

# TOLSTOY AND ALICE B. STOCKHAM: THE INFLUENCE OF "TOKOLOGY" ON *THE KREUTZER SONATA*

ROBERT EDWARDS, SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

## I. TOLSTOY AND STOCKHAM'S TOKOLOGY

At the time of Tolstoy's extended and often interrupted composition of *The Kreutzer Sonata*, several sources from America were an inspiration to him.<sup>1</sup> During this period he felt his views on chastity corroborated by the providential arrival of materials from correspondents around the world.<sup>2</sup> One of the most important American influences

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<sup>1</sup>Towards the end of the late seventies Tolstoy had been working for some years on a story based on the theme of a man who murdered his wife «Убийца жены». Sofia Tolstoy notes that she and her husband heard a performance of "The Kreutzer Sonata" by violinist Yury Liassotta, a pupil of the Moscow Conservatory, and the Tolstoys' son Sergei on piano. July 3, 1887. *The Diaries of Sophia Tolstoy*, trans. Cathy Porter, eds. O.A. Golenko, et al., (New York: Random House, 1985), p. 84. It is most likely that in Spring of 1888, after hearing another performance of the "Kreutzer Sonata" with his son and Liassotta as musicians, he began composing a story combining elements of his earlier tale with the title and emphasis on music suggested by Beethoven's composition. He completed the story in the fall of 1889. A story by the actor V.N. Andreev-Burlak served as the genesis of the basic narrative frame of the story as Sofia noted in her diary entry of December, 1890, "Yesterday in the drawing-room he [Tolstoy] was telling Lyova about the narrative form he was trying to create when he started writing *The Kreutzer Sonata*. This notion of creating a genuine story was inspired by that extraordinary story-teller and actor Andreev-Burlak. He had told Lyovochka about a man he had once met at a station who told him all about his unfaithful wife and how unhappy she was making him, and Lyovochka had used this as the subject-matter of his own story." p. 99, December 28, 1890. N.K. Gudzy points out that since according to Sofia's diary, Burlak met Tolstoy for the first time at Yasnaya Polyana on June 20, 1887, the version of the story involving the narrator on the train could not precede that date. *Polnoe Sobranie Sochineny Tolstogo* 27: 564 (Hereafter cited as PSS). After a reading organized by A.F. Koni, the tale was read to a gathering at Kuzminsky's house in Moscow, lithographed copies of the story were widely distributed in Moscow and Petersburg, although the prohibition of the censor held up publication of the story until Sofia Tolstoy intervened on behalf of her husband before the Tsar. Sonya was responsible for corrections and took responsibility as censor for objectionable passages. The uncensored version did not appear in Russia until the 27th volume of the Jubilee Edition was published in 1933. For a more detailed account, see Møller's *Postlude to the Kreutzer Sonata* listed in the Works Cited.

I gratefully wish to acknowledge the help given by Morris Humanities Librarians Marta Davis and Angela Rubin, particularly in finding information about Alice Bunker Stockham in preparation for this article.

<sup>2</sup>He read with enthusiasm materials sent to him by the Shakers in 1889. "I read the Shakers. Excellent. Complete sexual abstinence. How strange that just now, when I'm occupied with these questions, I should receive this." Diary 9 April 1889, PSS 50: 64. After receiving brochures from the Shakers he wrote Chertkov asking, "Знаете ли вы их ученье? В особенности против брака, а за идеал чистоты сверх брака. Это вопрос к[оторый] занимает меня и именно как вопрос. Я не согласен с решением Шекеров, но не могу не признать, что их решение много разумнее нашего принятого всеми брака. Не могу главное скоро решить вопроса, п[отому] ч[то] я старик и гадкий, развращенный старик." 10 April 1889. PSS 86: 224. "Do you know their teaching? In particular, against marriage, but for the ideal of purity. This is a problem which especially concerns me. I don't agree with the teaching of the Shakers, but I can't help but confess that their decision is a great deal more rational than our notion of

was a book received in late 1888 from Alice Bunker Stockham, M.D. (1833-1912)<sup>3</sup> a general practitioner, who resided in Evanston, Illinois. This book, *Tokology: A Book for Every Woman*<sup>4</sup>, ostensibly sent to one of his daughters, was a great source of inspiration to Tolstoy. He immediately perceived in her work an affinity with related movements that were gaining momentum, particularly in America at the turn of the century: temperance, anti-prostitution campaigns, the advocacy of hygiene (which at the turn of the century included a wide variety of health concerns such as birth control, sex education, municipal sanitation, inoculation, etc.), and more spiritualized, less carnal relations in marriage as a means of alleviating the plight of many women who suffered as a result of excessive childbearing.<sup>5</sup>

