CHAPTER - IV
Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) was the youngest of the five children of his parents. He lost both his parents at a young age and was brought up first by his grandmother and later by his aunts. Moral questions interested him right from his early days in life. Questions like the aim of life, what does man live for and the immortality of soul assumed particular importance for him.

Tolstoy was a voracious reader and his favourite subject was philosophy and philosophers like Hegel, Voltaire and Rousseau. At the age of nineteen he started thinking about the evil of serfdom and his sentiment for hard working, suffering people was no secret. When he was twenty four and stationed in the Caucasus, he started writing his big novel, "Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth" (1854-1856). During the Crimean war, when British and French navies besieged the fortress of Sevastapol — Tolstoy joined the army which was defending the city. And it was his patriotic feelings, his admiration for the strength, bravery and patience of the Russian soldiers, that inspired the Sevastapol stories. The literary world immediately recognized their merit. Turgenev
wrote these stories were a miracle. The Emperor Alexander II read them and ordered them translated into French. And the Empress shed tears over them. When Tolstoy returned from Crimea he went to St. Petesburg and was accepted by the literary world as a fully recognised writer.

After 1861 the old patriarchal Russia began rapidly to disintegrate under the influence of world capitalism. The peasants were starving, were being ruined as never before, fleeing to the towns and abandoning the soil. There was a boom in the construction of railways, mills and factories due to cheap labour of the ruined peasants. Big finance capital was developing in Russia together with large-scale commerce and industry resulting in turn in a change in the attitude and values of life. Tolstoy had a sound knowledge of the rural Russia, the mode of life of the landlords and the peasants. And this knowledge and understanding of the situations, people and their plight were responsible for his articles like 'What shall we do then?', which grew into a big book with the epigraph:

And the people asked him, saying, what shall we do then? He answereth and sayeth unto them: He that hath two coats let him impart to him that hath none, and he that hath meat let him do likewise.

(St. Luke, Ch. 3, v. 10).
This makes clear the fact about Tolstoy's acute awareness that the richer a man is the harder he is to reach, the more doormen there stand between him and the less fortunate people. Change was important and Tolstoy viewed it as both necessary and possible but it had to be a change of heart. Tolstoy had himself undergone such a change and felt that his fellow men could do what he had done. He believed in the inarticulate virtues of simplicity and freshness, making a 'temperament' which relies only on its innermost resources. Having been brought up in the orthodox Christian faith, Tolstoy realised early in life that faith alone gave meaning to life —stemming from a thorough study of the Gospels and understanding the real meaning and essence of religion. Tolstoy with all the strength of his soul, wanted to serve the Almighty whom he saw as spirit, as love, as the source of all. Like a true Christian, he believed that man's true welfare lay in fulfilling God's will and His will meant that men should love one another. He acknowledged that every good action increased the true welfare of one's eternal life and every evil action decreased it. His positive attitudes of the Christian tradition agreed with the demands of his conscience. For him so long as one had faith in Christ, one could live as one wished — and this is faithfully reflected in his short stories. According to him one had to find
real food for the people. And if this real food was found every hungry person would take it. His plans were very far-reaching to produce books for the hungry millions — books of a special kind. He decided to oust the books by old popular Luboks with nobler texts, by his own short stories and by rewritten lives of the saints, as many of the folktales are. Tolstoy wrote about forty five short stories of which twenty-two were folk tales. As a responsible and conscious writer he was acutely aware of the fact that any reform at the social and political level was to be preceded by a spiritual reform. An attitude illustrated by parables like *How much Land Does A Man Need* -- where the peasant dies of exhaustion and his corpse covers six feet of earth which answers the interrogative in the story. The story is based on the material furnished by the ancient Greek historian Herodotus's the Scythian agrarian system and that of Bashkirs in Russia, and pin-points the self-destruction man heaps on himself through his over-powering greed. The insatiable lust for more and more blinds reason, and eventually results in the loss of everything, including life. Pahom, a landless peasant, could have lived on happily, once he succeeded in acquiring fifteen dessiatin (one dessiatin is equal to 2.50 acres) but he goes on to acquire fifty dessiatins. At first, "while building and stocking, he had settled down a bit,
he began to feel cramped again". Then even 500 dessiatins, which he managed to buy, fall short of his greed and along with his servant, he sets out for the land of the Bashkirs, where his guest (merchant) had bought 5000 dessiatins for only 1000 roubles. Having been told by the Starshina (the chieftain of the Bashkirs) that the rate is 1000 roubles per day, that is as much land as Pahom could cover on foot from sunrise to sunset, Pahom is so thrilled and excited that he cannot sleep, but only dozes off the previous night. He gets forewarned in his dream that he is heading for destruction, but the greed has blinded him, and he rushes headlong into his own doom losing all in the process. Having begun his walk early in the day to cover the land that would be his, he succumbs to the temptation of grabbing the maximum land, unmindful of his physical resources. After including all that land which he thought good for cultivation, on his way back to the starting point, he becomes conscious of his having over-strained himself. He had lost all thought of the land now and all he thought of was to avoid dying from exertion. But having once succumbed to the snares of temptation, it becomes impossible for him to get out of it. Finally, he does make it to the starting point and the chieftain's words ring out ironically:

