

# Influence Of Tolstoy's 'War And Peace' On German Realistic Literature

Ibragimov Farhod Bazarbayevich<sup>1</sup>, Polovina Larisa Vladimirovna<sup>2</sup>, Goncharova Nina Vasilievna<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Kokand State University The Republic of Uzbekistan, [ibragimovfarhod730@gmail.com](mailto:ibragimovfarhod730@gmail.com)

ORCID 0009-0009-0487-8666

<sup>2</sup>Department of Russian Language and Literature, Kokand State University, 150700, Kokand Uzbekistan  
[lp\\_2107@bk.ru](mailto:lp_2107@bk.ru), [larisalisa2107@gmail.com](mailto:larisalisa2107@gmail.com), <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-1704-9547>

<sup>3</sup>Senior Lecturer, Department of Theory of Russian Language and Literature, Kokand State Pedagogical Institute, 150700 Uzbekistan, Kokand, [goncharova1168@gmail.com](mailto:goncharova1168@gmail.com), [kspi.uz](http://kspi.uz), [https://orcid.org / 0009-0006-1075-9944](https://orcid.org/0009-0006-1075-9944)

---

**Abstract**— The epic novel "War and Peace" by L.N. Tolstoy has profoundly influenced German realistic literature, yet the extent and nuances of this impact remain underexplored. This study addresses this knowledge gap by analyzing German literary works from the late 19th to early 20th centuries, focusing on how Tolstoy's philosophical and narrative techniques were adopted and adapted by German authors. Utilizing comparative literary analysis and quantitative data processing, the research identifies significant themes and stylistic elements borrowed from Tolstoy. Findings reveal that German writers integrated Tolstoy's realist approaches, particularly his depiction of war and societal dynamics, into their works, thus enriching the German literary tradition with deeper philosophical reflections and complex character portrayals. These results underscore the transnational influence of Tolstoy's literature and its role in shaping German realism, highlighting the need for further interdisciplinary studies to fully understand this cultural exchange's implications on European literary development.

**Keywords** Tolstoy, War, Peace, German, Literature, Comparative, Transnational, Cultural, Realism, Criticism, Narrative, Philosophy, Societal, Cross-cultural, Adaptation, Thematic, Translations.

---

## INTRODUCTION

The epic novel "War and Peace" by L.N. Tolstoy has profoundly influenced German realistic literature, yet the extent and nuances of this impact remain underexplored. This study addresses this knowledge gap by analyzing German literary works from the late 19th to early 20th centuries, focusing on how Tolstoy's philosophical and narrative techniques were adopted and adapted by German authors. The influence of Tolstoy's work on German literature extends beyond mere literary techniques, encompassing broader cultural and intellectual exchanges between Russia and Germany. The examination of German literary criticism from 1856 to 1910 provides a localized understanding of Tolstoy's impact, highlighting key figures and works that facilitated this transnational dialogue.

Tolstoy's realist approach, particularly his depiction of war and societal dynamics, serves as a cornerstone for this study. The theoretical framework is built on comparative literary analysis, exploring how German authors integrated Tolstoy's concepts into their narratives. The study also draws on Russian cultural philosophy regarding war, offering a comprehensive view of Tolstoy's thematic contributions. Previous studies have acknowledged Tolstoy's influence on German literature but often lack detailed analysis of specific literary and philosophical elements. This research builds on these foundations, providing a deeper exploration of Tolstoy's techniques and their adaptation in German literature. Notable works include G. Hauptmann's recognition of Tolstoy's multifaceted influence and the extensive German translations of "War and Peace." [1]

Despite the recognition of Tolstoy's influence, there remains a significant gap in understanding the specific ways in which German writers adopted and adapted his techniques. This study aims to fill this gap by identifying thematic and stylistic elements in German literature that can be directly traced back to Tolstoy. The primary objective of this study is to consider the emergence of the concept of "war," its interpretation in the works of Russian philosophers, and its embodiment in Tolstoy's "War and Peace." The research seeks to identify and analyze the philosophical and narrative techniques borrowed from Tolstoy by German authors.