As is well known, at this time Tolstoy was preaching total abstinence even in marriage. Yet he was simultaneously engaged in one of the most painful periods of his interminable and unsuccessful battle to subdue carnal love in his relation with his wife, Sofia Andreevna.<sup>6</sup> He expressed his approbation of Stockham's views to Vladimir Chertkov, especially pleased, that for a change, a medical doctor, asserting her claims on the foundations of science (and Tolstoy's disdain for science and medicine is well-

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marriage for everybody. The main reason I can't solve this problem is because I am an old man, a vile, debauched old man."

<sup>3</sup>The *Tokology* was translated into several languages including Russian, Finnish, German, and French. Alice Bunker Stockham was born in Cardington, Ohio, November 1833, and educated at Olivet College. She married Dr. G.H. Stockham in 1856 and was a schoolteacher briefly. She graduated from Eclectic Medical College in Cincinnati, practiced in La Fayette, Indiana, and Chicago. She had two children: Cora and William H. She established and was president of the Alice B. Stockham Publishing Company to publish her own works and other "advanced books." Besides the books already listed she wrote *Lovers' World: A Wheel of Life, A Visit to a Gnani, Boy Lover, True Manhood, and Parenthood*. She is said to have been instrumental in introducing "sloyd" (a Swedish form of wood-working) into Chicago public schools. Stockham is also listed as an "active worker for social purity, woman suffrage and social reform." She merited mention in Felton & Fowler's flippant *Famous Americans You Never Knew Existed* for having "sung the praises of 'Karezza', a peculiarly motionless, nonorgasmic brand of lovemaking." In 1900 she founded a school of philosophy at Williams Bay, Wisconsin, and later lived at Alhambra, California. She died in 1912. This brief biography was compiled from several sources: *Who's Who in America: Biographical Dictionary of Living Men and Women of the United States 1899-1900*, ed. John W. Leonard, (Chicago: A.N. Marquis & Co., 1900); *Woman's Who Who of America: 1914-1915*, ed. John William Leonard, N.Y., rpt. (Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1976); *Felton and Fowler's Famous Americans You Never Knew Existed*, eds. Bruce Felton and Mark Fowler, (New York, Stein and Day, 1979), pp. 268-269; *A Dictionary of American Authors*, ed., Oscar Fay Adams, 5th ed., (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1904), p. 566; *Ohio Authors and Their Books*, ed. William Coyle, (Cleveland, Oh.: The World Publishing Co., 1962).

<sup>4</sup>(Chicago: Sanitary Publishing Co., 1887).

<sup>5</sup>For a more detailed account, see the article by William Nickell in this issue of *Tolstoy Studies Journal*.

<sup>6</sup>Debunking critics who claimed that Tolstoy wrote an anti-sex story because of "sour grapes", Aylmer Maude said that, "...the year before his death, when he was eighty-one and very ill, that he was able to tell me that he was no longer troubled by physical desire. When he wrote *The Kreutzer Sonata* the grapes were still very tempting to him and remained so for many years." *The Kreutzer Sonata, The Devil, and Other Tales*, rev. ed., (London: Oxford University Press, 1940, from the "Introduction", xviii).

documented both in his fiction and polemical works) supported continence not only outside of, but within marriage.<sup>7</sup>

So great was Tolstoy's enthusiasm for the *Tokology*<sup>8</sup>, that he immediately wrote the author and requested permission to have the book translated into Russian. Stockham assented and the work was commissioned to Sergei Dolgov. Dolgov asked Tolstoy to provide a preface.<sup>9</sup> Curiously, in the several later editions of the *Tokology* appearing before Stockham's death, no use of Tolstoy's preface was made for a testimonial, although at this time Tolstoy's name commanded great authority among the various American circles of enlightened thought concerning the various progressive movements which advocated non-resistance, pacifism, temperance, celibacy, hygiene, and so forth.<sup>10</sup> He wrote to Stockham to express thanks for sending the book and indicated that he was especially struck by chapter eleven (entitled "Chastity in the Marriage Relation").

