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**Philosophical Analysis of Mythological Motifs in Russian Classics**

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## Research Relevance

The philosophical understanding of the works of Mikhail Lermontov, Ivan Goncharov and Leo Tolstoy, understanding them as a form of philosophizing is important, first of all, as bringing to philosophy the *living knowledge* (using Semen Frank's term<sup>1</sup>) that it lacks today. As Sergey Bulgakov noted, a true poet and a true thinker are “in the final sense the same thing”<sup>2</sup>. After all, the questions of philosophy – for instance, about the origin and unity of being, about the mystery of death and life, about the nature of freedom and beauty, etc. – by their very essence, cannot be comprehended and resolved by means of objectifying discursive knowledge alone. It is impossible to understand freedom, love, or beauty by substituting concepts and judgments about them for their living reality; it is impossible to comprehend the meaning of death and suffering, the eternal mystery of evil, without encountering them, without co-participating in these mysteries, but by warding them off with the theory of evil and the theory of suffering.

This does not mean that the thinker should abandon theories and discursive knowledge for the sake of a mythopoetic empathy with eternal mysteries: that would mean being left without proofs and clear cognitive results. Frank has repeatedly stipulated that living knowledge is richer than discursive knowledge, not poorer than it: it is super-rational, not pre- or irrational<sup>3</sup>: the mystery of beauty, freedom, or suffering cannot be revealed or exhausted at the level of speculation and logical inference. However, it is both possible and necessary, first, to bring a person to such a stage of reasoning, at which his encounter with these mysteries can take place, the transition from the thought of beauty or evil to their real presence. And, secondly, to overcome their simplistic, insufficient explanations. Setting for his study a mode of

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<sup>1</sup> Frank, S.L. 1996. “Predmet znaniya [Theme of knowledge]” [in Russian]. [Theme of knowledge. Man's Soul]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: Nauka. P. 355–358; Frank, S.L. 1996. “Nepostizhimoe [The Unknowable]” [in Russian]. Sobranie sochinenij [Collected Works]. Moskva [Moscow]: Pravda. P. C. 307–308 etc.

<sup>2</sup> Bulgakov, S.N. 1993. “Tragediya filosofii (filosofiya i dogmat)” [The Tragedy of Philosophy (Philosophy and Dogma)]” [in Russian]. Sobranie sochinenij. V 2 t. T. 1 [Collected Works. In 2 Vol. Vol. 1]. Moskva [Moscow]: Nauka. P. 314.

<sup>3</sup> Frank, S.L. 1996. “Predmet znaniya [Theme of knowledge]” [in Russian]. [Theme of knowledge. Man's Soul]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: Nauka. P. 305; Frank, S.L. 1996. “Nepostizhimoe [The Unknowable]” [in Russian]. Sobranie sochinenij [Collected Works]. Moskva [Moscow]: Pravda. P. C. 231 etc.

philosophical work very close to our own, F.W.J. Schelling in *The World Epochs* wrote: “Just as speech must be carried by rhythm, philosophical science must still be carried and accompanied by dialectic”<sup>4</sup>.

So, the appeal to Russian literary classics helps philosophy to remain human and alive. Today, philosophy's efforts to imitate science, dissolving into its objectifying thinking and outwardly copying its precision and constructiveness in defining its subject matter, methods, and disciplinary boundaries, often look respectable. In reality, this is just another fashionable attempt to abolish philosophy for its own sake. The words of Friedrich Schlegel's words: philosophy and poetry “are inseparably linked, a tree whose roots are philosophy and whose beautiful fruit is poetry. Poetry without philosophy becomes empty and superficial, philosophy without poetry remains inactive and becomes barbaric”<sup>5</sup>. Probably, the urgency of these words is the main reason for the great interest of both Russian and Western thinkers in the artistic classics (in particular, in the works of Lermontov, Goncharov and Tolstoy), the hermeneutic interpretation of which is built as a way of philosophizing.

Among the most notable Russian researchers who have long been working in this vein are: Sergey Nikolsky, Vladimir Porus, Vladimir Kantor, Valery Podoroga, Svetlana Neretina, Olga Zhukova, Irina Sizemskaya, etc. Of course, the classics of Russian philosophical thought – from Dmitry Merezhkovsky and Mikhail Bakhtin to Sergey Averintsev and Yuri Lotman – also cannot be imagined without its philosophical comprehension of the heritage of such writers as Lermontov, Goncharov, and Tolstoy.

Today, the large number of conferences and regular seminars on philosophical issues in literature and in the legacy of Lermontov, Goncharov, and Tolstoy in particular<sup>6</sup>, conferences and round tables at which the dialog between philosophy

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<sup>4</sup> Schelling *F.W.J.* *The Ages of the World* (1811). State University of New York: SUNY Press. 2019. P. 64.

<sup>5</sup> Schlegel, Fr. 1983. “Istoriya evropejskoj literatury” [Geschichte der europäischen Literatur] [in Russian]. *E`stetika. Filosofiya. Kritika: V 2 t. T. 2.* [Aesthetics. Philosophy. Criticism: In 2 vol. Vol. 2]. Moskva [Moscow]: Iskusstvo. P. 40.

<sup>6</sup> It is worth mentioning such conferences as “Ideas and Images of M.Y. Lermontov in World and Domestic Culture” in Tarkhany (to the bicentenary of Lermontov) 20.10.2014; seminar in the State Museum of Leo Tolstoy (jointly with

and literature<sup>7</sup> is intensely discussed, testify that these issues – the key ones for this study – touch *the living nerve of philosophy today*. It seems that the *great attention to them in the domestic, at least in the philosophical community, is due to the demand for living knowledge in philosophy, which is called upon to speak about the ineffable – the inaccessible to subject of cognition and inexpressible in the concept – the works of Lermontov, Goncharov, and Tolstoy give the researcher such an opportunity*.

Therefore, the research is relevant for the following reasons:

**firstly**, the need of philosophizing for event-based, living knowledge, which is not in conflict with discursive and object knowledge, but is also not reducible to it - knowledge as experience and presence of reality, participation in it, and not knowledge-model. In isolation from the living knowledge of philosophy, philosophy becomes an abstract reasoning over unanswered questions – engaging in the works of Lermontov, Goncharov, and Tolstoy helps to acquire this knowledge in the alliance with the mythopoetic word, which is at the origin of philosophy;

**secondly**, the situation of crisis common to classical philosophy and literature, marked by the catastrophes of the last century. Like the writer, the philosopher, in order not to lose himself today, must find a way to speak seriously about the unspeakable, remaining understandable and alive, not hiding behind a wattle of terms, not retreating into mournful and ironic silence. This is where he needs humanity, which reveals itself not in speculation but in empathy with Lermontov, Goncharov, and Tolstoy, their special language as the living presence and autonomous reality of humanity, not just a description or explanation of it;

**thirdly**, with the urgent task of comprehending and defining the position of philosophy among other humanities disciplines and its correlation with other spheres

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the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences) “Philosophy in Literature. Literature in Philosophy. The path laid by Leo Tolstoy”, annual “Tolstoy Readings”, etc.

<sup>7</sup> “Philosophy and literature: problems of mutual relations” 2009 (Philosophy and literature: problems of mutual relations (materials of the round table) / V. Lektorsky [et al.] // *Voprosy filosofii*. 2009. No. 9), conference “Russian Philosophy of the XX century and its contribution to the world intellectual tradition” (to the 100th anniversary of the “Philosophical steamer”), 27-30.09.2022 (first of all, the section “Philosophy and Literature”) international conferences “Philosophy & Literature” in Klagenfurt 29.05.-2.06.2019, “Philosophy and Literature” in Los Angeles 15.05.2022, “Philosophy and Literature in Dialogue” in Zagreb 8-9.12.2022, etc.

of spiritual culture – in particular, with mythology and fiction, with the need to clarify and preserve its own status of philosophizing, not in spite of, but on the basis of philosophy's non-autonomy, which is undeniable today. At the same time, the atomization of humanitarian knowledge in higher education institutions speaks today of the demand for interdisciplinary research that could unite the efforts of philosophers, historians, and philologists for both research and educational purposes.

### Object, Subject and Methodology of the Research

**The object** is the legacy of Lermontov, Goncharov and Tolstoy, understood as myth-making: as event reality different from a simple idea of reality, having an ontological status. **The subject** of the study is the mythological motifs of the works of Lermontov, Goncharov and Tolstoy: childishness and “naivety” of myth-making, tautologism, sculpturalism, apophatism, etc. – considered as having heuristic value for philosophy, as a material and means of solving ontogenetic problems, as a form of living knowledge in philosophy.

**Myth-making: the key concept of research.** The concept of living – non-objectifying and event – knowledge refers us to those areas of the spirit that seem very far from any evidence and rigor of knowledge of thought - to literature and mythology. This study is based on the philosophy of mythology, that goes back to F.W.J. Schelling<sup>8</sup>. Schelling and inherited by E. Cassirer<sup>9</sup>, A. Losev<sup>10</sup>,

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<sup>8</sup> Schelling, F.W.J. [Schelling, F.W.J.] 1989. “Vvedenie v filosofiju mifologii [Einführung in die Philosophie der Mythologie]” [in Russian]. Sobranie sochinenij. V 2 t. T. 2 [Collected Works. In 2 Vol. Vol. 2], ed. and trans. from the German by A.V. Gulyga. Moskva [Moscow]: Mysl'. P. 159–374; Schelling, F.W.J. [Schelling, F.W.J.] 1966. “Filosofiya iskusstva [Philosophie der Kunst]” [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Mysl'; Schelling, F.W.J. [Schelling, F.W.J.] 2013. “Monoteizm. Mifologiya [Monotheismus. Mythologie]” [in Russian]. Filosofiya mifologii. V 2-x t. T. 2. [Philosophie der Mythologie. In 2 Bänden. B. 2]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: Izd-vo S.-Peterb. un-ta.

<sup>9</sup> Cassirer, E. [Cassirer, E.] 2011. “Filosofija simvolicheskikh form. T. II: Mifologicheskoe myshlenie [Philosophie der symbolischen Formen Bd. II: Das mythische Denken]” [in Russian], trans. from the German by S.A. Romashko. Moskva [Moscow]: Akademicheskij Proekt.; Cassirer, E. [Cassirer E.] 1988. “Mif i religiya [Mythos und Religion]” [in Russian]. Izbrannoe. Opyt o cheloveke [Ausgewählt. Erfahrungen über den Menschen]. Moskva [Moscow]: Gardarika. P. 524–567; Cassirer E. The Myth of the State. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press. 1946. P. 3–53.

<sup>10</sup> Losev, A.F. 2001. Dialektika mifa [The Dialectic of Myth] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Mysl'; Losev, A.F. 1996. Mifologiya grekov i rimlyan [Greek and Roman Mythology] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Mysl'; Losev, A.F. 2005. Antichnaya mifologiya s antichny`mi kommentariyami k nej. E`nciklopediya olimpijskix bogov

S. Bulgakov<sup>11</sup>, K. Hübner<sup>12</sup> and others. Myth, according to this philosophical tradition, is neither an individual nor a collective fiction: it comes true in a person's life without his will and intention and is quite real for the consciousness he embraces. Therefore, mythology can only be understood tautegorically: its meaning cannot be distinguished and isolated from the form of its expression, as if it could take place outside of mythological expression and only then, as if at the second step, would be translated into mythical allegories.

Consequently, mythology is not a proto-artistic, not a primitive scientific or any other *presentation* of reality, it is the perfection (in the original sense of completeness, fullness of being) of reality – “the universe in a more solemn robe, in its absolute appearance, the true universe in itself,” according to classic formulation of Schelling<sup>13</sup>. It is equally important that mythology is not an objective reality, but a living, ongoing process that affects all aspects of human life, not only ideological issues, in which mythology, on the contrary, dissolves and ceases to be mythology. Myth is alive, becoming, but never becoming, it does not freeze in a closed system of beliefs, symbols and rituals. The named key features of mythology give reason to find in it the essence and source of non-objectifying knowledge, which comes true as the living presence of reality, its self-revelation to man.

But why is it necessary to turn to Lermontov, Goncharov and Tolstoy? For our research, it is extremely important that philosophers who analyzed and felt the “truth of myth” invariably associated with it the works of such writers who cannot in any way be considered depictees or judges of the empirically given (in this sense, “real”) world, who were the creators of their own special worlds – real in their improbability, convincing in their improbability.

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[Antique Mythology with Antique Comments on it. Encyclopaedia of Olympic Gods.] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: E'ksmo, etc.

<sup>11</sup> Bulgakov, S.N. 1999. “Pervooobraz i obraz: sochineniya v dvux tomakh. T. 1. Svet nevechernij.” [Primal Image and Image: Essays in two volumes. T. 1. Unfading Light] [in Russian]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: INAPRESS, Moskva [Moscow]: Iskusstvo. P. 72–83.

<sup>12</sup> Hjubner, K. [Hübner, K.] 1996. “Istina mifa” [Die Wahrheit des Mythos] [in Russian]. trans. from the German by V I.T. Kasavina. Moskva [Moscow]: Respublika.

<sup>13</sup> Schelling, F.W.J. [Schelling, F.W.J.] 1966. “Filosofiya iskusstva [Philosophie der Kunst]” [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Mysl'. P. 105.