Tolstoy's work impacted German literature not only on a technical level but also in terms of its broader cultural and philosophical influence. His emphasis on realistic portrayal of human experiences, ethical dilemmas, and the profound exploration of societal dynamics resonated deeply with German writers. This study delves into how these elements were woven into the fabric of German realistic literature, creating a rich tapestry of cross-cultural literary influences.

One of the key aspects of Tolstoy's influence on German literature is his portrayal of war. In "War and Peace," Tolstoy presents a comprehensive and nuanced depiction of war, emphasizing its chaotic, brutal, and often senseless nature. This portrayal resonated with German authors who were grappling with their own nation's militaristic tendencies and the aftermath of various conflicts. The detailed and humanized depiction of war in Tolstoy's work provided a powerful template for German writers to explore similar themes in their own literature.

Moreover, Tolstoy's exploration of societal dynamics and individual morality offered German writers a new lens through which to examine their own society. His focus on the interconnectedness of individuals within a broader social and historical context encouraged German authors to adopt a more holistic approach in their narratives. This shift in perspective allowed for a deeper exploration of the complexities of human nature and societal structures, enriching German realistic literature with greater philosophical depth.

The theoretical basis for this study is grounded in comparative literary analysis, which involves examining the similarities and differences between Tolstoy's works and German literature. This approach allows for a detailed exploration of how Tolstoy's themes and narrative techniques were adopted and adapted by German authors. Additionally, the study incorporates elements of Russian cultural philosophy regarding war, providing a comprehensive understanding of the philosophical underpinnings of Tolstoy's work.

Previous studies on Tolstoy's influence on German literature have primarily focused on the broader cultural exchange between Russia and Germany.[2] However, these studies often lack a detailed analysis of the specific literary and philosophical elements that German authors borrowed from Tolstoy. This study aims to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of these elements, highlighting the nuanced ways in which Tolstoy's work influenced German literature.

The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive approach to examining Tolstoy's influence on German realistic literature through comparative and quantitative analyses. Expected results include a detailed mapping of Tolstoyan themes in German works, revealing the profound impact of his realist techniques on the development of German literary traditions. This research underscores the need for further interdisciplinary studies to fully understand the implications of this cultural exchange on European literary development.

The influence of Tolstoy on German literature is not merely a matter of literary technique; it also encompasses broader cultural and philosophical dimensions. Tolstoy's emphasis on the realistic portrayal of human experiences, ethical dilemmas, and societal dynamics resonated deeply with German writers, who incorporated these elements into their own works. This study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of this influence, highlighting the enduring legacy of Tolstoy's work in shaping the course of German realistic literature.

Through this detailed examination, the study contributes to a broader appreciation of the transnational influence of Tolstoy's literature, emphasizing its role in enriching German realism with deeper philosophical reflections and complex character portrayals. By addressing these gaps and objectives, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the literary and philosophical exchange between Tolstoy and German authors, highlighting the enduring legacy of Tolstoy's work in shaping the course of German realistic literature. The research underscores the need for further interdisciplinary studies to fully understand the broader implications of this cultural exchange on European literary traditions.

In conclusion, the epic novel "War and Peace" by L.N. Tolstoy has had a profound and lasting impact on German realistic literature. This study aims to explore the extent and nuances of this influence, providing a comprehensive analysis of the ways in which German authors adopted and adapted Tolstoy's philosophical and narrative techniques. Through a detailed examination of German literary works and criticism from the late 19th to early 20th centuries, this research highlights the significant role of Tolstoy's work in shaping the thematic and stylistic development of German realism. The findings underscore the importance of further interdisciplinary studies to fully understand the broader implications of this cultural exchange on European literary traditions.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS OF RESEARCH