Without labour in this direction mankind cannot go forward... Sexual relation without the wish and possibility of having children is worse than prostitution and onanism, and in fact is both. I say it is worse, because a person who commits these crimes, not being married, is always conscious of doing wrong, but a husband and wife, which commit the same sin, think that they are quite righteous.<sup>11</sup>

Inspired by Tolstoy's enthusiastic response to her work, Alice Stockham traveled to Russia in September 1889, writing to him from Moscow that she would like to see him.<sup>12</sup> Tolstoy was no doubt flattered that Stockham had gone to such lengths to see him, and was genuinely interested in meeting her to exchange views. Thus, after politely

<sup>7</sup>"Радостно видеть, что вопрос давно поднят, и научные авторитеты решают его в том же смысле." "It's heartening to see that, with this problem raised so long ago, even scientific authorities are resolving it in the same sense [that we are]." 17 November 1888. *PSS* 86: 188.

<sup>8</sup>The term according to Stockham's definition means the science of midwifery from *tokos*- child in Greek.

<sup>9</sup>*Токология или наука о рождении детей*. М. 1892. According to the *Khronologicheskaiia kanva* for 1890, Tolstoy's foreword was written on 2 February 1890, but due to obstacles from the censor, which S.M. Dolgov refers to in a letter dated 28 July 1890, the publication of the book was slowed down. *PSS* 51: 164, 178, 248. However, N.K. Gudzy places the date of the appearance of Dolgov's translation as 1891, *PSS* 27: 573-74. K.S. Shokhor and N.S. Rodionov state that Tolstoy's preface did not appear until 1892. *PSS* 51: 248.

<sup>10</sup>Professor I.I. Yanzhul, a follower of Tolstoy found that when he visited America, "...he found that letters from Tolstoy and even the mere fact that he was personally acquainted with the great man, opened any door for him." Ernest Simmons, *Leo Tolstoy*, (Boston: Little Brown, & Co., 1946), p. 436. For a fascinating account of Tolstoy's impact in American intellectual life near the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century see Harry Walsh's "The Tolstoyan Episode in American Social Thought," *American Studies*, 17(Spring 1976) 1: 49-69. Walsh shows how figures as varied as Theodore Roosevelt, Clarence Darrow, and William Jennings Bryan invoked Tolstoy's name in their political and ideological disputes. See also Nickell's article in this issue of *Tolstoy Studies Journal*.

<sup>11</sup>To A. Stockham. 30 November 1888. Original in English. *PSS* 64: 202.

<sup>12</sup>N.N. Gusev and V.D. Pestsova state that according to Dolgov's preface to the Russian translation of the *Tokology*, Stockham spent several weeks in Moscow "...trying to acquaint herself with the conditions of Russian life with the aim of adapting the Russian edition of her book to the circumstances of Russian existence." *PSS* 27: 692.

claiming to be too occupied to come to Moscow, he invited her to Yasnaya Polyana if she could make the trip to Tula. She came to see Tolstoy at Yasnaya Polyana on October 2, 1889.