Schelling wrote in this spirit about Dante<sup>14</sup>, even noting that the ability to create one's own myth is the true measure of literary talent<sup>15</sup>. Hübner's analysis of the "truth of myth" is preceded by a detailed analysis of Hölderlin's mythopoetics, to which he never tires of referring, supporting his judgments about the peculiarities of myth with examples from the German poet<sup>16</sup>. Losev no less actively quotes Gogol, Lermontov, Leo Tolstoy<sup>17</sup> in his philosophical researches of myth, and so on. Losev himself emphasized in his text the words: "**Artistic understanding must be mythological understanding**"<sup>18</sup>.

In relation to literary classics, we can define **myth-making** as an autonomous event-based, non-objectified reality of collaboration between the writer and the living apophatic principle, the presence and self-disclosure of which distinguishes this reality from any idea of reality and makes it tautegorical, sculptural, fatalistic. **Tautegorism** we call the self-referentiality of a myth, its ontological self-sufficiency, the indistinguishability of its meaning and the form expressing it, **sculpturality** is the plastic character of a myth arising from this indistinguishability, which does not know the transcendent and consists entirely of "external" sculptural forms, right up to the sculpturality of the language of the mythmaker. **Apophatism** is the connection of myth-making with a living ontological foundation that precedes the conscious activity of a person, his thoughts and speech, making myth-making possible as an eventual reality (and not the fiction of an individual or a group): precisely because the non-fictional reality of a myth is possible only thanks to the connection with this living source, he himself can never be represented explicitly and objectively in myth-making. All the images and plots of the myth implicitly point to it, just as the points of a circle, by their mutual arrangement, point to the invisible center of the circle, but this center itself can never be presented as an

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* P. 447.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* P. 105.

<sup>16</sup> Hjubner, K. [Hübner, K.] 1996. "Istina mifa" [Die Wahrheit des Mythos] [in Russian]. trans. from the German by V I.T. Kasavina. Moskva [Moscow]: Respublika. P. 14.

<sup>17</sup> Losev, A.F. 2001. Dialektika mifa [The Dialectic of Myth] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Mysl'. P. 105–106; Losev, A.F. 1995. Dialektika xudozhestvennoj formy` [Dialectics of Artistic Form] [in Russian]. Forma – Stil` – Vy`razhenie [Form – Style – Expression]. Moskva [Moscow]: Mysl'. P. 75–77, 93, etc.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* P. 75.



objective part of the circle.

The **research methodology** includes a number of traditional for philosophes techniques: *hermeneutic interpretation* of the artistic work, *synthesis* and *historical analysis*, as well as *comparative analysis*. Comparative analysis allows us to identify the similarities and continuity of Lermontov, Goncharov and Tolstoy, as well as the closeness of their work with myth, interpreted on the basis of the tradition of the philosophy of mythology dating back to Schelling. On the basis of hermeneutic interpretation in the legacy of Lermontov, Goncharov and Tolstoy, the main features of myth-making are explicated: tauthegorism, apophatism, fatalism, sculpturality and their common spiritual focus – the central motif of childishness. Thus, this method allows us to understand and justify the heuristic potential of philosophy of mythology and philosophy of childhood for the study of literary classics. Historical analysis and synthesis help to reveal the fundamental significance of these mythological motifs for the work of the three Russian classics, for their intellectual and artistic connection.

However, the key to this study as an ontological project is a method, or technique, that goes back to Schelling: in the working order, let us call it the attitude to *non-autonomy of thinking*. It is conditioned by the super-rational nature of living knowledge and consists in the fact that always in this research – when studying the “naivety” of myth-making, the interrelation of time and eternity in the mythological vision of nature, or the mysteries of human freedom and love – the potential of objectifying thought must first be exhausted, the forces of logical-discursive thinking must be activated. But then at each stage of our research – if only its premises are correct, and we can check them only by doing – we will encounter the *insufficiency* of these forces for solving philosophical problems. And the realization of this insufficiency opens two purely logically equivalent paths: the *rejection* of claims to the solution of the mystery, which has turned out to be insoluble rationally, or voluntary complicity in this mystery, empathy with its presence, that is, *turning to a living knowledge* of it, which, unlike logical deduction, is only voluntary. It is at this key moment of transition from the movement of concepts to living knowledge

and complicity in the mystery that the philosopher is helped by the myth-making of Lermontov, Goncharov, and Tolstoy.

### The Aim and Objectives of the Research

**The aim** of the dissertation research is to give a philosophical interpretation of the works of Lermontov, Goncharov and Tolstoy as mythmaking (based on the philosophy of myth and the philosophy of childhood connected with it in one semantic whole), to prove the reality of mythmaking and its heuristic value for philosophical cognition. Following Loschits and a number of other researchers who adopted his working terminology, we *do not contrast* the realism of these Russian classics with their myth-making, but set out to substantiate the thesis about their *mythological realism* – that the myth itself becomes the most significant, valuable, and comes true for a person reality, different from ordinary objective reality. Thus, a philosophical analysis of Russian classics should become an *ontological project* with the event, non-objectified reality of myth-making at the forefront. This determines the structure of the study: first, it is necessary to clarify and substantiate the specific reality of myth-making, its source (mythological fantasy) and cognitive value. Then, from myth as a co-existence, move on to the two main participants in this co-existence: *nature*, which ends in human, in his mythological fantasy, and *human*, who finds himself in nature, but also outgrows it in myth-making.

Philosophical analysis *should not be equated with historical (literary, historical-philological) research*. This paper aims to use the methodological and conceptual tools of the philosophy of myth to find in the images and plots of Lermontov, Goncharov and Tolstoy *a form of living knowledge necessary to comprehend philosophical problems*, but not to reconstruct the historical facts of their biographies and works strictly on the basis of sources.

This aim is achieved by solving the following **tasks**:

1. Explication (based on the philosophy of mythology) of the mythologicalness of Lermontov, Goncharov and Tolstoy and of the event reality of their myth-making;
2. Analysis of mythological fantasy as a form of nature's self-dance, of the living knowledge of it in Lermontov's, Goncharov's and Tolstoy's myth-making, in other words, understanding it as an ontological complicity of man and nature in the events of myth common to them;
3. Revealing the interrelation and key significance of the key mythological motifs: childishness, sculpturality, apophatism, tautogorism, for understanding nature in myth-making;
4. Clarifying the correlation of eternity and time, the problem of living eternity in the mythological understanding of nature and man in the heritage of Lermontov, Goncharov and Tolstoy;
5. Proving that it is in myth-making that the mystery of meeting with a living person – with the “You” not available for objectification – embodies itself;
6. Establishing the connection of the mystery of man in myth-making with the main mythological motifs: tautogorism, sculpturality, apophatism, childishness;
7. Determining the ontological basis of the relationship between fate and human freedom in the myth-making of Russian classics;
8. Substantiating and analysis the humanity of myth-making as an opportunity to overcome the modern “crisis of human self-knowledge”.

### Novelty of the Research

1. A new approach to the philosophical analysis of literary classics has been developed: an ontological interpretation of the works of Lermontov, Goncharov and Tolstoy as myth-making, based on the philosophy of mythology dating back to Schelling. In contrast to the long-standing tradition in Russia of seeing in Russian classics the creators of myths in the sense of *a fantasy presentation of*

*reality, which is taken for reality, which makes you fall in love and enchants, replacing reality, we defend not a literary thesis, but an ontological thesis that Lermontov's myth-making, Goncharov and Tolstoy is not invented and created by people, but comes true with them, but not thanks to them alone. In other words, we are building **precisely the ontology of myth-making as the living basis of reality itself, and not as one of the possible points of view on reality**, the special flavor of which would be revealed by a historical and philological analysis of mythological archetypes in the works of these writers;*

2. The very notion of myth-making is significantly rethought and concretized: myth-making is not a vague image, but a living connection between the motifs of apophaticism, sculpturalism, tauthegorism, and fatalism that require each other;

3. One of the most important innovations of the research is the substantiation and study of the connection between myth-making and childishness, and between the philosophy of mythology and the philosophy of childhood: the idea of childishness becomes one of the key tools for the philosophical study of both mythology and the works of major Russian myth-making writers;

4. The philosophical analysis of the works of Lermontov, Goncharov and Leo Tolstoy is carried out as an ontological project that reinterprets and substantiates the reality of myth-making as the reality of miracle (in the sense of Losev) and co-existence (as Heidegger and Marcel used this term);

5. The event reality of mythmaking is also studied as a living knowledge (according to S.L. Frank) of man and nature (Cosmos), and its necessity for philosophy is demonstrated in a new way;

6. The heuristic significance of living knowledge, childishness and myth-making for understanding and finding solutions to a number of the most important questions of natural philosophy (in particular, about the relation of eternity and time, about the possibility of objective comprehension of nature, about the anthropomorphism of natural knowledge) and philosophical anthropology (say, about the possibility of human freedom, about "alien" consciousness, about the

relation of soul and body, etc.) is substantiated and revealed;

7. The philosophical study of mythological motifs in the works of Lermontov, Goncharov, and Leo Tolstoy includes the experience of a peculiar interpretation of history, linking both the visible rise and the bitter tragedy of New European culture (which Kant called itself “man’s emergence from his self-incurred immaturity”) with its rejection of myth and childhood.

### Theoretical and Practical Significance of the Research

Ontognoseological analysis of Lermontov’s, Goncharov’s, and Tolstoy’s myth-making allows us to bring elements of living knowledge to academic philosophy and to understand in a new way the well-studied works of the classics (as well as the philosophy of mythology of Schelling, Cassirer, and Losev) – brief, to breathe new life into the philosophical analysis of Russian literature and to find new ways of its development. The present work connects a number of humanitarian disciplines: philosophy of myth, philology, child psychology – not in a vague mixture of different directions, but in one methodological program and conceptual scheme, which today seems promising and in demand both in the sphere of humanitarian research itself and in the sphere of teaching. In work with students, this study could become the ideological and methodological basis for courses on the philosophy of myth, the philosophy of childhood, and the comprehension of fiction as a form of philosophizing. Philosophers, psychologists, historians, and literary critics who are able to make their professional contribution to the common cause, enter into polemics, and engage in productive dialog. Thus, the methods and main provisions of the thesis have already been successfully applied in the course of preparing and conducting the NIS on Philosophy in Russian Classical Literature (held since 2020 for students of the 2nd-4th year).

### Extent of Prior Research into the Problem

To date, studies of mythological motifs in the heritage of Lermontov, Goncharov, and Tolstoy remain fragmentary: we can speak now not of systematic studies of the works of these Russian writers as myth-making, but rather of various notes, ideas, and sketches by both Russian and Western authors who have studied one or another of the briefly outlined above features of myth-making. This state of affairs testifies both to the novelty and demand for this work and to the fact that it is rooted in a solid research tradition, which supports many of our provisions with the conclusions of scholars who have already developed this topic.

We find some important remarks and reservations about the mythologizing of Lermontov, Goncharov and Tolstoy in their own words. For example, Goncharov himself called “Oblomov” his myth and “a great fairy tale”<sup>19</sup>: even Nikolay Mikhailovsky insisted that to understand Goncharov it is necessary to grasp his mythological motifs of the enchanted dream, eternal dream realm, and in his main characters – to recognize the features of mythological archetypes<sup>20</sup>. These thoughts were taken up by Yuri Loschits, who described Goncharov’s artistic method and style as “mythological realism”<sup>21</sup>: the term is certainly akin to our term “myth-making”, as it emphasizes the erection of a more important, superior mythological reality beside the ordinary empirical reality.

A number of modern researchers, sometimes harshly polemicizing with Loschitz, at the same time accept and develop his words about the “mythological leaven” of Goncharov’s realism, noting, for example, the vivid mythologemes of the reserved kingdom of eternal sleep and peace, “corner”, clever “fool”, like Russian Emelie, non-dashing bogatyr Ilya, thirty years and three years spent on the stove (with him Ilya Ilyich compared already Aykhenvald<sup>22</sup>), etc. In this connection we

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<sup>19</sup> *Goncharov, I.A.* 1951. Pis`mo k I.I. L`hovskomu. Marienbad, 2/14 avgusta 1857 [Letter to I.I. L'khovsky. Marienbad, 2/14 August 1857] [in Russian]. Literaturny`j arxiv. T. III. [Literary Archive. Vol. III.]. Leningrad [Leningrad]: Izd-vo AN SSSR. P. 118.

<sup>20</sup> *Mihaylovskiy, N.K.* 1958. Sof`ya Nikolaevna Belovodova: Pyat` glav iz romana «E`pizody` iz zhizni Rajskogo» I.A. Goncharova [Sofya Nikolaevna Belovodova: Five Chapters from the Novel “Episodes from the life of Paradise” by I.A. Goncharov] [in Russian]. Goncharov I.A. v russkoj kritike: Sbornik statej [Goncharov I.A. in Russian Criticism: Collection of Articles]. Moskva [Moscow]: Gos. izd-vo xudozh. lit. P. 184–185.

<sup>21</sup> *Loshhicz, Yu.* 1986. Goncharov [Goncharov] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Molodaya gvardiya. P. 179.