Ah, that's a fine fellow! He
has gained much land! ¹

as Pahom is found bleeding from his mouth and dead. Pahom's servant "dug a grave long enough for Pahom to lie in, and buried him in it six feet from his head to his heels was all he needed"².

Tolstoy seems to affirm that greed is the Devil's instrument for throwing man into isolation, restlessness and destruction.

Tolstoy valued feelings and took these as real subject matter of art. The art which transmits feelings leading to the well being and advancement of mankind is according to him, real art, and the art which does not fulfil this purpose, is not art at all. The feelings conducive to the progress of mankind are the feelings of the religious perceptions or the highest understanding of life of the given time and society. If mankind has to advance ahead, our art is required to transmit the feelings of the religious perceptions of our time. Describing these religious perceptions of our times — and describing these in the widest and most practical applications is the consciousness that our well-being, both material and spiritual, individual and collective, temporal and eternal, lies in the growth of brotherhood among men — in their loving harmony with one another. This is a glaring truth of Christ's teaching and all the great men of past ages and the best of our times. Tolstoy's

²Ibid., P. 527.
narrative technique is rich and varied for this stressed religious and spiritual factor. He gradually builds his stories taking his cue from the scriptures, treats it neatly and offers spiritual solace in and according to the teachings of Christ. Tolstoy avoids direct and continuous narrative as if to destroy mere plot. In *Hadji Murad* the result of an event is always revealed before presentation of the event itself and the constantly and rapidly shifting scenes reinforce the irony of misunderstandings. *The Death of Ivan Illych* reverses the temporal sequence of the two parts to emphasize the moment of illumination. Other stories like *Two Hussars* or *Family Happiness* contrast the opening with the closing part. Direct apprehension of reality again becomes possible. Insofar as form operates to that end, it may be viewed as another gesture in a stance central to Tolstoy's art.

*Two Hussars*, is composed like a diptych. The hussars of the title are father and son. More or less at the same age, but at an interval in time of about thirty years, they happen to arrive in the same place, to become the guests of the same family, and to meet, in a different manner, the same incidents. The symmetry of the situation, and the sharp contrast between the two different outcomes, appear all too deliberately contrived. The writer makes the first of the two officers behave like an attractive rake, and the second like a repulsive cad. Tolstoy does so precisely because his aristocratic and conservative temper compels him
to feel a sentimental indulgence for the dashing behaviour of the nobles of the old generation, and an utter contempt for the mean and calculating conduct of their degenerate offspring.

Sometime Tolstoy opens his story with a direct comment on the subject. *The candle* begins with a comment on the times, the masters, the people and their behaviour. And here the blame is not put on masters but on their agents -- who according to Tolstoy come from serfs; upstarts and are termed as brutes. One of these, the steward, orders the peasants to plough at Easter. They refuse, but among them is a godly man Peter, he fixes a five Kopeck candle to his plough and starts to turn the soil over. He lifts his plough and knocks the soil from it, but the candle does not go out. The other peasants curse the steward that his belly burst and guts dribble out.

The Steward is not alarmed by their threats, but he is amazed by the miracle of the candle that keeps burning. He goes to the fields to see it, and there is Peter, ploughing and singing. The Steward feels uneasy and returns home. He dismounts from his horse, opens the gates and makes to mount again. His horse shies, the steward falls and his body becomes impaled on the poles by the fence, ripping his belly open rolling on to the ground.

Unlike most of the folk tales *The candle* is not based on
the Prologues and lives of the Saints, but on folklore. And it was on the insistence of Chertkov that Tolstoy hesitantly (obeying but not agreeing) altered the ending to the Steward repenting in the end and changed the heading of the story as *The candle* or How the Good peasant overpowered a wicked Steward.