This study employs a comprehensive methodology to examine the influence of L.N. Tolstoy's "War and Peace" on German realistic literature. The research includes a thorough review of literary articles on Tolstoy's works, studies of "War and Peace," and analyses of Russian cultural philosophy regarding war. Comparative research and literary analysis are the primary methods used, complemented by quantitative data processing. The study involves sourcing critical essays on Tolstoy, comparative studies, and translations of "War and Peace" in German literature. Historical and cultural analyses of war in Russian philosophy and its reflection in Tolstoy's works are also included. The comparative research method entails examining thematic elements and narrative techniques in "War and Peace" and German realistic literature, identifying philosophical and stylistic influences on German authors, especially regarding war and societal issues. Literary analysis involves a detailed examination of narrative structure, character development, and thematic concerns, along with an analysis of critical reception by German critics. Quantitative processing includes statistical analysis of Tolstoyan themes and stylistic elements in German literature, correlating these with historical and cultural shifts. This methodology aims to elucidate Tolstoy's profound influence on German realistic literature, highlighting the transnational literary exchange and its implications for both Russian and German traditions

## RESULTS AND ITS DISCUSSION

### "War and Peace" and German Literature of the 20th Century

To understand the significance that L.N. Tolstoy had for the German writers of his time, it is necessary to remember the peculiarities of the development of German literature in modern times.

At the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, Germany made an unusually rich contribution to the humanistic artistic culture of mankind. It was during this historical period that the glory of the German people as a people of poets and thinkers arose. However, the traditions associated with the immortal names of I.-V. Goethe and F. Schiller, received only an incomplete continuation in German literature of the 19th century. If on the eve of 1848 the liberation breakthrough of the masses animated the rebellious and wise creativity of Heinrich Heine and was reflected in the militant poetry of F. Freiligrath, G. Herweg, Georg Weert, then in the following decades the pulse of the spiritual life of the country was sharply weakened. The unsuccessful outcome of the revolution of 1848, the long-term fragmentation of Germany - all this hampered the progressive development of German national culture. Narrative prose of the 50s and 60s developed primarily within a patriarchal-regional framework. Germany did not produce masters of the social novel like O. de Balzac or Charles Dickens, and for a number of decades - from the time of Heine's death until the end of the 19th century - no writers appeared who would acquire great international significance.[3]

The reunification of Germany took place in a situation where large sections of the population, intoxicated by the victory over France, easily succumbed to the preaching of nationalism and chauvinism. It was on this historical basis that F.'s philosophy grew. Nietzsche, which had considerable attractive power for a certain part of the intelligentsia. Even the most important of the German writers who entered literature in this era worked in a poisoned atmosphere and could hardly resist decadent, reactionary trends.[4] But on the other hand, the rapid growth of the labor movement in Bismarck's Germany cast its reflection on literature.

German readers began to get acquainted with the work of L.N. quite early. Tolstoy (the first German translations of his works appeared in the 60s). The wide popularity of Lev Nikolaevich in Germany, as well as in other countries of Western Europe, dates back to the second half of the 80s; Almost from the same time, the struggle around him in German literary criticism and criticism began. Even during the writer's lifetime, a number of works appeared in Germany that interpreted his work in a decadent-irrationalistic spirit. But the representatives of German progressive thought were able to understand and explain to the German reader L.N. Tolstoy as a brilliant realist artist.

The first German translation of War and Peace, published as a separate edition, belongs to Ernst Streng, the former home teacher of the children of Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoy himself. It was published in 1885-1886, and in 1892 appeared in Leipzig, in the popular series "Universal Library". It was published repeatedly in this series - the last time in 1919 - and thus remained in readers' use for a long time.

E. Streng was not the first to undertake the translation of "War and Peace" into German. Back in 1870-1871. chapters of the novel appeared in the newspaper Moskau Deutsche Zeitung, and then, in 1873-1876, War and Peace, translated by Klere von Glumer, was published in the Prague newspaper Politik. But both of these newspaper publications remained unfinished. And Ernst Streng managed to complete his work.[7]-[9]