<sup>22</sup> *Ajhenval`d, Yu.* 1908–1913. Goncharov [Goncharov] [in Russian]. Silue`ty` russkix pisatelej. V 2 vy`p. 2-e izd [Silhouettes of Russian writers. In 2 vols. 2nd ed.]. Moskva [Moscow]. P. 147.

should name such foreign researchers as Testa, Kleespies, Borowec<sup>23</sup> and such domestic authors as Kantor, Geiro, Melnik<sup>24</sup>, whose observations and conclusions are particularly close to us<sup>25</sup>. He not only emphasizes the mythological nature of Goncharov's works, but also links it to the plastic, sculptural character of the classic's prose, to the relief "objectivity" of his language.

In part, this thesis goes back to the works of Dmitry Merezhkovsky, who also compared Goncharov's images and plots to bas-reliefs and statues: sculpturality, the embodiment of everything and anything in self-contained bodily forms, is an important feature of myth (noted especially by Cassirer and Losev), directly related to its tautogorism. Merezhkovsky also correlated this sculptural nature of Goncharov with another characteristic feature of his work, which is also easily recognizable as a mythological feature (according to Schelling, Cassirer, and Losev): symbolism as a condition and place of meeting between the temporary and the eternal, the general and the particular<sup>26</sup>.

The architectural scope described by Merezhkovsky, the mythological background, the sense of eternity and the marked prevalence of the whole over all the private and individual – all this allows us to bring Goncharov's works closer to the epic. Indeed, and Lermontov, and Goncharov, and Tolstoy themselves more than once said that they were oriented in their work on myths, fairy tales, folklore, and especially – on Homer mythological epic. Much has been written about it by both

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<sup>23</sup> Testa C. Goncharov's Oblomov: Fragmentation, Self-Marginalization, Cockroaches // Canadian-American Slavic Studies=Revue Canadienne-Americaine d'etudes slaves. 1994. № 28 (4). P. 399–418; Kleespies I. Russia's Wild East? Domesticating Siberia in Ivan Goncharov's 'The Frigate Pallada' // Slavic and East European Journal. 2012. № 56 (1). P. 21–37; Borowec Ch. Time after Time: The Temporal Ideology of Oblomov // The Slavic and East European Journal. Vol. 38, 4. 1994. P. 561–573.

<sup>24</sup> Gejro, L.S. 1987. Roman I.A. Goncharova "Oblomov" [Novel of I.A. Goncharov "Oblomov"] [in Russian]. Goncharov, I.A. Oblomov [Oblomov]. Leningrad [Leningrad]: Nauka. P. 536–538; Kantor, V.K. 2014. Russkaja klassika, ili Bytie Rossii [Russian Classics, or the Being of Russia] [in Russian]. Moskva; Sankt-Peterburg [Moscow; Saint-Petersburg]: Centr gumanitarnyh initsiativ; Universitetskaja kniga. P. 190–194; Mel'nik, V.I. 2014. Fol'klornyi bazis khudozhestvennoi modeli I.A. Goncharova [Folklore Roots of Ivan Goncharov's Prose Creative Paradigm] [in Russian]. Yazyk. Slovesnost'. Kul'tura [Language. Philology. Culture]. No. 4. P. 67–81; Mel'nik, V.I. 2021. Goncharov i Dante: voprosy' poe'tiki [Goncharov and Dante: Questions of Poetics] [in Russian]. Dva veka russkoj klassiki [Two Centuries of Russian Classics]. Vol. 3, No. 4. P. 58–79, etc.

<sup>25</sup> Mel'nik, V.I. 2014. Fol'klornyi bazis khudozhestvennoi modeli I.A. Goncharova [Folklore Roots of Ivan Goncharov's Prose Creative Paradigm] [in Russian]. Yazyk. Slovesnost'. Kul'tura [Language. Philology. Culture]. No. 4. P. 69.

<sup>26</sup> Merezhkovskij, D.S. 2007. Vechnye sputniki. Portrety iz vsemirnoj literatury. [Eternal Companions. Portraits of World Literature] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Nauka. P. 461–462.

Russian<sup>27</sup> and Western<sup>28</sup> researchers.

Of particular importance here are the classic works of research by Mikhail Bakhtin, who identified several key features of the epic, first of all, the time-value distance between the profane present and the absolute past, and the connection between the epic and national legends<sup>29</sup>. Bakhtin often turned to Goncharov and Tolstoy for illustrations. Similarly, Merezhkovsky noted that Goncharov places in the past the source of light that illuminates and vitalizes his entire oeuvre, opposing the gloomy modernity<sup>30</sup> – similar conclusions in spirit and meaning can be found today in Lim, Klispis, Melnik<sup>31</sup> – and Boris Eichenbaum<sup>32</sup> wrote repeatedly about Leo Tolstoy's ostentatious archaism.

Researchers write almost the same thing about Lermontov, who did not have time to write, but conceived his own epic and only partially realized it in his epic poetry: in “Boyarin Orsha”, “Valerik”, “The Song of the Merchant Kalashnikov”, “Borodino” and others. In these works narrated on behalf of the people, ordinary soldiers, guslars not exactly about the absolute, folklore and mythological, not about the historical past: “The age of epic poems has passed away”<sup>33</sup>. There are very good

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<sup>27</sup> *Jejhenbaum, B.M.* 1969. Iz stat'i “Ocherednye problemy izuchenija L. Tolstogo” [From the article “The next Problems of Studying L. Tolstoy”] [in Russian]. O proze. Sbornik statej [On prose. Collection of Articles.]. Leningrad [Leningrad]: Hudozhestvennaja literature. P. 190–192; *Merezhkovskij, D.S.* 2007. Vechnye sputniki. Portrety iz vseмирnoj literatury. [Eternal companions. Portraits of World Literature] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Nauka. P. 199–200; *Gachev, G.D.* 2008. Soderzhatel'nost' hudozhestvennyh form. Jepos. Lirika. Teatr. [The Content of Artistic Forms. Epic. Lyrics. Theatre] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Izd-vo Mosk. un-ta. P. 111–112; *Mel'nik, V.I.* 2014. Fol'klornyj bazis khudozhestvennoj modeli I.A. Goncharova [Folklore Roots of Ivan Goncharov's Prose Creative Paradigm] [in Russian]. Yazyk. Slovesnost'. Kul'tura [Language. Philology. Culture]. No. 4. P. 71.

<sup>28</sup> *Blum, G.* [Blum, G.] 2017. Tolstoj i geroizm [Tolstoy and Heroism] [in Russian]. Zapadnyj kanon. Knigi i shkola vseh vremen [The Western Canon. Books and School of All Times]. Moskva [Moscow]: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie. P. 401; *Kliger I.* Genre and Actuality in Belinskii, Herzen, and Goncharov: Toward a Genealogy of the Tragic Pattern in Russian Realism // *Slavic Review*, Vol. 70, no. 1. 2011. P. 52; *Friedrich P.* Tolstoy, Homer, and Genotypical Influence // *Comparative Literature*. Vol. 56, No. 4. 2004. P. 285; *Frederick T., Stanley J.* Tolstoy and Homer // *Epic and the Russian Novel from Gogol to Pasternak*. Academic Studies Press. 2011. P. 146; *Lounsbury A.* The World on the Back of a Fish: Mobility, Immobility, and Economics in “Oblomov” // *Russian Review*. 2011. № 70 (1). P. 43.

<sup>29</sup> *Bakhtin, M.M.* 1975. Jepos i roman [Epic and Novel] [in Russian]. Yazyk. Slovesnost'. Kul'tura [Questions of Literature and Aesthetics]. Moskva [Moscow]: Hudozhestvennaja literatura. P. 458.

<sup>30</sup> *Merezhkovskij, D.S.* 2007. Vechnye sputniki. Portrety iz vseмирnoj literatury [Eternal companions. Portraits of World Literature] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Nauka. P. 208.

<sup>31</sup> *Mel'nik, V.I.* 2014. Fol'klornyj bazis khudozhestvennoj modeli I.A. Goncharova [Folklore Roots of Ivan Goncharov's Prose Creative Paradigm] [in Russian]. Yazyk. Slovesnost'. Kul'tura [Language. Philology. Culture]. No. 4. P. 74; *Lim S.S.* Whose Orient Is It?: 'Frigate Pallada' and Ivan Goncharov's Voyage to the Far East // *Slavic and East European Journal*. 2009. № 53 (1); *Kleespies I.* Russia's Wild East? Domesticating Siberia in Ivan Goncharov's 'The Frigate Pallada' // *Slavic and East European Journal*. 2012. № 56 (1).

<sup>32</sup> *Jejhenbaum, B.M.* 2009. Lev Tolstoj: issledovanija. Stat'i [Leo Tolstoy: Research. Articles] [in Russian]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: Fakul'tet filologii i iskusstv SPbGU. P. 296–297.

<sup>33</sup> *Ajhenval'd, Ju.* 1908–1913. Lermontov [Lermontov] [in Russian]. Silujety russkih pisatelej. V 2 vyp. 2-e izd. [Silhouettes of Russian Writers. In 2 issues. 2nd ed.]. Moskva [Moscow]. P. 79–81; *Jejhenbaum, B.M.* 1961.



reasons to believe that it was Lermontov who had a decisive influence on Goncharov and Tolstoy, anticipating not only many of the philosophical motifs of their work (from heroism and fatalism to simplification of life), but also their sculptural prose and the mythological epic itself<sup>34</sup>.

The following formulation by Eichenbaum describes the epic of the Russian classics as best as possible: it is “the creation of the past on the basis of legends – as a reality more significant than the reality of history alone”<sup>35</sup>. Eichenbaum himself does not speak here of myth and epic based on myth, but, in fact, his words are simply a brief formula for myth-making in our sense of the word. Lermontov, Goncharov, and Leo Tolstoy seem to mold from their special prose a voluminous and living reality of history, everyday life, nature, and human that does not fit on a flat page, imperceptibly forcing the reader to believe their words about Napoleon and Alexander, about lordly hunting and the Russian estate more than the evidence and arguments of historians: this is what researchers emphasize even today<sup>36</sup>.

A strong argument in favor of interpreting the legacy of the Russian classics as myth-making is their memories and arguments that their own characters and literary plots seem to stop obeying their creators and begin to live their own lives.

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Literaturnaja pozicija Lermontova [Literary Position of Lermontov] [in Russian]. Stat'i o Lermontove [Articles on Lermontov]. Moskva [Moscow], Leningrad [Leningrad]: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR. P. 114; *Nikol'skij, S.A.* 2008. Russkoe mirovozzrenie. T. I. Smysly i cennosti rossijskoj zhizni v filosofskih i literaturnyh proizvedenijah XVIII – serediny XIX stoletija [Russian Worldview. Vol. I. Meanings and Values of Russian Life in Philosophical and Literary Works of the XVIII – the Middle of the XIX Century] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Progress Tradicija. P. 206–207; *Serman, I.Z.* 2003. Mihail Lermontov: Zhizn' v literature: 1836–1841. 2-e izd. [Mikhail Lermontov: Life in Literature: 1836–1841. 2nd ed.] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: RGGU. P. 81–82; *Griffiths F., Rabinowitz S.* Epic and the Russian Novel: from Gogol to Pasternak. Academic Studies Press. 2011. P. 81, 176, etc.

<sup>34</sup> The most important works on this topic: *Merezhkovskij, D.S.* 2002. M.Ju. Lermontov. Pojet sverhchelovechestva [M.Y. Lermontov. Poet of Superhumanity] [in Russian]. M.Ju. Lermontov: pro et contra [M.Y. Lermontov: Pro et Contra]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: RHGI. 2002. P. 378; *Durylin, S.N.* 1941. Na putjah k realizmu [On the Ways to Realism] [in Russian]. Zhizn' i tvorcestvo M.Ju. Lermontova: Issledovanija i materialy: Sbornik pervyj [Life and Work of M.Y. Lermontov: Studies and Materials]. Moskva [Moscow]: OGIZ; Gos. izd-vo hudozh. lit. P. 186, 251; *Jejhenbaum, B.M.* 1961. “Geroj nashego vremeni” [“Hero of Our Time”] [in Russian]. Stat'i o Lermontove [Articles on Lermontov]. Moskva [Moscow], Leningrad [Leningrad]: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR. P. 282; *Lotman, Ju.M.* 2002. Problema Vostoka i Zapada v tvorcestve pozdnego Lermontova [The Problem of East and West in the Works of Late Lermontov] [in Russian]. M.Ju. Lermontov: pro et contra [M.Y. Lermontov: Pro et Contra]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: RHGI. 2002. P. 813, etc.

<sup>35</sup> *Jejhenbaum, B.M.* 1969. Iz stat'i “Ocherednye problemy izuchenija L. Tolstogo” [From the article “The next Problems of Studying L. Tolstoy”] [in Russian]. O proze. Sbornik statej [On prose. Collection of Articles.]. Leningrad [Leningrad]: Hudozhestvennaja literature. P. 191–192.

<sup>36</sup> *Porus, V.N.* 2020. “Na sretenii simvola i real'nosti (eshhe raz o ‘Doktore Zhivago’)” [At the Meeting of the Symbol and Reality (once again on ‘Doctor Zhivago’)] [in Russian]. Filosofskie nauki [Russian Journal of Philosophical Sciences] No 7. P. 64. See also *Friedrich P.* Tolstoy, Homer, and Genotypical Influence // Comparative Literature. Vol. 56, No. 4. 2004. P. 283–284; *Browning G.L.* A “Labyrinth of Linkages” in Tolstoy’s “Anna Karenina”. Academic Studies Press. 2010. P. 40.