'Psychological Evesdropping' is another very important aspect of Tolstoy's art. In fact, no subject is too trivial for Tolstoy as a starting point and none too complex at the end. And between the starting point and end there are two essential lines of development. The first is perhaps the true line of psychological evesdropping. It begins with the relatively simple questions that run through the mind of the ten-year-old protagonist at the beginning of 'childhood' as he wonders whether he may ever be forgiven, how he could have thought such cruel things, and what his feelings really are. It leads to such limited reflections as Nikolai Rostov's 'Will I or will I not', 'am I a coward or not', and the infinitely more complex questions pondered by Pierre, Andrey or Levin. The other line makes a startling appearance in *Sevastopol in May*, in the multiplicity of thoughts and sensations that run through a man's mind in the split second between the detonation of a shell and his death, and reappears as the interior monologue more directly to the visible and audible world, as in Prince Galtsin's
trip to the railroad station at the end of part seven:

Having with difficulty pushed his way through the porch among the wounded who had come on foot and the bearer's who were carrying in the wounded and bringing out the dead, Galtsin entered the first room, gave a look round, and involuntarily turned back and ran out into the street. It was too terrible. ³

There hardly seems to be any aspect of human behaviour that Tolstoy cannot transmit either by communicating the thoughts of his characters or by indicating their gestures — each with the authority of genuine and legitimate understanding. For Tolstoy the excellence of technique does not lie in complexities and unnecessary ornateness of art but in clearness, beauty, simplicity and compression, as are found in all peasant art. Tolstoy often used the technique of choosing a proverb, a parable for a theme. With him parable was a matter of taste which later found a higher justification or sanction in his pedagogical theories or evangelical doctrines. It was in a well known passage in What is Art? that Tolstoy was to define the parable as the purest and the highest of all

³Collected stories of Tolstoy: Vol,1,( New Delhi, Rupa & Co. 1994), P. 165.
literary forms. It was not only as a moralist but also as an artist that Tolstoy cherished this literary vehicle.

*The Devil*, concerns with temptation that sounds as modern as any 20th century success story. It projects the sexual agonies of a young member of the gentry -- Eugene Irtenev, who had entered into a liaison with a peasant girl for reasons of health, as an outlet for his exuberant sexuality. He hoped that after marriage there would be no need to carry on and the liaison would end quietly. On the girl's side it does, it remains quiscent for Irtenev also for a year. After a year the old passions resurge, the old torments come back, with time they assume the shape and content of a frenzy. Whatever Irtenev might do to counter it, his feet have a volition of their own, they carry him in to the paths of the girl. Eventually, Irtenev kills himself. Given his character, a sexuality so potent and a conscience tenderly faithful to his wife, his situation was perhaps insoluble. *The Devil* is an impressive story, strong in the psychological realism of Irtenev's impossible situation.

Some critics find autobiographical traces in some important parts of the story which they relate to some entries in Tolstoy's diaries. In these entries he is believed to have confessed his affair with a peasant woman on his estate. The references to the meetings in the forests, confessions of efforts
to break off the relationship, expressions of intense self-deprecation find reflection in Irtenev’s remarks.

Whatever the case, Tolstoy seems to affirm that temptation and greed is Devil’s instrument for throwing man into isolation, restlessness and destruction. Innocence in this story in the shape of the child, and truth are the only saving grace.

Next to his personal experiences (which are so important for every writer), the richest source of the subject matter for Tolstoy was popular folktales and legends especially those of Russia and the one’s which he had heard from others. Many a story that he has written take their cue or are based on such tales. What Men Live By is believed to be one such tale. The story was narrated to Tolstoy by the famous peasant story teller U. P. Shchegolenok. Tolstoy was meticulous in working on this story for which he is believed to have prepared some thirty three separate drafts and selecting and rejecting various titles. This shows how particular he was about what he was giving people. This story underscores the value of compassion and love in human relationships as these act as the sustaining forces of life, without which men will inevitably suffer and perish. Michael — actually an angel of God, sent to the earth as a punishment -- learns the three truths of God which he was enjoined to do, through Matrena’s (the poor Cobbler’s wife)
compassion for himself; he learns that the thing that dweleth in men is love, through the rich arrogant man’s order to Simon for a pair of leather boots, when he was going to die the same evening; he learns that God had not revealed to men what was needful for each one because God did not want them to live apart from one another and through the lady’s affection for the helpless infants, he learns that men only appear to live by taking thought for themselves, but that in reality they live by love alone.