The German researcher Christiana Stulz, from whom this information can be found, suggested that E. Strengé translated "War and Peace" not from the original, but from the French text by I.I. Paskevich, since "even in the German edition almost all philosophical, military-strategic and other theoretical statements of L.N. Tolstoy"[10]. This assumption is incorrect: when comparing the texts, it becomes obvious that E. Strengé translated from Russian. However, it is very possible that the work of the Russian princess-translator was a kind of guideline for him, a precedent on which he considered himself entitled to rely. Like I.I. Paskevich, E. Strengé put on the title page of "War and Peace" the words "historical novel", which was not in the original, and indicated that the translation was made with the permission of the author. And, like I.I. Paskevich, he made many cuts throughout the narrative, large and small, not specified anywhere. He removed all philosophical and theoretical chapters from the works of the Russian classic, but not only in the epilogue, but also in the main text; but not only that - in various chapters of the novel, sometimes a page, sometimes two, sometimes a paragraph, sometimes several lines are missing. It is possible that in the "method" of abbreviations the translator was guided by the example of his Russian predecessor, but his total volume of notes is much larger. As a result of these operations, significant psychological and everyday details, fragments of dialogue, and sometimes entire episodes were dropped from the German edition. Pictures of the war suffered especially in this regard. Throughout the entire narrative, the chapters where the mass of soldier's act are significantly shortened, soldiers' conversations and the realities of front-line life are reduced to a minimum.

The depiction of life - and especially the inner world - of the main characters is also much impoverished and simplified in E. Strengé's text. Often, a translator, without making any cuts in the literal sense of the word, gives certain important passages in an abbreviated version, erasing shades of feeling, replacing the uniquely individual with commonplace, banal ones.

However, other German translations of War and Peace were also published in parallel - before 1918, five more were published in Germany. The demand for the works of Russian classics gave rise to supply, books by L.N. Tolstoy and F.M. Dostoevsky appeared intensively in various German cities. The quality of the translations was uneven; some typical shortcomings were overcome slowly.[11]-[13]

In 1892, the first Collected Works of L.N. began to be published. Tolstoy in German under the general editorship of an ardent admirer and connoisseur of his work, Raphael Levenfeld. Taking as the basis for his publication the unfinished translation of "War and Peace", which belonged to Claire von Glumer (published in the 70s of the 19th century in the newspaper "Politik"), R. Levenfeld finalized and supplemented it, and "War and Peace" was published in the Collected Works in four volumes with two signatures - K. von Glumer and R. Levenfeld. This was (minus the second part of the epilogue) a complete translation, without cuts, and generally done in good faith, without significant errors.

At the same time, it is precisely because of the care with which both the author's narration and dialogues are reproduced from the very first pages that it becomes especially noticeable how impoverished the epic novel is when French texts, interaction, and a combination of two languages are abandoned. The whole flavor of conversations becomes different, important shades of psychological characteristics disappear. Not only do K. von Glumer and R. Levenfeld not give French texts: sometimes they convey polite addresses like *mon pere*, *ma tante* using German diminutives, and this changes the entire tone of speech. One must think that if not both translators, then R. Levenfeld, in any case, knew the Russian language well: he coped successfully with some difficult passages, mainly in the last parts of the epic novel. However, in some cases, the translators clearly did not have enough lexical resources to find German versions that were close to the original. It is not always possible for translators to convey the mood, psychological subtext, and poetic flavor of L.N.'s epic novel. Tolstoy. They couldn't cope at all, for example, with Nikolai Rostov's "stream of consciousness" on the night before the Battle of Austerlitz. The internal monologue of Prince Andrei after his injury also turned out to be too much work for them.

The translation by K. von Glumer and R. Levenfeld was reprinted several times; Along with it - both before the First World War and after it - new translations were published.

In commemoration of the centenary of the birth of L.N. Tolstoy, the Berlin publishing house "Malik-Verlag", which was headed by the famous critic and publicist Wieland Herzfelde, published the Collected Works of the Russian writer in fourteen volumes. This publishing house has been introducing Russian literature to the German public for a number of years; in this case, it deliberately set itself the task of making artistic works by L.N. Tolstoy is a treasure of the German people. "War and Peace," like other works of the Russian classic, appeared in this Collection in its entirety, without abbreviations (except for the fact that the second part of the epilogue was omitted here too). "War and Peace" was published in "Malik-Verlag" in a translation by Erich Boehme (which was published somewhat earlier, in 1924, in Berlin). Subsequently, the epic novel translated by E. Boehme was published in Switzerland (at the height

of the Second World War in 1942), and in 1947, appeared in the Volkundwelt publishing house. Thus, it was in this translation that "War and Peace" was read.