This is evidenced by the reading experience of the researchers – take, for example, Vladimir Nabokov’s remark: “We now and then have the feeling that Tolstoy’s novel writes itself”<sup>37</sup>.

It is extremely important for understanding myth-making that mythology recognizes (in the double sense of the word) only one level of reality<sup>38</sup> and itself comes true as its bodily presence, without building layers of less and more real layers characteristic of the adult worldview. This corresponds to the judgments of a number of researchers of Lermontov’s, Goncharov’s, and Tolstoy’s heritage, who point, for example, to the importance and reality of the dream, which is on a par with reality and sometimes outweighs it: this is quite obvious in Goncharov’s *Oblomov*, but it is also characteristic of poems of Lermontov<sup>39</sup> and epic narrative of Tolstoy<sup>40</sup>.

It has been written more than once that for these Russian classics, as for Homer, there is nothing uninteresting in the world, which, it seems, all without exception must be included in their works, reflected in endless details and names<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> Nabokov, V.N. 2010. *Lekcii po russkoj literature* [Lectures on Russian Literature] [in Russian]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: Azbuka-klassika. P. 225. See also *Jejhenbaum, B.M.* 2009. *Lev Tolstoj: issledovanija. Stat'i* [Leo Tolstoy: Research. Articles] [in Russian]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: Fakul'tet filologii i iskusstv SPbGU. P. 45; *Jejhenbaum, B.M.* 1987. *Lermontov. Opyt istoriko-literaturnoj ocenki* [Lermontov. Essay of Historical and Literary Assessment] [in Russian]. *O literature: Raboty raznyh let* [On Literature. Works of Different Years]. Moskva [Moscow]: Sovetskij pisatel'. P. 271; *Belyj, A.* *Lev Tolstoj i kul'tura* [Leo Tolstoy and Culture] [in Russian]. *O religii L'va Tolstogo* [On the Religion of Leo Tolstoy]. Moskva [Moscow]: Put'. P. 155–156, etc.

<sup>38</sup> *Kassirer, Je.* [Cassirer, E.] 2011. “Filosofija simbolicheskikh form. T. II: Mifologicheskoe myshlenie [Philosophie der symbolischen Formen Bd. II: Das mythische Denken]” [in Russian], trans. from the German by S.A. Romashko. Moskva [Moscow]: Akademicheskij Proekt. P. 50–51; Losev, A.F. 2001. *Dialektika Mifa* [The Dialectic of Myth] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Mysl'. P. 55.

<sup>39</sup> See especially Solov'ev, V.S. 2002. *Lermontov* [Lermontov] [in Russian]. M.Ju. Lermontov: pro et contra [M.Y. Lermontov: Pro et Contra]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: RHGI. 2002. P. 339; *Lotman, Ju.M.* 1992. *Tekst v tekste* [Text in Text] [in Russian]. *Izbrannye stat'i: V 3 t. T. 1.* [Selected Articles: In 3 vol. Vol. 1]. Tallin [Tallin]: Aleksandra. P. 158; *Serman, I.Z.* 2003. *Mihail Lermontov: Zhizn' v literature: 1836–1841. 2-e izd.* [Mikhail Lermontov: Life in Literature: 1836–1841. 2nd ed.] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: RGGU. P. 66–67, 151; *Löve K.* *The Structure of Space in Lermontov's 'Mcyri' // Russian Literature. Vol. 34. 1.* 1993. P. 37–58.

<sup>40</sup> *Jejhenbaum, B.M.* 2009. *Lev Tolstoj: issledovanija. Stat'i* [Leo Tolstoy: Research. Articles] [in Russian]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: Fakul'tet filologii i iskusstv SPbGU. P. 681; *Nabokov, V.N.* 2010. *Lekcii po russkoj literature* [Lectures on Russian Literature] [in Russian]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: Azbuka-klassika. P. 236; *Browning G.L.* A “Labyrinth of Linkages” in Tolstoy’s “Anna Karenina”. *Academic Studies Press.* 2010, etc.

<sup>41</sup> *Dobroljubov, N.A.* 1958. *Chto takoe oblomovshchina?* [What is Oblomovshchina?] [in Russian]. Goncharov I.A. v russkoj kritike: *Sbornik statej* [Goncharov I.A. in Russian Criticism: Collection of Articles]. Moskva [Moscow]: Gos. izd-vo xudozh. lit. P. 58; *Merezhkovskij, D.S.* 2000. *L. Tolstoj i Dostoevskij* [L. Tolstoy and Dostoevsky] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Nauka. P. 98–99; *Jejhenbaum, B.M.* 2009. *Lev Tolstoj: issledovanija. Stat'i* [Leo Tolstoy: Research. Articles] [in Russian]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: Fakul'tet filologii i iskusstv SPbGU. P. 45; *Merezhkovskij, D.S.* 2007. *Vechnye sputniki. Portrety iz vseмирnoj literatury.* [Eternal companions. Portraits of World Literature] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Nauka. P. 199–201; *Gachev, G.D.* 2008. *Soderzhatel'nost' hudozhestvennyh form. Jepos. Lirika. Teatr.* [The Content of Artistic Forms. Epic. Lyrics. Theatre] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Izd-vo Mosk. un-ta. P. 93–95; *Lounsbury A.* *The World on the Back of a Fish: Mobility, Immobility, and Economics in 'Oblomov' // Russian Review. Vol. 70(1).* 2011, etc.

In the living eternity of myth-making, the distinction between chance and necessity, significant and practically insignificant causes and incidents is erased – but in Russian writers, small accidents, overlapping, merging gradually into one whole, become a formidable force of fate for Oblomov, Merchant Kalashnikov or Pierre Bezukhov, and the plans and wishes of Napoleon are openly equaled in their significance for the historical event with the will and plans of any of the rank and file of his army<sup>42</sup>.

Interesting remark of Cassirer that it is more difficult for mythology to understand and convey human death than immortality or the continuation of life beyond the grave<sup>43</sup> also corresponds well with the observations of researchers of Lermontov, Goncharov, and Leo Tolstoy. They write, for example, that the dream idyll of Oblomov's men is also as if death is too lazy to break – Goncharov himself emphasizes that its mythical dream is “the true likeness of death”, but it is namely the *likeness*<sup>44</sup>. And Oblomov died peacefully – as if at the evening of his life he simply fell asleep in a now eternal sleep<sup>45</sup>. Lermontov expected a quiet eternal sleep (not “the cold sleep of the grave”), knowing that he would have to carry “earthly passions there with him”, even in his youth instead of “my life” he said “my eternity”<sup>46</sup>. Even his poetic prophecy about his death in the valley of Dagestan was

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<sup>42</sup> Tolstoy, L.N. 1940. “Vojna i mir. Tom 3 [War and Peace. Volume 3]” [in Russian]. Polnoe sobranie sochinenij v 90-tomah. T. 11 [The Complete Works in 90 Vol. Vol. 11], ed. by V.G. Chertkov. Moskva [Moscow]: Goslitzdat. P. 4–5.

<sup>43</sup> Cassirer, E. [Cassirer, E.] 2011. “Filosofija simbolicheskikh form. T. II: Mifologicheskoe myshlenie [Philosophie der symbolischen Formen Bd. II: Das mythische Denken]” [in Russian], trans. from the German by S.A. Romashko. Moskva [Moscow]: Akademicheskij Proekt. P. 68.

<sup>44</sup> “And if someone from old age or from any old disease and went to eternal sleep, then there long after that could not marvel at such an extraordinary case” (Goncharov, I.A. 1998. Oblomov: Roman v chetyreh chastjah [Oblomov: A Novel in Four Parts] [in Russian]. Polnoe sobranie sochinenij i pisem v dvadcati tomah. Tom 4 [Complete Works and Letters in Twenty Volumes. Vol. 4]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: Nauka. P. 104).

<sup>45</sup> Merezkovskij, D.S. 2007. Vechnye sputniki. Portrety iz vseмирnoj literatury. [Eternal companions. Portraits of World Literature] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Nauka. P. 197; Loshhicz, Yu. 1986. Goncharov [Goncharov] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Molodaya gvardiya. P. 181; Testa C. Goncharov's Oblomov: Fragmentation, Self-Marginalization, Cockroaches // Canadian-American Slavic Studies=Revue Canadienne-Americaine d'etudes slaves. 1994. № 28 (4); Borowec Ch. Time after Time: The Temporal Ideology of Oblomov // The Slavic and East European Journal. Vol. 38, 4. 1994. P. 561–573; Rebel' G. Oblomov and the Others // Russian Studies in Literature. 2013. № 49 (4). P. 8–37, etc.

<sup>46</sup> Merezkovskij, D.S. 2002. M.Ju. Lermontov. Pojet sverhchelovechestva [M.Y. Lermontov. Poet of Superhumanity] [in Russian]. M.Ju. Lermontov: pro et contra [M.Y. Lermontov: Pro et Contra]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: RHGI. 2002. P. 359, 362; Isupov, K.G. 2015. Metafizika igry u Lermontova [Metaphysics of the Game in Lermontov] [in Russian]. Solov'evske issledovanija. Vypusk 1 (45) [Solov'evskie Researches. Issue 1 (45)]. P. 96; Golstein V. The Enigma of Heroism in Lermontov's ‘The Song of Tsar Ivan Vassilyevich, His Young Oprichnik, and the Stout-Hearted Merchant Kalashnikov’ // Lermontov's Narratives of Heroism. Northwestern University Press. 1998. P. 87–88.

written as a poem not about death, but about a dream.

Death, of course, is not a fiction, but not just an irresistible fact, but a mystery into which, like Tolstoy's Prince Bolkonsky, the mythmaker dares to look. Merezhkovsky wrote about Tolstoy: "Not only living, but also dead faces "speak" in him: the face of the little princess and in the coffin was the same as in the living: "Ah, what have you done to me?" it said"<sup>47</sup>. Even in "The Death of Ivan Ilyich" one can respond with Nabokov that "this is the story of life, not the death of Ivan Ilyich"<sup>48</sup>.

Analyzed in the works of Cassirer<sup>49</sup> and Losev, the corporeality of mythology, its will to embody all reality, all relational and abstract in sculptural, plastic forms, can be matched by a long series of studies of the colossal attention of Lermontov, Goncharov, and Tolstoy to the life of the flesh and body<sup>50</sup>. The most complex reflections, moral problems, all the nuances of human feelings and relationships receive in these classics bodily, almost physically tangible expression, as researchers rightly write<sup>51</sup>. Sometimes even individual parts of the human body – chubby white hands Speransky, sponge with mustache little princess or "glowing with such a wonderful light" eyes of Anna Karenina, etc., become almost independent literary

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<sup>47</sup> *Merezhkovskij, D.S.* 2000. L. Tolstoj i Dostoevskij [L. Tolstoy and Dostoevsky] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Nauka. P. 100; See also *Veresaev, V.V.* 1991. Zhivaja zhizn': O Dostoevskom i L. Tolstom: Apollon i Dionis (o Nicshe) [Living Life: On Dostoevsky and L. Tolstoy: Apollo and Dionysus (on Nietzsche)] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Politizdat. P. 79–80; *Hudspith S.* Life in the Present: Time and Immortality in the Works of Tolstoy The Modern Language Review. Vol. 101, no. 4. 2006. P. 1059, etc.

<sup>48</sup> *Nabokov, V.N.* 2010. Lekcii po russkoj literature [Lectures on Russian Literature] [in Russian]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: Azbuka-klassika. P. 334.

<sup>49</sup> *Kassirer, Je.* [Cassirer, E.] 2011. "Filosofija simvolicheskikh form. T. II: Mifologicheskoe myshlenie [Philosophie der symbolischen Formen Bd. II: Das mythische Denken]" [in Russian], trans. from the German by S.A. Romashko. Moskva [Moscow]: Akademicheskij Proekt. P. 68–70, etc.

<sup>50</sup> For this study, the following texts touching on this subject are most relevant: *Merezhkovskij, D.S.* 2002. M.Ju. Lermontov. Pojet sverhchelovechestva [M.Y. Lermontov. Poet of Superhumanity] [in Russian]. M.Ju. Lermontov: pro et contra [M.Y. Lermontov: Pro et Contra]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: RHGI. 2002. P. 376; *Leont'ev, K.N.* 1911. Analiz, stil' i vejanie. O romanah gr. L.N. Tolstogo. Kriticheskij jetjud [Analysis, Style and Trends: About the Novels of Count L.N. Tolstoy. Critical Sketch] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]. P. 104–105; *Jejhenbaum, B.M.* 1961. "Geroj nashego vremeni" ["Hero of Our Time"] [in Russian]. Stat'i o Lermontove [Articles on Lermontov]. Moskva [Moscow], Leningrad [Leningrad]: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR. P. 279; *Aldanov, M.* [Aldanov, M.] 1996. "Zagadka Tolstogo [L'énigme de Tolstoj]" [in Russian]. Sobranie sochinenij. V 6 t. T. 6 [Collected Works. In 6 vol. Vol. 6], trans. from the Frenche by A.A. Chernyshev. Moskva [Moscow]: Novosti. P. 73; *Loshhicz, Yu.* 1986. Goncharov [Goncharov] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Molodaya gvardiya. P. 189–190; *Butler E.M.* Rilke and Tolstoy // The Modern Language Review. Vol. 100. 2005. P. 210–221; *Rosenshield G.* Injury, Pain, and Change in 'War and Peace': The Cases of Nikolai Rostov and Prince Andrei Bolkonsky // The Russian Review. Vol. 74 (4). 2015. P. 662–663.