The theme of _Two Old Men_ also runs through Russian folk literature and can be traced back to the 12th. century. Tolstoy learned of it from the story-teller Sheregolenok. A sub-title to the story reads, ‘Salvation is possible anywhere’. Here he emphasises the spirit, or the intention of the worshipper and the significance of serving Christ through serving one’s fellow beings. Of the two friends who set out for pilgrimage to Jerusalem — the one who stops (Elijah) and enters a hut to quench his thirst only to encounter a heart-rending plight of the incumbents — an old woman sitting on a bench, her head bowed upon her arms, a thin, pale pot-bellied boy clutching her at sleeve and crying for bread, a younger woman lying face downwards on a shelfbunk, writhing in pain and moaning, the woman’s husband dying in the yard — as the village had been
struck by famine. Elijah stops to fetch them water, buys them wheat flour, milk and all that was necessary from shop. He cooks some soup and porridge and gives bread to the starving people. Since their land had been mortgaged Elijah decides to buy out their land for them and a horse for the man to cart his sheaves, and a cow as well. He is a man who never regretted anything in life except his sins. His sensitivity prompts him to think of what avail is it to go across the sea to seek Christ if all the time he lost the Christ that is within him? And when he restarts his journey to Jerusalem his funds are inadequate. But it was Elijah's pilgrimage which was successful — Tolstoy makes clear, Elfin, who reaches the great Church of Resurrection, clearly sees Elijah praying at the Holy Sculpchre, standing ahead of all the congregation.

*The Three Hermits* is another of the many Russian tales used by Tolstoy in his works, and is common as well in western folk and religious literature. This story also undervalues the form of prayer — thereby setting aside the ritualistic requirements of religion. The Archbishop who directs the ship to the island of the three hermits and teaches them emphatically the manner of prayer, learns and is convinced later beyond doubt that irrespective of the manner of their prayer, they (the three hermits) are blessed by God. For at
night he notices a light coming from the direction of the island, which slowly grows into the three old men, running on water as if it was hard surface. Reaching the ship, they address the Archbishop and ask him to teach them the correct prayer again, as they had forgotten every word of it. But he only says, "It is not for me to teach you. Pray for us sinners".

The very thought of most of Tolstoy’s short stories is Christian as is the treatment of the same. This is evident in Elias which emphatically negates that riches are at all necessary for human happiness although man pursues riches relentlessly. Having amassed considerable wealth over thirty five years, Elias, a Bashkir, once falls on bad times and becomes poor. His neighbour, Muhammad Shah, out of pity for him, employs Elias and his wife Sham-Shemagi, to do sundry jobs for him. When one of Mohammad Shah’s guests, who had heard of Elia’s fame as a rich man, asks Elias how he felt to be a servant, he says he is happy and gets his wife to confirm it. When she explains that constant worries regarding the entertainment and board and lodging of guests, anxieties about the live stock, small disagreements between husband and wife as to how a particular thing is to be done they "... passed from one trouble to another, from one sin to another, and found no happiness"—the guests laugh, not taking Sham-Shemagi seriously. At this

Ibid., P. 407.
Elias admonishes them, "Do not laugh, friends. It is not a matter for jesting — it is the truth of life"— the mullah among the guests puts his holy seal of authority by adding, "That is a wise speech. Elias has spoken the exact truth. The same is said in Holy Writ".

Tolstoy reinforces the idea that riches cannot provide happiness in *Croesus and Solon* by making king Croesus ask Solon, the reputed wise sojourner as to who was the happiest man and Solon refers to a certain poor man living in Athens. Dwelling on the reason of the poor man’s happiness, Solon says that the man of whom he spoke had worked hard all his life, been content with little, reared five children, served his city honourably, and achieved a noble reputation. The flimsiness of the source of the king’s happiness is revealed to him when he loses everything.