Tolstoy wrote in his diary, on first meeting Dr. Stockham, that he perceived in her person that same spirit he felt permeated the rationalistic and humanistic enterprises underlying the various branches and movements of American progressive religious thought in the latter half of the nineteenth century. He found these views exemplified in American publications he regularly subscribed to such as *New Christianity*, a Swedenborgian organ, and the *World's Advance Thought*. He used Stockham's visit as an opportunity to question her about the rich profusion of enlightened and progressive sects and social movements then burgeoning in America. Apparently agitated by conversation with his visitor he spent a sleepless night and rose early the next day, noting a list of these groups in his diary: Universalists, Unitarians, Quakers, spiritualists, Swedenborgians, Shakers, and so on: "All this is moving towards practical Christianity, towards a universal brotherhood and the sign of this is non-resistance."<sup>13</sup> That day he asked her "to help him collect information about different religions in America." Dr. Stockham, it seems, was well-qualified to comment on such groups since she was of Quaker background and involved in various manifestations of the progressive movements, particularly temperance and hygiene, at the turn of the century. She mentions in the book inspired by her meeting, *Tolstoi: Man of Peace*, Tolstoy's interest in these groups, and his praise for the Universalist pastor Adin Ballou,<sup>14</sup> the American advocate of non-resistance whose works Tolstoy was reading at this time.

Tolstoy further noted in his diary that in his guest's presence he gave a talk at the local Justice Hall to an assembly of peasants about abstention from tobacco and alcohol and received a rebuff. "The people are terribly depraved," he noted bitterly.<sup>15</sup> Stockham mentions this same scene in her account of the visit with Tolstoy, placing it in a wider context. Tolstoy was trying to adjudicate repayment of a loan which he had presided over for the good of the community. The peasants were unable to repay the loan, and this is why he had occasion to give them a lecture on temperance since, as Stockham relates it, the judge ruled that Tolstoy should devote what money was still left in his hands "...to the public use in some way. That lent out to the peasants was to be kept by them."<sup>16</sup> It is amusing that Stockham's version casts a somewhat different light on this scene: "The Count took this occasion to follow with a temperance lecture, telling them if they did not spend their money for vodka, they would have plenty to be comfortable and pay their

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<sup>13</sup>"Все это идет к practical Christianity, к всемирному братству и признак этого non-resistance." Diary, 3 October 1889. PSS 50: 153.

<sup>14</sup>His *Christian Non-Resistance* was a great inspiration for Tolstoy. (London: Charles Gilpin, 1848); De Capo Press, New York, 1970, published a reprint of the unabridged second edition which was printed in Philadelphia in 1910. His *Autobiography* is also of interest. (Lowell, Mass.: Vox Populi Press, 1896).

<sup>15</sup>PSS 50:153-54. "Страшно возвращен народ."

<sup>16</sup>Alice Bunker Stockham, *Tolstoi: Man of Peace*, (Chicago, Stockham Publishing Co., 1900), p. 51. The book is mostly concerned with Stockham's visit to Yasnaya Polyana and Tolstoy's teachings about non-resistance.

taxes; that life was of too much account to dull the sensibilities in the use of liquor and tobacco. They took this lecture kindly and looked as if a new resolve had entered their souls."<sup>17</sup> Probably, Masha Tolstoy, who was serving as Stockham's interpreter, was content to allow the visitor to perceive that her father's speech had a telling effect upon the peasants.

It seems likely that Dr. Stockham left fairly soon afterwards since Tolstoy's diary entries during this period make no further mention of her, and her own account of her visit ends with the anecdote about the dispute with the peasants. Nevertheless, Stockham's visit freshened Tolstoy's interest in her book and views at a time when he had temporarily laid aside his composition of *The Kreutzer Sonata*. After her visit he set to work on the story with renewed vigor, and perhaps under the influence of his conversations with her and by renewed association with the eleventh chapter of her book which promotes chaste relations during marriage, Tolstoy was inspired to recompose *The Kreutzer Sonata*. Four days after Dr. Stockham's arrival he entered in his diary for 6 October 1889, "I wrote a new version of the *Kreutzer Sonata*."<sup>18</sup>

Stockham and Tolstoy shared similar views on sexual relations within marriage.<sup>19</sup> In Chapter 9 of Stockham's *Tolstoi: Man of Peace*, she discusses *The Kreutzer Sonata* in an obvious attempt to enlist the name of the famous author in their mutual campaign to alter commonly held views of sexuality and to aid Tolstoy in the dissemination of the message behind his tale for English-speaking audience. She writes, "Naturally accepting Jesus as his teacher, Tolstoi's prophetic vision discloses a life of the spirit, admitting no marriage, a life free from any desire of marriage or offspring."<sup>20</sup> She quotes or