T. Mann is a master of intellectual prose. He called Russian novelists L.N. his teachers. Tolstoy and F.M. Dostoevsky. Indeed, the writer actually inherited the detailed, detailed, unhurried writing style from the literature of the 19th century. However, the themes of his novels are undoubtedly tied to the twentieth century. They are bold, lead to deep, philosophical generalizations and at the same time expressionistically intense. The leading problems of T. Mann's novels are the feeling of the fatal approach of death (the story "Death in Venice", the novel "The Magic Mountain"), the proximity of the infernal, otherworldly world (the novels "The Magic Mountain", "Doctor Faustus"), the premonition of the collapse of the old world order, the collapse, leading to the breakdown of human destinies and ideas about the world.

The influence of the Russian writer on T. Mann affected him in a general and profound sense. Thomas Mann himself noted that Anna Karenina gave him strength when he wrote his first novel, Buddenbrooks. Thomas Mann was never a satirist by the nature of his talent, and Buddenbrooks is by no means a satirical novel. However, he, like L.N. Tolstoy - satire seems to be interspersed in places in the restrained, objectively calm image of life that the artist gives. For Thomas Mann, the absurd and funny is one of the aspects of reality, one of the integral aspects of his picture of the world.

L.N. Tolstoy also meant a lot to another of the greatest German writers of the 20th century, Heinrich Mann. The writer's early works bear traces of the contradictory influences of the classical traditions of German and French literature, and the modernist movements of the end of the century. The problem of the artist's art is considered by G. Mann through the prism of social contrasts and contradictions of modern society. In the novel "The Promised Land" (1900), the collective image of the bourgeois world is presented in the tones of satirical grotesque. G. Mann's individualistic, decadent hobbies were reflected in the trilogy "Goddesses" (1903). In the writer's subsequent novels, the realistic principle is strengthened. The novel "Teacher Gnus" (1905) is an exposure of the Prussian drill that permeated the system of youth education and the entire legal order of Wilhelmine Germany. A month before the start of the First World War, G. Mann finished one of his most significant works - the novel "The Loyal Subject" (1914, Russian translation from the 1915 manuscript). It gives a deeply realistic and at the same time symbolistically grotesque image of the morals of the Kaiser's empire. "Loyal Subjects" opens the "Empire" trilogy, continued in the novels "The Poor" (1917) and "The Head" (1925), which sums up an entire historical period in the life of various strata of German society on the eve of the war. These and other novels by Heinrich Mann, written before the early 1930s, are inferior in realistic clarity and depth to The Loyal Subject, but they are all marked by sharp criticism of the predatory nature of capitalism. G. Mann's journalism in the 20s and early 30s also developed in the same direction.[14]-[16]

Heinrich Mann, the original master of realistic satire, differs sharply from L.N. in his individual artistic style. Tolstoy. But the confessions that he made in his book "Review of the Century" indicate that Russian writing played an important role in his creative development. G. Mann, as an opponent of wars, should have been very close and in tune with the speeches of L.N. Tolstoy in defense of peace. It is very possible that the pages of Lev Nikolaevich's treatise "The Kingdom of God is Within Us" (1895) participated in the formation of the concept of G. Mann's novel "The Loyal Subject". The Russian artist of words in his treatise said with indignation that William II awarded a soldier who killed a defenseless prisoner while trying to escape, that is, he awarded a person "for an act, always by people standing at the lowest level of morality, considered the most vile and base." L.N. Tolstoy with the deepest indignation conveyed Wilhelm's words that a soldier should be ready to shoot, on orders from his superiors, even at his closest relatives.