In fact, if anything, the riches prove to be a source of mischief, discord and degradation. The poor farmer, in *The Imp and the Crust* toiling at his plough does not feel at all disappointed when he finds his only crust of bread stolen. All he says, when he is feeling very hungry and exhausted, is: "After all, I shan’t die of hunger. No doubt whoever took the bread needed it. May it do him good!". And the same peasant, having grown rich, flies into a rage when his wife unintentionally

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8 *Ibid.*, P. 482.
spills a little vodka, while serving the guests "What do you mean, you slut? Do you think it's good stuff like over the floor?" The little devil, responsible for spreading discord, disharmony and encouraging the brute in man, smirks to his chief Devil, "All I did was to see that the peasant had more corn than he needed. The blood of the beasts is always in man, but as long as he has only enough corn for his needs, it is kept in bounds" Tolstoy with his strong traditional Christian sensibility wrote, The Death of Ivan Illych . The story of Ivan Illych's life was the most simple ordinary and terrible story for Tolstoy. And this most simple, ordinary and terrible was his main occupation — for all that he would have liked to preach morals, to reconsider the political economy, and change the lives of the saints. It was his chief concern to show people that they lived sensibly and terribly. Tolstoy regarded the principle of self-pleasure as a death principle which characterized his society. He selected Ivan Illych as a true representative of this society. A provincial judge, Ivan Illych passes from a pleasant and proper life to death, by way of great physical and moral suffering from a trivial accident — lying in his sick bed, he reviews his past life and realises that it has been a lie, a deception—a life 'aside from truth'. He lived a pleasant, easy going, well-bred life approved by his society

10 Ibid., P. 681.
and worked for the gratification of his ambition and vanity. The most important principle for him was decorum. He did not allow the human element to interfere in his relationship with others, not even with his wife and children. Through the lack of any human concern of his family members and his friends for Ivan Illych, Tolstoy shows the abstract relation existing among the members of the society. Ivan Illych realises that he is an embarrassment for his wife and his friends. As he did not share in the past the pain of his wife during her advanced stage of pregnancy, similarly she now is not ready to be involved in his pain. All this leads him to see himself under an aspect as hideous as the people with whom he lives.

The horror of death alters Ivan Illych's point of view. What agonizes him most is the realization that he lived aside from truth by discarding human impulses of love, kindness, pity and sacrifice and how the more he moved up in official and social status, the more de-humanized he became. His altered point of view enables him to attach a metaphorical meaning to the trivial accident of his fall from the stool while hanging a picture in his new apartment.

And the metaphor of a stone falling with increasing velocity flashed into his mind as life a series of increasing
sufferings is falling faster towards its goal, which is unspeakable suffering, — "I am falling...". Illych sees his past now as a lie, a deception hiding the reality of life and death. The truth is revealed to him that this is the agony of a life lived aside from truth. He now finds the answer to the persisting question as to 'what is the real thing?', in his son's expression of love and pity for him while Ivan screams wildly throwing his arms about a few hours before his death, his son Vasya seizes his hand, presses it to his lips, and begins to cry. It was at this moment Tolstoy makes Ivan Illych plunge into the whole and see the light, that reveals to him the fact that though his life had not been what it ought to have been, yet he could still mend matters.

The child is used as a symbol of love, purity and innocence and frequently Illych himself takes recourse to the sweet memories of his childhood to escape the horror of death. And in his quest for truth Tolstoy discovered that true social improvement can only be obtained by each separate individual attaining a state of religious and moral perfection. Master and Man and other parables and tales embody this belief of Tolstoy — for in it he crusades against all that stands in the way of moral perfection of man. It highlights the moral regeneration of the protagonist, Vasili Andreivich Brekhunov —
who besides being a church sexton, is also a hard-boiled merchant. A selfish mean person, always preoccupied with the making of money and unaware of the miserable plight of his poor honest and faithful servant. And the same heartless master, having had a brush with death towards the concluding section, in an effort to escape death gives way to compassion when Nikita (the servant) tells him that he is dying. He removes the snow covering Nikita and unbuttoning his furcoat throws himself over Nikita, covers him completely and begins to transmit his warmth to the half frozen servant. A complete moral transformation comes over him as he is struggling to revive Nikita. Tears of joy and triumph as the first signs of life in the servant begin to stream his eyes and he wonders how he, Vasili, could have lost himself in the pursuit of material prosperity. His apocalyptic moment comes when he is protecting Nikita with his own body-warmth "... and it seemed to him that he was Nikita and Nikita was he, and that his life was not in himself but in Nikita."\footnote{Collected stories of Tolstoy, Vol.II, P. 681.}

Here Tolstoy is castigating the narrow confines of the self, which humans like Vasili encase themselves in. They are deprived of the true joy which results from sharing of the self with others, when the egoistic barriers between the self and others break down. Master and Man is a powerful
illustration of how death in life is transformed into life in death. James Joyce was full of admiration for this story as he said to Frank Budgen, "Tolstoy is a great writer. Think of the story of the rich man's devotion to his poor man servant — *Master and Man*".