<sup>51</sup> *Merezhkovskij, D.S.* 2000. L. Tolstoj i Dostoevskij [L. Tolstoy and Dostoevsky] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Nauka. P. 99–100

characters, like the nose that has left its owner in the story of Gogol<sup>52</sup>.

It is not always the case that researchers bring the works of these writers closer to myth, but such formulations as “the secret-seer of the flesh” (about Tolstoy), “the holiness of the flesh” (about Lermontov), in their meaning come close to what we call myth-making, as well as comparisons of Tolstoy's characters with Egyptian deities in Merezhkovsky's book and a number of his individual observations: “It is as if the artist were searching for the supernatural in the natural brought to its last limits, for the supercorporeal in the corporeal brought to its last limits”<sup>53</sup>.

Sergey Bulgakov's remark about the absence of *common names* in myth helps to understand this supernatural in myth-making: “The subject of myth, its subject, can be designated only by a ‘proper’, not by a ‘common’, generic name”<sup>54</sup>. Since mythology is not constructed by man and is not to him, but is realized with him, any forces, things, natural phenomena in myth are not objects and representations, not impersonal “They”, but the living presence of the “You” with whom man empathizes. Losev explicitly brought Lermontov's animals, things, individual features of the body and character closer to myth in such an intuitive, before any reflection understandable personal form, animatedness of animals, things, individual features of the body and character<sup>55</sup>.

Here again we see how the judgments of many researchers (who usually say nothing about myth) on the symbolism and strange liveliness of things, which sometimes grow to the rank of characters in Lermontov, Goncharov, and Tolstoy, correspond exactly to the conclusions of the philosophy of mythology<sup>56</sup>. This also

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* P. 95.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Bulgakov, S.N. 1999. “Pervoobraz i obraz: sochineniya v dvux tomakh. T. 1. Svet nevechernij.” [Primal Image and Image: Essays in two volumes. T. 1. Unfading Light] [in Russian]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: INAPRESS, Moskva [Moscow]: Iskusstvo. P. 72.

<sup>55</sup> Losev, A.F. 1995. Dialektika xudozhestvennoj formy` [Dialectics of Artistic Form] [in Russian]. Forma – Stil` – Vy`razhenie [Form – Style – Expression]. Moskva [Moscow]: Mysl'. P. 75–77, 93; Losev, A.F. 2001. Dialektika mifa [The Dialectic of Myth] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Mysl'. P. 92–93.

<sup>56</sup> Nabokov, V.N. 2010. Lekcii po russkoj literature [Lectures on Russian Literature] [in Russian]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: Azbuka-klassika. P. 338; Jeihenbaum, B.M. 1961. Literaturnaja pozicija Lermontova [Literary Position of Lermontov] [in Russian]. Stat'i o Lermontove [Articles on Lermontov]. Moskva [Moscow], Leningrad [Leningrad]: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR. P. 71; Serman, I.Z. 2003. Mihail Lermontov: Zhizn' v literature: 1836–1841. 2-e izd. [Mikhail Lermontov: Life in Literature: 1836–1841. 2nd ed.] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: RGGU. P. 246–247.

applies to the observations of researchers regarding intuitive and practical understandable to man thoughts, feelings and even “without words, but alive” speech of animals, plants, rocks, elements in the Russian classics<sup>57</sup>.

It is also necessary to mention a solid body of texts devoted by researchers to childishness in the works of Lermontov, Goncharov and Tolstoy, their interest in childhood and children’s play, their manner of speaking about the world of nature and people on behalf of a child, assessing and reviewing them from the child point of view<sup>58</sup>.

Among the classics and contemporaries, there are many who write sympathetically about childishness in Lermontov, Goncharov, and Leo Tolstoy<sup>59</sup>, as well as those for whom it remains a symbol of everything that must be overcome<sup>60</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup> *Merezhkovskij, D.S.* 2000. L. Tolstoj i Dostoevskij [L. Tolstoy and Dostoevsky] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Nauka. P. 121, 129; see also *Veresaev, V.V.* 1991. Zhivaja zhizn': O Dostoevskom i L. Tolstom: Apollon i Dionis (o Nicshe) [Living Life: On Dostoevsky and L. Tolstoy: Apollo and Dionysus (on Nietzsche)] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Politizdat. P. 60–61; *Löve K.* The Structure of Space in Lermontov's 'Mcyrj' // Russian Literature. Vol. 34. 1. 1993. P. 44.

<sup>58</sup> *Bahtin, M.M.* 2012. Prilozhenie. Zakljuchitel'noe slovo M.M. Bahtina na obsuzhdenii doklada “Roman, kak literaturnyj zhanr” [Appendix. Final Word of M.M. Bakhtin at the Discussion of the Report “The Novel as a Literary Genre”] [in Russian]. Sobranie sochinenij. T. 3: Teorija romana [Collected Works. Vol. 3: Theory of the Novel]. Moskva [Moscow]: Jazyki slavjanskih kul'tur. P. 649; *Veresaev, V.V.* 1991. Zhivaja zhizn': O Dostoevskom i L. Tolstom: Apollon i Dionis (o Nicshe) [Living Life: On Dostoevsky and L. Tolstoy: Apollo and Dionysus (on Nietzsche)] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Politizdat. P. 103, etc.

<sup>59</sup> *Druzhinin, A.V.* 1958. “Iz stat'i: ‘Oblomov’, roman I.A. Goncharova [From the Article: ‘Oblomov’, a Novel by I.A. Goncharov]” [in Russian]. Goncharov I.A. v russkoj kritike: Sbornik statej [Goncharov I.A. in Russian Criticism: Collection of Articles]. Moskva [Moscow]: Gos. izd-vo xudozh. lit. P. 180; *Merezhkovskij, D.S.* 2007. Vechnye sputniki. Portrety iz vseмирnoj literatury. [Eternal companions. Portraits of World Literature] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Nauka. P. 197, 207; *Mann, T.* [Mann, T.] 1960. “Gjote i Tolstoj. Fragmenty k probleme gumanizma [Goethe und Tolstoi. Fragmente zum Problem des Humanismus]” [in Russian]. Sobranie sochinenij. V 10 t. T. 9 [Collected Works. In 10 vol. Vol. 9], ed. and trans. from the German by N.N. Vilmont and B.L. Suchkova. Moskva [Moscow]: Goslitizdat. P. 585–589; *Gorky, M.* 1978. “Lev Tolstoj [Leo Tolstoy]” [in Russian]. L.N. Tolstoj v vospominanijah sovremennikov. V 2-h tomah. T. 2. [L.N. Tolstoy in the Memoirs of Contemporaries. In 2 volumes. Vol. 2], ed. by N.M. Fortunatov. Moskva [Moscow]: Hudozh. lit. P. 487; *Loshhicz, Yu.* 1986. Goncharov [Goncharov] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Molodaya gvardiya. P. 88, 290; *Mel'nik, V.I.* 2014. Fol'klornyj bazis khudozhestvennoj modeli I.A. Goncharova [Folklore Roots of Ivan Goncharov’s Prose Creative Paradigm] [in Russian]. Yazyk. Slovesnost'. Kul'tura [Language. Philology. Culture]. No. 4. P. 70. *Nedzvetsky V.* Ilya Oblomov as Portrayed in the Novel (Bicentenary of the birth of Ivan Goncharov) // Social Sciences. 2013. № 44 (1). P. 43.

<sup>60</sup> *Krasnoshhekkova, E.A.* 1997. I.A. Goncharov: Mir tvorcestva. [I.A. Goncharov: The World of Creativity] [in Russian]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: Pushkinskij fond. P. 355; *Kantor, V.K.* 2014. Russkaja klassika, ili Bytie Rossii [Russian Classics, or the Being of Russia] [in Russian]. Moskva; Sankt-Peterburg [Moscow; Saint-Petersburg]: Centr gumanitarnyh iniciativ; Universitetskaja kniga. P. 205–208; *Nikol'skij, S.A., Filimonov, V.P.* 2009. Russkoe mirovozzrenie. Kak vozmozhno v Rossii pozitivnoe delo: poiski otveta v otechestvennoj filosofii i klassicheskoj literaturnoj ture 40–60-h godov XIX stoletija [How Positive Affair is Possible in Russia: the Search for an Answer in Russian Philosophy and Classical Literature of the 40-60s of the 19th Century] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Progress-Tradicija. P. 161–163; *Kliger I.* Genre and Actuality in Belinskii, Herzen, and Goncharov: Toward a Genealogy of the Tragic Pattern in Russian Realism // Slavic Review, Vol. 70, no. 1. 2011. P. 45–46; *Mann Yu.* Goncharov in the Context of Philosophical Thought // Social Sciences. № 44 (1). 2013. P. 52.

A number of researchers, such as Veresaev<sup>61</sup> and Kantor<sup>62</sup>, openly correlate childishness with myth-making, treating myth itself as the “childhood” of humanity. However, there has been no systematic, comprehensive analysis of the relationship between childhood and myth, or of childhood as the most important mythological motif in the legacy of the Russian classics.

## The Main Content and Conclusions of the Research

**The first chapter** is devoted to the ontological analysis of the mythological vision of nature in the works of Lermontov, Goncharov and Tolstoy. **Paragraph 1.1.** contains a review and criticism of traditional ideas about their understanding of nature, reveals their *insufficiency* and thereby substantiates the necessity of further research using new methodologies.

**Paragraph 1.2.** is devoted to *mythological-child fantasy and the “naivety” of myth-making*. The key element and creative force of the mythological understanding of nature in Lermontov, Goncharov and Tolstoy is their “naïve” (in the original sense of the word, i.e. natural, non-artificial) mythological-child fantasy. The fantasy of the mythmaker has nothing in common with free fantasizing; it is the *living presence, continuation and self-enrichment of nature* in man – not one of the processes of subject reality explained by external causes and not a purely “subjective” activity of human consciousness, but an event of mythmaking. We rely here not on the legacy of German Romanticism, in particular on the ideas of Joseph Görres, who viewed myth as the action and revelation of nature in human consciousness<sup>63</sup>. At the same time, interpreting mythology as a co-existent reality, we rethink and significantly

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<sup>61</sup> Veresaev, V.V. 1991. Zhivaja zhizn': O Dostoevskom i L. Tolstom: Apollon i Dionis (o Nicshe) [Living Life: On Dostoevsky and L. Tolstoy: Apollo and Dionysus (on Nietzsche)] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Politizdat. P. 76–77.

<sup>62</sup> Kantor, V.K. 2014. Russkaja klassika, ili Bytie Rossii [Russian Classics, or the Being of Russia] [in Russian]. Moskva; Sankt-Peterburg [Moscow; Saint-Petersburg]: Centr gumanitarnyh iniciativ; Universitetskaja kniga. P. 564–567.

<sup>63</sup> Gerres, J. [Görres, J.] 1986. “Mifologija aziatskogo mira [Mythengeschichte der asiatischen Welt]” [in Russian]. Jestetika nemeckih romantikov [Aesthetics of the German Romantics]. Moskva [Moscow]: Iskusstvo. P. 282–283; Schelling, F.W.J. [Schelling, F.W.J.] 1989. “Vvedenie v filosofiju mifologii [Einführung in die Philosophie der Mythologie]” [in Russian]. Sobranie sochinenij. V 2 t. T. 2 [Collected Works. In 2 vol. Vol. 2], ed. and trans. from the German by A.V. Gulyga. Moskva [Moscow]: Mysl'. P. 335.

transform the ontological basis of Görres' conclusions, first of all, rejecting the understanding of nature as a certain pre-prepared and only manifesting itself in man foundation of myth.

