

Title: Love and Knowledge in Tolstoy's *Resurrection*

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Abstract:

The relationship between aesthetics and philosophy of love in Tolstoy remains a constant connection throughout his intellectual career. His belief in the centrality of love as the essence of humanity was a strong note of continuity on both sides of his famous conversion/spiritual crisis. His understanding of love, however, changed quite dramatically. As Tolstoy revises his philosophy of love, his aesthetics change accordingly. Before the crisis, trying to follow the steps of Plato in the *Symposium* from the love of a particular person to universal love, Tolstoy repeatedly failed to arrive at the all-inclusive love he so longed for. There was always an excluded remainder. If the romanticization of the family led him to nationalism, romantic love led either to distractive passions, or, at best, to a family. The family as a model even when including the neighbor in its sphere of love, could not extend to a love of humanity as a whole. Tolstoy could not be comfortable with such vicious circularity. This paper considers Tolstoy's latest novel *Resurrection* (1899) as his attempt to fix the problem. I argue that late Tolstoy reverses the direction of Plato's 'Ladder': we are now supposed to begin with the love of everything, which will logically imply the love of particular people as constituent parts. Based on his new philosophy of love, Tolstoy comes up with a new conception of subjectivity, which implies that we are all the same underneath, thus can all be known and loved. This, in turn, changed which consciousnesses Tolstoy found necessary to represent: instead of depicting the consciousnesses of characters he loves in order to show their development, Tolstoy now depicts consciousnesses that fail to see his newly discovered truth and need to be taught the lesson. In other words, Tolstoy's quest for universal love leads him not only to a rejection of the family as a main priority, but also to a revision of human subjectivity, epistemology, morality and aesthetics.