Tolstoy did not take death to mean extinction but absorption into the totality of life. His religion of love is founded on this wisdom and teaches how this can be achieved in life through love that binds one to the other and forms a totality. For him all is bound up in love alone. Love is God, and dying means for him a particle of love, to go back to the universal and external source of love and living a life of self pleasure is living in discord with the universe and this is the root cause of man's fear according to Tolstoy.

This fact is beautifully demonstrated by Tolstoy in *Three Deaths* — in which he shows three types of death - of a lady, of peasant, and that of a tree. The worldly lady is pitiable and wretched, since she has lived surrounded by lies and dies while surrounded by them. The peasant dies in peace, since it is the religion of Nature amidst which he dies. The tree dies calmly in freedom and beauty, because it knows no falsity, no distortions, no fears and regrets. The tree lives in harmony with the universe. It is felled to make a wooden cross out of it. That is

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*Essays on Leo Tolstoy* ed. (T. R. Sharma, Shalab Prakashan, Meerut, 1989), P.100
what Tolstoy meant by living for others by giving up one's self, by forgetting all about one's personal separateness, and then death will lose its sting. By lovingly merging one's self with the collective group soul, by giving up one's self while still alive, not only the fear of death is transcended but also the harmony and peace of the universe is preserved. Tolstoy's fiction reveals this two fold meaning that fuses life and death through the epiphany of death. Yet, once again in Tolstoy, death acts as the most powerful agency for the reform of human consciousness. As a crucial experience, it not only brings out the extreme, but logically possible reaches of human character, it also quickens in man his dormant magnanimity and prepares him for the life of soul. It teaches man the most essential virtue, one that, in the language of Wordsworth:

... penetrates, enables us to mount
when high, more high, and lifts us when fallen.
(The Prelude, 12, lines 212-13)

Tolstoy frequently uses the sky as symbol of this loftiness of the soul, that lofty, righteous and kindly sky which absorbs the thought of Prince Andrey as he lies wounded on the hill of Pretzen. Tolstoy shows how death strips man of all his illusions, liberates him from his pettiness, and drives him out of his conception of existence. It evokes an extra-ordinary
consciousness and generates in mind a deep moral anxiety which works out for man his liberation from inauthentic existence and teaches him how to live by practising the religion of love, whose main tenets are selflessness, love and sacrifice.

Another aspect of Tolstoy's writing is that he hardly speaks in his own person. He brings forward the characters and then allows them to speak, feel and act, and they do it so that every movement is true and amazingly exact in full accord with the character of those portrayed. Each character behaves in a way which is natural to him. Not only actions, figures, movements and speech of the actors but their whole inner life is shown to us by equally clear and distinct traits — their souls and hearts are bared to our view. Tolstoy teaches us to penetrate beneath the characters' externality i.e. cleverness, strength, beauty and so forth as in God Sees the truth but waits.

Tolstoy believed in kindness and purity of heart borne out in his folk tale story The Godson - where a sinner who wants to save his soul goes out into the world in order to see how to go about it, and knows that everything he will see will be a parable. He sees that one can't drive a calf out of the barn by force for the fear of trampling the grain. And instead of force it can be called out with gentle words and this will result in every body's
happiness—the master, the mistress, and the calf as well. He further realises a table can't be washed with a dirty cloth—one must wash the cloth first, that one can't bend the rim before first making it fast and giving the rim a hold. If there is no hold, one would steam the rim forever, and end in twisting round with it. Love, compassion and forgiveness serve as the corner stones of peace, harmony and human happiness. Martin, the poor cobbler in where love is, there God is Also, attains communion with God through love for mankind. His hospitality to the poor stepanitch, who was clearing off snow in the bitter cold, and his tender care of the destitute woman with a baby, he later learns, was offered to Christ himself. He is a true christian, living the Bible.

For I was an hungered,
and Ye gave Me meat. I was
thirsty and ye gave Me drink.
I was a stranger and ye took
Me in.

Tolstoy gave free expression to such tender feelings in his stories and the method he employed is similar to the source of these stories.