As Goncharov emphasized: "Nature is too strong and peculiar to take it, so to speak, in its entirety, to compete with it with its own forces and directly stand next to it; it will not give. She has her own too powerful means. A direct photograph of it would be a pathetic, powerless copy. It allows you to get close to her only by creative imagination"<sup>64</sup>. Realism, which demands an exact "copy from nature", excludes fantasy, but at the same time paradoxically impoverishes nature, because fantasy is a natural gift and an expression in man of the same creative forces that are present in nature itself. It is neither copying nor embellishing nature, but an organic part of nature, reflecting the whole (like any part of an organic, living whole): "Write one nature and life as they are! – they [the realists] say. But after all, the desire for ideals, fantasy – these are also organic properties of human nature. After all, the truth in nature is given to the artist only through fantasy! <...> For the sake of realism would have to limit too much and even completely eliminate fantasy, to fall, then, fall into dryness, sometimes in colorlessness, instead of living images to write silhouettes, sometimes completely abandon poetry, and all in the name of imaginary truth! But fantasy, and with it poetry, are given by nature to man and are part of his nature, hence, of his life: would it be true and real to pass them by?"<sup>65</sup>

This is precisely the childish and mythological fantasy (its key features Goethe gave to his "exact fantasy": a method created in opposition to the mathematical objectifications of nature in New European physics<sup>66</sup>), guided by astonishment at nature, at the richness of its forces, acquired by man and in himself. Hence the *philosophical and mythological wonder* valued by the Greeks above other

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<sup>64</sup> Goncharov, I.A. 1952. Luchshe pozdno, chem nikogda [Better late than never] [in Russian]. Sobranie sochinenij v vos'mi tomah. Tom 8. Stat'i, zametki, pis'ma [Collected Works in Eight Volumes. Volume 8. Articles, Notes, Letters]. Moskva [Moscow]: Goslitizdat. P. 107–108.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* P. 101

<sup>66</sup> "Fantasy is much closer to nature than sensuality; the latter is present in nature, the former soars above it. Fantasy grew out of nature, sensuality – in its power" (*Gete, I.V.* [Goethe, J.W.] 1964. Maksimy i razmyshlenija [Maximen und Reflexionen] [in Russian]. Izbrannye filosofskie proizvedenija [Selected Philosophical Works]. Moskva [Moscow]: Nauka. P. 345). On Goethe's exact fantasy see *Svas'jan, K.A.* 2001. Filosofskoe mirovozzrenie Gjote [The Philosophical Worldview of Goethe] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Evidentis. Especially – P. 197–199.



cognitive abilities. European science tries to eliminate everything surprising in the course of cognition of nature and expects to approach it on this way, but in reality it loses nature, ceasing to be surprised by it due to its substitution by equations and constants invented by science itself. But myth-making, as well as the philosophy of the ancients, which is still inseparably connected with myth, on the contrary, wants to hold on to amazement by means of fantasy: only in amazement it is possible to retain closeness to nature and a living knowledge of it. Amazement is another major motif of Goethe's comprehension of nature<sup>67</sup>, which undoubtedly influenced its formation in Lermontov, Goncharov and, especially, Leo Tolstoy<sup>68</sup>.

The fantasy of children and the fantasy of the mythmaker, who spiritualizes nature, finding in it not the world of objects, processes and laws to be found in man, but the living presence of a higher reality ("And in the heavens I see God"), is usually called *naive*, which, in fact, is reasonable and profound, if only we take into account the original meaning of the word: "The Latin *nativus* means literally: natural, innate, indigenous, artless; in this case, to say to someone: 'you are naïve', would be to pay him almost a compliment"<sup>69</sup>. This is not profane, genuine naivety reaches myth-making, when Lermontov, for example, sees with his "diligent eye" child in the sky angel flight or God himself. Merezhkovsky wrote about the quiet simplicity of Pushkin's poetic pictures of nature as perpetuating the worldview of adults, and about the tension and depth of Lermontov's experience of nature as a child's participation in its being<sup>70</sup>.

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<sup>67</sup> Eckermann relates: "The highest thing a man can achieve, Goethe remarked on the subject, is amazement. If a phenomenon plunged him into amazement, he must be satisfied, nothing higher to see he is not given, and to seek further is meaningless" (*Jekkerman, I.-P.* [Eckermann, J.P.] 1986. *Razgovory s Gete v poslednie gody ego zhizni* [Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Hudozh. lit. P. 285).

<sup>68</sup> On the main aspects of influence of Goethe on Tolstoy, as well as on the most important works on this matter see *Motyleva, T.L.* 1982. *Tolstoj chitaet Gete* [Tolstoy reads Goethe] [in Russian]. Tula: Priok. kn. izd-vo. Especially – P. 3–6. Among the canonical texts, let us refer to essay of T. Mann "Goethe and Tolstoy", in which Mann particularly emphasises the similarity of the "Antaeus consciousness" of the two classics, who drew their inspiration and persuasiveness from nature, its richness and life, without forgetting their aristocratism, "mischievousness", attention to childishness, problems of pedagogy, etc. (*Mann, T.* [Mann, T.] 1960. "Gjote i Tolstoj. Fragmenty k probleme gumanizma [Goethe und Tolstoi. Fragmente zum Problem des Humanismus]" [in Russian]. *Sobranie sochinenij. V 10 t. T. 9* [Collected Works. In 10 vol. Vol. 9], ed. and trans. from the German by N.N. Vilmont and B.L. Suchkova. Moskva [Moscow]: Goslitizdat. Especially – P. 521–523).

<sup>69</sup> *Svas'jan, K.A.* 2001. *Filosofskoe mirovozzrenie Gjote* [The Philosophical Worldview of Goethe] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Evidentis. P. 61.

<sup>70</sup> *Merezhkovskij, D.S.* 2002. "M.Ju. Lermontov. Pojet sverhchelovechestva [M.Y. Lermontov. Poet of Superhumanity]" [in Russian]. *M.Ju. Lermontov: pro et contra* [M.Y. Lermontov: Pro et Contra]. Sankt-Peterburg

**Paragraph 1.3** (and partly **paragraph 1.5**) is devoted to *the ontological reconstruction of the Cosmos in the myth-making of the Russian classics*. The myth-making of the Russian classics *recreates a living Cosmos* like a child's play and a well-appointed House. In myth-making, nature is seen through the eyes of children, and it itself wants to be a kind of *child play* – in the sense in which Heraclitus and Schiller spoke about it. For mythmakers, as for children, nature is not a given of experience and not a conceivable object, but a fascinating and living presence of the Cosmos that is inexpressible in thought, not to be seen by man, but to be realized with him in the *co-existence* (in the double sense of the word) of mythmaking.

The thought of the child and the mythmaker is visible, plastic, free, like nature, the continuation and completion of which it is – Lermontov's lines about the power of thought recall Heraclitus' mythological philosopheme for good reason:

thought is powerful,

When it's not constrained by the size of words,

When it's as free as child play.

A myth transformed from praxis into discourse, into a text intended for interpretation – “constrained by the size of words” – is no longer a myth: so, too, the nature present in it, if one tries not to empathize with it in myth-making, but to represent it in words, through terms and special signs, ceases to be nature. Eichenbaum wrote about Tolstoy: “The depiction of the Caucasian night is followed by a characteristic reflection: “I thought: I will go and describe what I see. But how to write it? I have to go, sit down at the ink-stained table, take gray paper, ink; get my fingers dirty and scribble letters on the paper. Letters make words, words make phrases; but can one convey a feeling? Can one not somehow pour into another one's own view at the sight of nature? Description is not enough.” To this is added another observation: “To people who look at things for the purpose of writing things down,

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[Saint-Petersburg]: RHGI. 2002. P. 349. Philosophically curious remarks on the difference between Pushkin's landscape and Lermontov's one, on the ironic separation of Lermontov from Pushkin on this path see *Marsh C. Lermontov and the Romantic Tradition: The Function of Landscape in ‘A Hero of Our Time’ // The Slavonic and East European Review. № 66 (1). 1988. P. 38–39; Tsetsiliia M. Lermontov Reads Eugene Onegin // The Russian Review №53 (1). 1994. P. 61; Serman, I.Z. 2003. Mihail Lermontov: Zhizn' v literature: 1836–1841. 2-e izd. [Mikhail Lermontov: Life in Literature: 1836–1841. 2nd ed.] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: RGGU. P. 217–219.*

things are presented in an inverted form”<sup>71</sup>. Lermontov and other Russian mythmakers hoped to find in the child and in the “common man”, who are the least detached from nature, such an understanding of nature, in which words and thoughts about life would not supplant, not yet cluttered life itself – as one of the vivid “Tolstov’s” passages of Lermontov says: “In the hearts of simple people the feeling of the beauty and grandeur of nature is stronger, more alive a hundred times than in us, enthusiastic storytellers in words and on paper”<sup>72</sup>.

Only blind thought is firmly bound to words and special symbols, which it often substitutes for everything it can no longer see, to which it has no access – this is the case, for example, in the New European exact sciences, which produce some mysterious *exact knowledge without understanding*. This knowledge as a technical mastering of that which in human terms remains obscure and alien, as Werner Heisenberg wrote about Einsteinian mathematical description of the relativity of simultaneity<sup>73</sup>. Gottfried Leibniz explicitly called this knowledge “blind knowledge”, “which is used in algebra and arithmetic, and perhaps almost everywhere else”<sup>74</sup>. In “our time” – indeed, almost everywhere, but not in childhood and myth-making.

The mythological fantasy and play of the child are not blind: they do not cling to Leibnizian Ariadne’s thread of conventional signs and abstract rules, but unfold freely, like nature itself, which is not enclosed in any external framework. Heraclitus’ eternal child plays because he plays, without any abstract rules, goals and grounds: the meaning and purpose of his game is the game itself in its freedom and living beauty, it is *aimless and that is why it is priceless*. Rules and goals are signs of lack, of imperfection, but nature is the embodiment of completeness. That is why thought really comes close to nature and gains strength in myth-making when

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<sup>71</sup> *Jejhenbaum, B.M.* 2009. Lev Tolstoj: issledovanija. Stat'i [Leo Tolstoy: Research. Articles] [in Russian]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: Fakultet filologii i iskusstv SPbGU. P. 35.

<sup>72</sup> *Lermontov, M.Ju.* 2002. “Geroj nashego vremeni [Hero of Our Time]” [in Russian]. Polnoe sobranie sochinenij v 10 tomah. T. 6. [Complete Works in 10 volumes. Vol. 6]. Moskva [Moscow]: Voskresen'e. 2002. P. 235.

<sup>73</sup> *Gejzenberg, V.* [Heisenberg, W.] 1989. Fizika i filosofija. Chast' i celoe [Physik und Philosophie. Der Teil und das Ganze]. Moskva [Moscow]: Nauka. P. 162.

<sup>74</sup> *Lejbnic, G.V.* [Leibniz, G.W]. 1984. “Razmyshlenija o poznanii, istine i idejah [Betrachtungen über die Erkenntnis, die Wahrheit und die Ideen]” [in Russian]. Sochinenija: V 4 t. T. 3. [Works: In 4 vols. Vol. 3]. Moskva [Moscow]: Mysl'. P. 103.

it comes close to child play.

In this case, the play of nature-macrocosm is indistinguishable and inseparable from the play of the visible thought of microcosm-man: their unity is absorbed by the living mythological imagery, which does not need any justifications and explanations, because it is no longer a description, no representation of reality, but the presence and self-evidence of it.

The contrast between the adult thinking of “our time” and the “naïve”, childish-mythological thinking is very clearly revealed by one episode from Tolstoy’s quest for education and training. In the most famous and prestigious schools of Germany Tolstoy more than once witnessed the same scenario of the children's dialogue with their teacher, who showed them a textbook opened on a page with a drawn fish and questioned them about what they saw here. Naturally, the students responded – fish, the underwater world, but the mentor rejected all such answers, gradually, methodically, relentlessly forcing the children to say that they saw only *a picture of a fish*<sup>75</sup>.

One cannot think of a more expressive example of the opposition between the mythmaker’s childish thought as a living presence of reality (breathing life even into a simple picture from a textbook) and the objectifying thought of a Kantian “adult” person who does not accept myth and who, on the contrary, imprisons reality itself everywhere in a picture – in an object of possible experience, in a mathematical model, in belles-lettres (deliberately opposed to reality), etc. These are the thoughts of young Natasha:

«Mamma, is he very much in love? What do you think? Was anybody ever so much in love with you? And he’s very nice, very, very nice. Only not quite my taste he is so narrow, like the dining-room clock.... Don’t you understand? Narrow, you know – gray, light gray...’

‘What rubbish you’re talking!’ said the countess.

Natasha continued: ‘Don’t you really understand? Nicholas would

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<sup>75</sup> Tolstoy, *L.N.* 1936. “O metodah obuchenija gramote [On the Methods of Teaching Literacy]” [in Russian]. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenij v 90-tomah. T. 8* [The Complete Works in 90 Vol. Vol. 8], ed. by V.G. Chertkov. Moskva [Moscow]: Goslitizdat. P. 137–138.

understand.... Bezukhov, now, is blue, dark-blue and red, and he is square.’

‘You flirt with him too,’ said the countess, laughing.

‘No, he is a Freemason, I have found out. He is fine, dark-blue and red.... How can I explain it to you?’”<sup>76</sup>.

Children’s thinking with feelings<sup>77</sup> cannot be expressed with conventional words from the vocabulary of adults, wrapped in which it would lose its direct connection with the world, and with it its obviousness, its pre-reflexive clarity. This *clear-seeing* child thought is not removed from sensuality: “gray, light gray”, “so narrow, like the dining-room clock”, “square”, “dark-blue and red” – but it does not simply bog down in it, but, staying and unfolding in sensual experience, enriches and completes it in mythological experience. Therefore, for the mythological-child fantasy, “dark-blue and red” or “gray”, “square” or “narrow” are no longer representations of shapes or colours, but the secret of entire human destinies.

Thus, in the handsome but “gray”, “so narrow, like the dining-room clock” boy Boris is already revealed in the child fantasy as a shrewd careerist, which Boris is only to become. Those who do not trust childhood and the “naivety” of the myth can spend hours trying to explain it on the level of general concepts and words: Boris is a grey, empty man, his dreams, goals and thoughts are narrow, life passes mechanically, as if the work of a wound clock, etc. In Goethe’s words: “Feelings do not deceive us, but judgements do”<sup>78</sup>.