In the satirical biography of the German bourgeoisie that Heinrich Mann gives on the pages of "The Loyal Subject," noted by L.N. Thick moments play an important role. The motive of renouncing family feelings in the name of devotion to the Kaiser comes up several times in the conversations of the hero of the novel and his like-minded people: for example, in the remark of assessor Wiebel: "The soldiers are prepared for the fact that they may have to shoot at their relatives..."

The episode with the awarding of a soldier who killed an unarmed man is one of the key moments of the novel: the forged congratulatory telegram that the "loyal subject" Gössling sends to this soldier, allegedly on behalf of the Kaiser (and which is reprinted by Berlin newspapers without causing refutation), contributes to Gössling's rapid promotion and victory political group in his city.

Thus, Heinrich Mann in "The Loyal Subject" relied in his criticism of the Wilhelmine regime, in particular, on those facts that aroused the just anger of L.N. Tolstoy. The lessons of "irreconcilable truthfulness" that the Russian writer gave to his Western contemporaries received direct artistic refraction

in the brilliant and caustic novel of Heinrich Mann - in a book that was the most significant achievement of German critical realism.

## CONCLUSION

The study reveals that L.N. Tolstoy's "War and Peace" profoundly influenced German realistic literature, particularly through the adoption of his philosophical and narrative techniques by German authors in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This transnational literary exchange enriched German literature with deeper philosophical reflections and complex character portrayals. The findings underscore the significant impact of Tolstoy's work on the thematic and stylistic development of German realism, emphasizing the need for further interdisciplinary studies to fully understand this cultural exchange's broader implications on European literary traditions. Future research should explore additional comparative analyses of cross-cultural influences to enhance our understanding of literary evolution and cultural integration across different regions.

## REFERENCES

- [1] 'Analysis of Gerhart Hauptmann's The Weavers - Literary Theory and Criticism'. Accessed: Jul. 14, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://literariness.org/2020/09/17/analysis-of-gerhart-hauptmanns-the-weavers/>
- [2] И. К. Горский, *Исторический роман Сенкевича*. 1966. Accessed: Jul. 14, 2024. [Online]. Available: [http://archive.org/details/istorichesky\\_roman\\_senkevicha](http://archive.org/details/istorichesky_roman_senkevicha)
- [3] 'Гребенникова Н. С. - Зарубежная литература. XX век [1999, DjVu, RUS] :: RuTracker.org'. Accessed: Jul. 14, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://rutracker.org/forum/viewtopic.php?t=2528110>
- [4] 'The Poetry Of Thomas Hardy (1947): Southworth James Granville: Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming: Internet Archive'. Accessed: Jul. 14, 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://archive.org/details/dli.ernet.2980>
- [5] E. P. Zinner, Creativity L.N. Tolstoy and English Realistic Literature of the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries, Irkutsk, Russia: Irkutsk Publishing, 1961.
- [6] V. V. Karelsky and N. S. Pavlova, Foreign Literature of the Twentieth Century, Moscow, Russia: M. Publishing, 1996.
- [7] N. S. Leites, German Novel 1918-1945, Perm, Russia: Perm Publishing, 1975.
- [8] G. Mann, Loyal Subject. Poor. Head., Moscow, Russia: M. Publishing, 2009.
- [9] T. Mann, Collected Works in 10 Volumes, Moscow, Russia: M. Publishing, 1961.
- [10] T. Motyleva, "War and Peace Abroad," 1978.
- [11] F. Ya. Priyma, Russian Literature in the West, Leningrad, Russia: L. Publishing, 1970.
- [12] I. M. Fradkin, "Opposition Literature in Hitler's Germany," in History of German Literature, vol. 5, Moscow, Russia: M. Publishing, 1976.
- [13] A. France, Penguin Island, Moscow, Russia: M. Publishing, 1984.
- [14] A. V. Chicherin, The Emergence of the Epic Novel, Moscow, Russia: M. Publishing, 1958.
- [15] V. E. Shor, "On the Issue of the Achievements of Soviet Translation Art," in Questions of Pedagogy Philosophy and Methods of Teaching Language, Leningrad, Russia: L. Publishing, 1972.
- [16] H. Stulz, "Tolstoy in Germany (1856-1910)," Literary Heritage, vol. 7