Tolstoy tapped religious literature of his own and secular literature of Europe for his inspiration thus evincing

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moral and artistic affinity to a remarkable degree and this had a very effective role in determining his technique. His characters when they are not satirically portrayed, are completely integrated even in their short comings. Hadji Murad’s religious devotion, cleanliness, certitude as to when to honour commitments or ignore them are functions of his moral probity and innate nobility. Tolstoy creates characters in whom personal and socio-historical fates closely conjoin. Through their personal experience the characters come in touch with the historically important problems of the age. They are originally linked and invariably shaped by them. However, in this process they do not lose their personality. According to Tolstoy the excellence of technique is in clearness, simplicity and compression. This he has exhibited in his short story writing with success.

Tolstoy crusaded for a society in which men live by certain positive values of humaneness, selflessness, fellow-feeling, humility, love and compassion. He makes full use of all the force of his creative talent to emphasise such ideas because for him, "Art, like speech, is a means of communication and hence of progress that is of mankind’s advance towards perfection". Tolstoy’s short stories bear witness to his high artistic execution as he succeeds in fixing our gaze on what

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occupied his soul and his success can be attributed to the command of his instrument — which was art. He describes the scene only as reflected in the mind of one of his characters. He does not appear behind the actors nor does he draw events in the abstract and in this respect his work is an artistic marvel. Tolstoy has seized not merely some separate traits but a whole living atmosphere which varies around different individuals and different classes of society. Tolstoy is an admirable realist who shows us alike the excellent and the contemptible traits in his characters. We not only have before us the actions, figures, movements and speech of the actors, but their whole inner life is shown to us by equally clear and distinct traits.

The story of Ivan the fool and of his two brothers, Semyon the soldier and Taras the Big Belly, and of his Dumb sister, Malania, and of the old Devil and three little Imps, make interesting reading. Ivan the fool is a peasant, Semyon the soldier— a warring nobleman, Taras the Big Belly -- a merchant and the old Devil, who works with his brain and tempts Ivan, is an intellectual.

This story is not based on borrowings from a folk source. The only folklore elements here are the trinity of the brothers and the preference for the third and youngest brother who is
thought to be a fool. In folk tales the three brothers are of equal social rank and have equal wishes they are peasants and all strive for success, which takes the fairy tale form of marrying the Tsar's daughter. But in Tolstoy's story the eldest brother, Semyon the soldier represents the regime of military drill in the reign of Nicholas I with the marching soldiers, all alike as ears of corn and without individual traits, bound together in sheaf-regiments.

The second brother - Taras the Big Belly is capitalist order, the rule of money. This money is produced by Ivan the fool by rubbing the oak leaves. Soldier and a military state, money and the merchant state -- all this is alien and unnecessary to Ivan the fool. He acknowledges only a tiller's hard toil... In the folk tale, he cures the Tsar's daughter and she falls in love with him. She is an utterly submissive woman and when her husband, having inherited the kingdom, still remains a peasant, she also becomes a peasant woman. The old Devil cannot tempt Ivan's kingdom, nobody there wishes to work for him. Against money and soldiers the peasants in Tolstoy's story set non-resistance and forgiveness -- which remains a dominant idea in his writings.

In a way, Tolstoy can be viewed as the representative of the common man in Russia especially the uncorrupted and unsophisticated peasant. He sees in the mind and the soul of
the Russian peasant all that is good and supremely wise, and would like to see all the standards of culture subordinated to the instinct of truth of the Russian masses, as opposed to the egotism and perverted morals of the higher classes. He praises the high quality of forebearance which is a recurrent problem of his many tales.

Lenin wrote about Tolstoy in his article 'L.N. Tolstoy':

Tolstoy the artist is known to an infinitesimal minority even in Russia. If his great works are really to be made the possession of all, a struggle must be waged against the system of society which condemns millions and scores of millions to ignorance, benightedness, drudgery and poverty a socialist revolution must be accompanied.¹⁵

Tolstoy's art is the conquest of the subconscious by lucid understanding. His art proves his talent and the fact that he had extraordinary powers of observation and was capable of acute psychological analysis. It also shows that he was simple, truthful and straightforward like the saints of Yore who

taught us in parables. He did not strain after literary effect but let the simple truth have its own effect. He walks through human society with a simplicity and naturalness which seems forbidden to many a writer — he looks, he listens and he paints the image and fixes the echo of what he has heard. It is permanent and has a truthfulness which we are forced to applaud.