As for count Bezukhov, his “dark-blue and red” future is rich in events and colours, he will still find family happiness, his answers to the “accursed questions”, and even peace of mind (albeit temporary, probably) – briefly, he will still be stable, powerful: “square”. But all such verbal explanations supersede the immediate clarity

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<sup>76</sup> Tolstoy, L.N. 1938. “Vojna i mir. Tom 2 [War and Peace. Volume 2]” [in Russian]. Polnoe sobranie sochinenij v 90-tomah. T. 10 [The Complete Works in 90 Vol. Vol. 10], ed. by V.G. Chertkov. Moskva [Moscow]: Goslitizdat. P. 194.

<sup>77</sup> “In the field of feelings children are much richer than we are, they think with feelings,” wrote J. Korczak (*Korchak, Ja.* [Korczak, J.] 2017. “Vospitatel'nye momenty. Kak ljubit' rebenka. Ostav'te menja detjam (Pedagogicheskie zapisi) [Momenty wychowawcze. Jak kochać dziecko]” [in Russian], trans. from the Polish by K.E. Senkevich. Moskva [Moscow]: AST. P. 21).

<sup>78</sup> *Gete, I.V.* [Goethe, J.W.] 1957. “Iz aforizmov i vyskazyvanij Gete [Aus Aphorismen und Äußerungen Goethes]”. [in Russian]. Izbrannye sochinenija po estestvoznaniju [Selected Works on Natural Science]. Leningrad [Leningrad]: Izdat. AN SSSR. P. 397.

and cogency, the vivid intensity of the child thought. Being self-revelation and an extension of reality, these thoughts, like reality itself, cannot be squeezed into any conceptual explanatory scheme: in mythological-child thought and in life, what is most important is that which resists schematisation and cannot be defined.

All myth-making is co-existence: as the *presence and continuation* of nature itself in human life, it can be contrasted with the New European study of nature as a mere *description* and modelling of it, as a strange effort to achieve the “objectivity” of cognition of nature in the course of dissolving it in symbols, mathematical laws, and constants created by man himself. Myth-making does not so much cognise nature as it knows it in a human way: the *living knowledge* of nature is opposed here to various theories and models as abstract *knowledge on* nature.

**Paragraphs 1.4-1.5** analyse the *anthropomorphism of myth-making and its ontological foundations*. Myth-making does not attempt to liken nature to man, to “transfer” human traits to nature – in it they both rather become themselves: in mythological fantasy, nature is enriched and completed, while man lives as a microcosm, finding in himself the inexhaustibility of nature and allowing it to come true as a living cosmos. Myth-making is inherent in anthropomorphism, like any form of the *human* spirit, but here it is intimately connected with *cosmomorphism* and with the “*cosmisation of the soul*” (as Frank said) so characteristic of the imagery of Lermontov, Goncharov and Leo Tolstoy. This is the root of the inseparable connection between the myth-making of nature and the mythological vision of man, to which the first and second chapters of the thesis are devoted, respectively.

In myth-making, man, like nature, is not an object of thought or sensual experience, but a bodily present “You”, not profaned into an object “He (which would mean the loss of man: only the absent are spoken of in the third person). It is necessary to distinguish clearly between the corporeality of “You” and the material-sensual givenness of the organism (to which the human being is reduced by fashionable naturalism): “You” is not part of the object reality, but the co-existence of “My” life, which in this co-existence becomes “Our” life. “Your” feelings and ideas are not transmitted to “Me” and do not affect “Me” as if they were something

external, but appear from the beginning as “Ours” have a co-existence nature. Consequently, it is incorrect to speak of the definition of the human being or of the problem of the human being in the sense of objectifying thinking. “You” can only be encountered and recognised (not cognised objectively) in the miracle (in Losev’s sense) of the encounter: this miracle is not determined entirely by external causes or by the intentions of its participants - the encounter with “You” might not have taken place. Thus, man is a mystery, in which the philosopher is allowed to participate by myth-making, but not a problem subject to rational solution.

One of the main motifs of the mythological vision of nature in the Russian classics is the *living eternity* of the cosmos, different from both the mere flow of time and the immobile abstract eternity of the Eleates. **Paragraph 1.6** is devoted to the study of its nature and ontological significance. It can be most fully understood and empathised in children’s play as an incomplete, ongoing whole that is not formed from single moments. In child play there is no place for the past and the future that are objectively represented and therefore detached from the present and opposed to it: both the first and the second are present in the present, are played out in it, and change their meaning for the play “on the fly”. The child game of the cosmos with itself does not unfold in time, as if in an already existing form, but it is also not imprinted in an immobile eternity: the living eternity itself is realised in the game.

**The second chapter** *analyses the image of man in the myth-making of Lermontov, Goncharov and Leo Tolstoy.* Myth-making is investigated as an *ontological basis of philosophical anthropology.*

**Paragraphs 2.1-2.3** *reveal various aspects of the ontological mystery (in the sense of Marcel) of man as the presence of “You”, analyse the corporeality of this presence and the manifestation of “alien” (“Your”) consciousness in myth.* The living truth cannot be sufficiently reflected in judgements, deduced and experimentally verified. And he who is willing to accept only objectifying knowledge – knowledge of the regularities and facts of subject reality – is doomed to regard human truth as vague, unproven, or simply fictitious. In various forms of

modern naturalism referring to neuropsychology, in the postpositivist “epistemology without a knowing subject”, in the formalisms of analytical philosophy – in short, in the now terribly influential scientism “You” of the living human being is transformed not only into an objective “He” opposing the thinker, but also into an impersonal, non-human “It”.

In such a situation, one can seriously speak about the necessity of “proofs” (or, more precisely, “demonstration”) of human existence: like classical “proofs” of God’s existence, they should not and cannot be proofs in the sense of mathematics, i.e. logical violence, forcing the opponent to agree with the reality of the human “You” regardless of his consent and attitude to this reality. The non-subject reality of “You” – human or divine – cannot be presented to the interlocutor as an obstacle that he would not be able to bypass and overcome even if he wanted to.

By means of discursive thinking, at the level of logically constructed argumentation, knowledge of laws and facts, it is only possible to lead him to a stage of reflection at which an encounter with this reality is possible, if only he wishes to meet it, wishes to accept the presence of “You” in his life – for example, in fear, in affection and love, etc. *It is impossible to prove otherwise* to those who wish to see in all this and in man himself only the totality of processes occurring in the organism, only the result of the blind play of natural and historical forces, part of an object reality subject to scientific anatomy.

It is only possible to show him, or rather, to look more closely into one’s own life, one’s own moral and spiritual experience, in order to realise that everything he insists on is true, but not all of it. Just as it is impossible to logically prove to an interlocutor beyond his consent and will that in the sound of music, in addition to the measurable and empirically fixed vibrations of the air, in addition to the historical and cultural conditions of its creation and reception, an unimaginable miracle of beauty takes place. The legacy of the Russian classics-mythmakers is one of the most vivid and significant “demonstration” of human existence, just as the existence of



love, beauty or other mystery (in the sense in which Marcel spoke of it<sup>79</sup>). It is well known how much attention Lermontov, Goncharov and Leo Tolstoy paid to the flesh, to the life of the body, sometimes even to the flesh of man, i.e. to the most crude, as it seems, object reality of man, but it is all the more important and surprising that it is in this attention that the presence of the human “You” reveals itself and the encounter with man is made, not with his social or moral status, not with his nervous system and organism. By twisting the aphorism of Schelling a little, we can call many of the great passages of Russian writers of myth-making a true “document” of human philosophy.

**Paragraphs 2.4-2.6** examine *the mythological motif of the unity of kin and family (the co-existence of “We”) in connection with the motif of fate and the sculptural nature of the epic* from different angles. In this connection, Spengler’s remark about the plastic, sculptural character of Greek culture is appropriate: “Some soul impulses that cannot be expressed verbally can be felt by others with the help of a glance, two or three bars of a melody, a barely perceptible movement. This is the true language of the soul, which remains incomprehensible to outsiders”<sup>80</sup>. A special art: to see, to experience the presence of the soul in a look, in a subtle movement – in the way, say, as Kitty, looking at her husband after childbirth, “wanted and could not smile” and only “weak movement of fingers responded to his kisses”. This requires something like a musical ear, to which the mystery of sounding beauty is miraculously revealed without any deliberate special effort.

The miracle of the living encounter with “You”, the miracle of the presence and revelation of the beauty of the human soul in his body and flesh, is a miracle of myth-making: it is impossible to explain it analytically, or even to tell about it with general concepts and words to someone to whom it has not yet happened. In the

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<sup>79</sup> *Marsel', G.* [Marcel, G]. 1995. “Ontologicheskoe tainstvo i konkretnoe priblizhenie k nemu [Position du mystere ontologique et ses approches concretes]” [in Russian]. *Tragicheskaja mudrost' filosofii. Izbrannye raboty* [The Tragic Wisdom of Philosophy. Selected Works]. Moskva [Moscow]: Izdatel'stvo gumanitarnoj literatury. P. 83; *Marsel', G.* [Marcel, G]. 2004. *Opyt konkretnoj filosofii* [Essai de philosophie concrète] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Respublika. P. 55, etc.

<sup>80</sup> *Shpengler, O.* [Spengler, O.] 1998. *Zakat Evropy. Ocherki morfologii mirovoj istorii. 1. Geshtal't i dejstvitel'nost'* [Der Untergang des Abendlandes. Umriss einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Mysl'. P. 478.

weak and silent movements of the exhausted, happy, triumphant, happy, loving Kitty, the “sense of love” is expressed and understood without any verbal expression, no less, but rather more fully and accurately than in all the object judgements of philosophers on this subject<sup>81</sup>.

One who wishes to see not the revelation of “You” even in this scene, not the miracle of the unity of human lives coming true, but only the external interaction of the object “She” and “He”, the various components of the object reality – for example, the work of muscles and the functioning of the lacrimal gland – probably cannot be dissuaded by anything. No one can be intellectually forced to recognise the unimaginable reality of a human being, which does not at all speak of the shakiness or worldview position of the one who proposes to recognise it upon meeting. On the contrary, only the primitive and crudest reality of those regularities and facts, which, as Leo Shestov remarked, are supported only by physical violence, unceremoniously invades human life and makes us submit to it<sup>82</sup>.

The reality of “You”, the living truth of man, is a different matter: it can only be revealed to the one who accepts it and participates in it as in a mystery that exceeds his reasoning understanding. This is why the peculiar price of human truth, as well as of any living knowledge that comes true in this mystery, is the inevitable doubt organically connected with it, intellectual restlessness and incompleteness of understanding, which will not allow the thinker to stop and rest one day on any finished idea of man, to establish himself in the inanimate “truth” at the level of model and judgement.

*The living basis of myth-making*, the co-existence of the “We” and all its other mysteries is *the mystery of love*, which is discussed in **Paragraph 2.7**. To participate in the mystery of innocent suffering and evil, in the mystery of the “revelation of You”, in the mystery of the meaning of life and death (all these are not problems, but mysteries that are understandable only to the one who opens himself to them and

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<sup>81</sup> Tolstoy, L.N. 1935. “Anna Karenina [Anna Karenina]” [in Russian]. Polnoe sobranie sochinenij v 90-tomah. T. 19 [The Complete Works in 90 Vol. Vol. 19], ed. by V.G. Chertkov. Moskva [Moscow]: Goslitizdat. P. 293–294.

<sup>82</sup> Shestov, L. 1993. “Afiny i Ierusalim [Athens and Jerusalem]” [in Russian]. Sochinenija v dvuh tomah. Tom 1 [Works in Two Volumes. Vol. 1]. Moskva [Moscow]: Nauka. P. 362.

does not judge them), to endure and experience them is possible only by being ontologically close, equal to them. And for this it is necessary to find the same deep mystery in oneself: a person grows up to such a mystery and discovers it in oneself only in love for “You”.

**Paragraphs 2.8-2.9** are *ontological analyses of human freedom in myth-making and the self-decomposition of the New European idea of freedom as autonomy*. Another essential mystery and another miracle, by which, thanks to love, the human being is revealed in myth-making, is freedom. Human freedom is neither a problem nor an object of study: “He” or “She” as a part of the subject world, obedient to its regularities and internal dependencies, is not free. Freedom can be recognised (not objectified) only in the presence of “You”. Freedom happens to man as a mystery, it is neither a thing nor a property, it does not belong to man and does not characterise him. Freedom cannot be understood either as the autonomy of the will or as freedom of choice. Human freedom in myth-making is revealed as *non-autonomy*: it comes true with people – although it could not have come true – not thanks to their efforts and will alone and is firmly linked to the experience of fate.

Freedom is discovered *only in living knowledge*; it does not stand before the thinking gaze of the researcher in Cartesian clarity and distinctness, but grows in complexity with man, sometimes revealing itself less, sometimes – more fully, retaining in itself the seeds of incompleteness and doubt. Because of this, man can never be quite sure of his freedom or know exactly in what and to what extent he is free.

