life, and memory realizes this. It appears that it is memory which is able to transform man from lower, animal, life into higher, spiritual, one.

According to Tolstoy, memory restores the whole plenitude of person's life which exceeds the empirical time. Tolstoy defines person as a limited form of the God, fully spiritual principle. This means that person seems limited in space and time only within lower consciousness connected with the forms of material life (science gives this limited and incomplete knowledge); if we look at ourselves from the viewpoint of the higher knowledge given by the religion and philosophy, we understand that our existence is as infinite as the God's, spiritual principle. Tolstoy's notion of "reminiscence" appears like Plato's anamnesis: it raises man not only above empirical time of his life, but also above mundane reality as itself he understands infinite plurality of the forms of life in which his personality should be realized. Tolstoy states that "all this world, including my life in it, is only one of an innumerable number of possibilities of other worlds and other lives, and for me only one of innumerable stages through which it seems to me I am passing in time" [17, p. 5–6]. The fully and deeply experienced act of memory proves for the personality that its being did not begin at the moment of birth and it will nor cease at the moment of death. As a result, Tolstoy's conception of memory leads to the idea of immortality, i. e. to the idea of infinite sequence of lives lived by personality. Tolstoy sometimes acknowledges the possibility of the indirect anamnesis of previous lives: "In this life you can remember not the

events of the past life, but the events of the other form of life. Life is always united; it only seems separated in every given form” [17, p. 103–104].

The fines answer to the question about immortality is given by Tolstoy in his last book *Path of Life*: “When we die, we can exercise only one of the two cases: either something we considered our self will be transformed into another separate creature, or we will cease to be separate creatures and will be united with the God. Whether it will be this or that, we should not fear” [13, p. 465]. In his diaries, Tolstoy clarifies that “another separate creature” can be another human person; this conviction (metempsychosis) is especially clear seen in the following utterance:

“It would be good to write a story about the experiences in this life of a man who had killed himself in a previous one: how, when running up against the same demands made on him in the other life, he comes to the realisation that he must fulfill them. And in this life, he would be more intelligent than other people, remembering the lesson he had had” [18, p. 79].

But man may become more perfect superhuman creature after death as every creature includes large or small parts of the world, and if during his life man loves people and world, he will embrace bigger part of the world than it was when he lived; thus, he will become more perfect creature: “...I call life the existence united by love and understood in myself and in other separate beings. <...> I see the same unifying principle of love in all separate creatures. <...> I am one of these united creatures. In the former existence, not being a man, I loved something which formed man’s spiritual essence and passed from the lowest stage of existence to that which I loved. Now I love something higher and will be transformed into that form of existence which corresponds to my love. And there can be countless forms of existence” [18, p. 63].

We see that in his late years Tolstoy adhered to the conception of immortality which he firstly expressed in the novel *War and Peace*, but this conception became more complex and well-grounded in the context of his religious doctrine.

It is very important that Tolstoy admits such conception of the immortality which substantiates the development of the mankind to the historical ideal, to the state of “spiritual empire”. For the person who actively strives for the spiritual perfection, death appears rather a transition to the more complicated form of being allowing to go further on the way of perfection and ideal than a tragical end of life.

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Received: May 11, 2022

Accepted: June 17, 2022

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Спор о смысле истории между Л. Н. Толстым и Ф. М. Достоевским и идея «духовной империи» как формы исторического развития человечества*

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Для цитирования: *Evlampiev I.I., Matveeva I.Yu.* The debates on the sense of history between F.M. Dostoevsky and L.N. Tolstoy and the idea of “spiritual empire” as a form of historical development of the mankind // Вестник Санкт-Петербургского университета. Философия и конфликтология. 2022. Т. 38. Вып. 3. С. 319–331. <https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu17.2022.304>

* Исследование выполнено за счет гранта Российского научного фонда № 21-18-00153 «Идея империи и идея революции: два полюса русского общественно-политического мировоззрения в философии и культуре XIX–XXI веков» (Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет).

В статье обосновывается гипотеза о том, что в романе Ф. М. Достоевского «Подросток» выражена концепция истории, прямо направленная против модели истории, которую Л. Н. Толстой предложил в романе «Война и мир». Толстой полагает, что ход исторических событий определяет стихийное взаимодействие элементарных биологических сил, действующих в отдельных личностях и в народах; он категорически отвергает мысль о том, что отдельные личности могут своей разумной волей влиять на историю. В романе «Подросток» Достоевский защищает прямо противоположную концепцию: только немногие «высшие личности» непосредственно влияют на историю с помощью своих великих идей, среди которых особенно большое значение имеют религиозные идеи. В статье доказывается, что критика Достоевского, вероятно, оказала воздействие на Толстого, в результате чего он в своем позднем религиозном учении переходит на позицию, которую раньше отрицал. Теперь Толстой утверждает, что только немногие «лучшие люди», живущие в точном соответствии с учением Иисуса Христа, направляют общество на путь духовного единства и духовного совершенства и тем самым определяют ход истории. Та общая модель исторического развития общества, к которой приходят Достоевский и Толстой, может быть названа «духовной империей», она противоположна модели общества, принятой в западной либеральной традиции, порожденной философией Просвещения. В модели «духовной империи» целью развития является все большее духовное единство людей и служение каждого высшим духовным ценностям (созиданию культуры), управлять таким обществом должны «высшие личности», достигшие наибольшего духовного развития и влияющие на общество с помощью своего духовного авторитета, а не с помощью материальной силы.

Ключевые слова: русская философия истории, Лев Толстой, Фёдор Достоевский, либерализм и авторитаризм, империя.

Статья поступила в редакцию 11 мая 2022 г.;
рекомендована к печати 17 июня 2022 г.

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