Since, unlike living knowledge and the mysteries of myth-making, the object world, objectified by sensuality and reason, forcibly intrudes into human life, it is always easier to identify it with the totality of reality, dissolving in it all the mysteries revealed in the co-existence of myth-making, eliminating freedom above all. It is impossible to make a person inclined to do this logically, at the level of judgements, “to force him to be free”; it is only possible to invite him to participate in the mystery of mythmaking, and to find out in his mythological, rather than object, experience that the question of the essence of freedom is not an accident that disturbs the normal

functioning of the world of facts and things, unnecessary and incomprehensible to him.

In the myth-making of the Russian classics, we constantly encounter the mystery of freedom, to which man attaches himself in love and which gives fulfilment not to human autonomy, but to his destiny, remaining not once and for all proven, but a living truth. Consider this on the example of Lermontov's testimony to the fate of the prophet – probably the central character of his mythopoetic heritage. Central – because not only Lermontov, but surely all of his most important characters (including Pechorin) are poets: as Oblomov would add, “poets in life because life itself is poetry”. First of all, the prophet cannot be considered free in the sense in which “our time” usually speaks of freedom: his omniscience and his will are from the eternal judge, not from him “himself”. Even Plato learnt and conveyed the tragedy of the prophet's fate: he himself was a philosopher-mythmaker and a poet, who tried in terrible efforts to separate one from the other, expelling poets from the ideal polis, that is, first of all, from himself. Much later the Russian classical mythmakers<sup>83</sup> also went through this.

The prophet returns to people not by virtue of “free choice”, but also not by the dictates of duty as an abstract a priori imperative: the prophet simply cannot do otherwise: otherwise he is no longer a prophet. It is remarkable, however, that in this “cannot” lies precisely his freedom, not only his fate. The poet cannot do otherwise because of love, but in no way because of external compulsion from the object reality or special self-coercion (which, after all, has to be recognised as either arbitrary or dictated by the same “external” object world). Both the poet's encounter with human beings and his encounter and co-labouring with God himself are accomplished by and through love in the co-existence of “We”. The prophet did not make himself a prophet “himself”: his omniscience is given by God, but both the living God (not the “God of philosophers”) and the living *man are not parts of the external, object*

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<sup>83</sup> For more details about myth-making of Plato and his closeness to Gogol and Tolstoy, about their rebellion against their art see *Kulikova, A.K.* 2020. *Mifologicheskie motivy v tvorchestve N.V. Gogolja. Filosofskij analiz* [Mythological Motifs in the Works of N.V. Gogol. Philosophical Analysis]. Sankt-Peterburg [Saint-Petersburg]: Aletejja. 2020. Especially – P. 240–242, 274–275.

world, but the presence of “You” participating in all “My” (or more precisely, “Our” by virtue of “Your” co-participation) feelings, actions, thoughts, creations.

The will of the poet (prophet, mythmaker) is not heteronomous, but also not autonomous in the sense of “our time”, but *co-existent*. Neither the precept of the Eternal, nor the pages of evil and vice are perceived by the poet as something external, forthcoming to him or imagined by him – he himself lives all this as his own, not alien. This is also noticeable in “Duma”, in which the poet writes about “our generation” in the first person: “We are rich, barely out of the cradle...” etc. Society, the crowd does not oppose the prophet here, which was still noticeable in the poems on death of Pushkin – the true poet shares the empty and dark future of people as his own<sup>84</sup>.

Only the miracle of the “We”, which is realised in myth and myth-making in love, allows us to participate in the mystery of freedom. “His” act, “His” thought, “His” will (whether of God, prophet or man) are not free: the third person unambiguously indicates that they are perceived and described simply as elements of the world of objects. However, “Your” supreme and eternal covenant, “Your” self-loving smile or “Yours” are already events of “My”, and therefore “Our”, life that take place over and above the object reality, and these events do not take place necessarily, but their participants, unlike the observer from the outside, would hardly consider them mere accidents. We can say that *participation* in such events is the very *destiny* of both people and prophet, the very essence of their life<sup>85</sup>, “chosen” by

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<sup>84</sup> See *Serman, I.Z.* 2003. Mihail Lermontov: Zhizn' v literature: 1836–1841. 2-e izd. [Mikhail Lermontov: Life in Literature: 1836–1841. 2nd ed.] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: RGGU. P. 145; *Powelstock D.* Becoming Mikhail Lermontov: The Ironies of Romantic Individualism in Nicholas I's Russia. Northwestern University Press. 2011. P. 255, 260. Compare with conclusions of Lotman: “The desire to penetrate through the veil of ‘genteel proprieties and passions’, necessary for a prophet – denouncer of modernity, dictates knowledge of evil and involvement in it. It also explains the so-called secular behaviour of Lermontov in the second half of the 1830s, his desire to become a secular man” (*Lotman, Ju.M.* 1988. V shkole poeticheskogo slova: Pushkin. Lermontov. Gogol' [In the School of the Poetic Word: Pushkin. Lermontov. Gogol] [in Russian]. Moskva [Moscow]: Prosveshenie. P. 213).

<sup>85</sup> “Fate gave me a second chance to overhear the conversation that was to decide his fate”. The etymologically related words chance and fate remove the opposition between the accidental (discrete and unpredictable) and the deterministic (inevitable and linearly determined) in terms of the hero's volitional initiatives” (*Isupov, K.G.* 2015. Metafizika igry u Lermontova [Metaphysics of the Game in Lermontov] [in Russian]. Solov'evske issledovanija. Vypusk 1 (45) [Solov'evskie Researches. Issue 1 (45)]. P. 166; *Vishevsky A.* Playing with a Used Deck: Echoes of Pushkin's ‘The Queen of Spades’ in Lermontov's ‘The Fatalist’ // Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne Des Slavistes. Vol. 43, no. 2/3. 2001. P. 198; *Stelleman J.* Traditional and Innovative Compositional Methods in Lermontov's Dramatic Works. Russian Literature. Vol. 64, no. 1. 2008. P. 115, 124.

them because it has chosen them.

Such events might not have happened, but they did happen, and this has a decisive significance in the lives of their participants. Without assuming them to be inevitable, it is also impossible to consider as mere coincidences the revelation of the supreme judge to the prophet or the poet's meeting and encounter with people, Natasha's meeting and love with Prince Andrei, his wound and death, as well as the meeting and subsequent break-up of Ilyinskaya and Oblomov, his childhood in the sleepy kingdom of Oblomovka and his falling asleep in nature, dissolving in it on the Vyborg side. Marcel spoke about the mystery, or better – the mystery of meeting his beloved: “Will we avoid difficulties by declaring that, ultimately, this meeting was just a happy accident, a coincidence? In the depths of my soul, a protest immediately rises against this empty phrase, this useless denial of something that I feel with all my being”<sup>86</sup>.

These are not randomness but chance [не случайности, а *случа́й*], as they would have said in time of Lermontov, that is, the action and presence of fate, the living reality of “We”, which, in Aristotelian terms, precedes possibility: every thought, feeling, and deed that Bezukhov, Bolkonsky, Oblomov, or Lermontov's prophet can and cannot perform is foreseen and encompassed in the co-events that made these people who they are. *Made* – means here: not externally influenced, but *allowed to come true* as those heroes of Russian myth, as they are known and as they were to become. This is why the myth-makers themselves (as, for example, in the case of Pierre's union with Natasha<sup>87</sup>) often do not know and cannot know in advance exactly how the fates of their heroes will come true<sup>88</sup>.

Within the framework of the object world and the objectifying thought that

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<sup>86</sup> *Marsel', G.* [Marcel, G]. 1995. “Ontologicheskoe tainstvo i konkretnoe priblizhenie k nemu [Position du mystere ontologique et ses approches concretes]” [in Russian]. *Tragicheskaja mudrost' filosofii. Izbrannye raboty* [The Tragic Wisdom of Philosophy. Selected Works]. Moskva [Moscow]: Izdatel'stvo gumanitarnoj literatury. P. 83.

<sup>87</sup> *Shklovskij, V.B.* 1968. “‘Vojna i mir’ L'va Tolstogo [‘War and Peace’ by Leo Tolstoy]” [in Russian]. *Tolstoj, L.N.* *Vojna i mir. Toma pervyj i vtoroj* [War and Peace. Volumes one and two]. Moskva [Moscow]: Hudozhestvennaja literatura. P. 11.

<sup>88</sup> As Heidegger emphasized: “The event, in its manifestation realising the human being, gives mortals to be themselves in that it entrusts them to that which from everywhere speaks to man in a story, referring to the hidden <...> The event gives man, demanding it for himself, to come true in his own being” (*Heidegger, M.* [Heidegger, M.] 1993. “Put' k jazyku [Unterwegs zur Sprache]” [in Russian]. *Vremja i bytie* [Time and Being]. Moskva [Moscow]: Respublika. P. 269).

comprehends it, there are only contrasting necessity and randomness (although there is a possible measure for them: probability), but *freedom does not fit into this dichotomy; it comes true as non-randomness* – it comes true with “You” and therefore also with “Us”. Even the simple pre-reflexive experience of freedom, which has always been referred to as a “fact” in arguments with the proponents of determinism, is the consciousness that the event that *happens to a person is not accidental, but at the same time it is not determined either by the regularities of subject reality or by that person’s selfishness*. Myth-making itself can be described as a living integrity or a series of such non-randomness. It is impossible to penetrate further into the mystery of human freedom without destroying it: having overcome the attempts of subject description and explanation of freedom, we now come to such a boundary at which it can only be divided and experienced precisely as a mystery. Human freedom, especially that which is known to the poet, comes true, due to love, as a fate – as participation in the miracle of “We” and the presence of this miracle in myth-making. In this miracle, freedom is unconcealed (in a double sense) clear in its incomprehensibility, available for participation as a mystery that can be verbally described only apophatically: *not randomness, not arbitrariness, not autonomy, not necessity*.

Short **Paragraphs 2.9-2.12** summarise the research of the mythological understanding of human in Lermontov, Goncharov and Tolstoy. They are devoted, first of all, to the *inscrutability of humanity in myth-making and the search for a way out of the New European crisis of humanism on the basis of myth*. In the myth-making of the Russian classics we can find a way to overcome the “crisis of human self-knowledge”: the fragmentation and loss of a single living image of man in numerous disparate objectifications of him. As an encounter with the living “You”, myth-making expresses non-objectified humanity, which can become the common root of various representations of man, from representations of “Him” becoming the faces of reference to “You”.

## Approbation of the Research Results

### Conference Presentations:

1. “Utopii N.V. Gogolya i L.N. Tolstogo kak mifotvorchestvo [Utopias of Nikolay Gogol and Leo Tolstoy as Myth-making]” [in Russian]. Conference *Obshhestvenny`j ideal kak problema russkoj filosofskoj i politicheskoy my`sli* (April 21, 2021, RAS Institute of Philosophy, Moscow).
2. “Filosofskoe osmy`slenie naslediya M.Yu. Lermontova v russkoj religioznoj my`sli Serebryanogo veka [Philosophical Understanding of Mikhail Lermontov's Heritage in Russian Religious Thought of the Silver Age]” [in Russian]. Conference *Proryv k transcendentnomu: konferenciya pamyati P.P. Gajdenko* (March 29–30, 2022, RAS Institute of Philosophy, Moscow).
3. “Geroizm i sud`ba u M.Yu. Lermontova i L.N. Tolstogo [Heroism and Fate in Mikhail Lermontov and Leo Tolstoy]” [in Russian]. Philosophy Seminar *Filosofiya v literature. Literatura v filosofii. Put`, prolozhennyj L`vom Tolsty`m* (March 16, 2022, Leo Tolstoy State Museum, Moscow).

### Publications on the topic of the dissertation:

Works published by the author in journals indexed in international indexing and citation databases, as well as included in the list of high-level journals of the National Research University Higher School of Economics:

1. Kulikov, A.K. 2023. “Ivan Goncharov i Lev Tolstoj: chelovechnost` v russkoj klassike kak filosofskaya problema [Ivan Goncharov and Leo Tolstoy: Humanity in Russian Classics as a Philosophical Problem]” [in Russian]. *Voprosy filosofii [Problems of Philosophy]* 7, 119–130.
2. Kulikov, A.K. 2023. “Lev Tolstoy i vozmozhnost` mifologicheskogo myshleniya [Leo Tolstoy and the Possibility of Mythological Thought]” [in Russian]. *Filosofiya. Zhurnal Vysshey shkoly ekonomiki [Philosophy. Journal of the Higher School of Economics]* 7 (2), 174–202.



3. Kulikov, A.K. 2022. “Russkaya klassika, ili mif v bor’be s... mifom? [Russian Classics, or a Myth in the Struggle Against... a Myth?]: razmyshleniye nad knigoy V.K. Kantora [Reflections on the Book by Vladimir Kantor]” [in Russian]. *Filosofiya. Zhurnal Vysshey shkoly ekonomiki* [*Philosophy. Journal of the Higher School of Economics*] 6 (3), 358–376.
4. Kulikov, A.K. 2022. “Problema sud’by` i geroizma u Lermontova i L`va Tolstogo. Filosofskij analiz [The Problem of Fate and Heroism in Lermontov and Leo Tolstoy. Philosophical Analysis]” [in Russian]. *Voprosy filosofii* [*Problems of Philosophy*] 1, 122–133.