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>PSS 50: 154. In all, there were nine versions of *The Kreutzer Sonata*. It should be noted that the Shakers occupied and influenced Tolstoy's thought at this time as much as the *Tokology*. This is shown in Tolstoy's correspondence with A.G. Hollister, an American Shaker who sent him tracts, books and pamphlets about the movement. Incidentally, the Shaker allusion also arises at the end of chapter 11 in *The Kreutzer Sonata* where the listener observes that the speaker seems to be advocating, in his repudiation of sex in marriage, something along the lines of the Shakers, and he agrees, "'Yes, and they are right,' he said. The sex instinct, no matter how it's dressed up, is an evil, a horrible evil that must be fought, not encouraged as it is among us. The words of the New Testament, that whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart, don't just apply to the wives of other men, but expressly and above all to our own.'" The Maude translation leaves out this reference. Recently two translations by British scholars have recently appeared: David McDuff's version appeared in his *The Kreutzer Sonata and Other Stories*, (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1985). Robert Chandler also translated "An Afterword to *The Kreutzer Sonata*" for A.N. Wilson's collection of Tolstoy's religious writings in *The Lion and The Honeycomb*, (London: Collins, 1987). Both scholars, unlike Maude, had the advantage of using the authoritative ninth redaction which appeared only in the 1933 Jubilee edition. The well-known Maude translation, which first appeared in 1925, was based on Volume 13 of the *Collected Works* which Sofia Andreevna edited, with special permission from the Tsar.

<sup>19</sup>However, see below and Nickell's article in this issue of *Tolstoy Studies Journal* for a detailed analysis of where their views diverged.

<sup>20</sup>*Tolstoi: Man of Peace*, p. 65.

paraphrases extensively from the published version of the afterward to *The Kreutzer Sonata* with apparent approval.

Nonetheless, Stockham's views on sex within marriage do not completely coincide with Tolstoy's as is evident in her extensive discussion of sexual matters in her book *Karezza: Ethics of Marriage*.<sup>21</sup> Here Stockham asserts that under certain conditions sex is permissible and even desirable in marriage. The bearing of children is seen by her as the summit of life. For this very reason, profligate relations *within* marriage are to be avoided. Stockham proposes a spiritualized relationship between woman and man in marriage wherein sexual relations are not prohibited but must take place under strictly regulated conditions.

For married couples wishing to follow the principle of *Karezza*, according to Stockham, "There should be a course of training to exalt the spiritual and subordinate the physical." As part of this instruction Stockham advocates the reading of such authors as Emerson and Browning. She lists another group of authors who "have revealed the law of spirit and given practical helps in life's adjustment."<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, the practice of *Karezza* is achieved through meditation which consists in "an act of giving up of one's will, one's intellectual concepts, to allow free usurpation of kosmic intelligence. In obedience to law, common or finite consciousness listens to kosmic consciousness. Daily, hourly, the listening soul awakens to new ideals." Stockham's depiction of actual physical relations between a couple when they have submitted themselves to "the kosmic intelligence" shows what she envisions as a remarkable transformation of the sexual act in both the spiritual and physical dimension:

At the appointed time, without fatigue of body or unrest of mind, accompany general bodily contact with expressions of endearment and affection, followed by complete but quiet union of the sexual organs. During a lengthy period of perfect control, the whole being of each is merged into the other, and an exquisite exaltation experienced. This may be accompanied by a quiet motion, entirely under subordination of the will, so that the thrill of passion for either may not go beyond a pleasurable exchange. Unless procreation is desired, let the final propagative orgasm be entirely avoided.

With abundant time and mutual reciprocity the interchange becomes satisfactory and complete without emission or crisis. In the course of an hour the physical tension subsides, the spiritual exaltation increases, and not uncommonly visions of a transcendent life are seen and consciousness of new powers experienced.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>*Karezza: Ethics of Marriage*, new and revised edition, (Chicago: Stockham Publishing Co., 1896), rpt. 1903, as an edition in the series *Sex, Marriage, and Society*, ed. Charles Rosenberg, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, (New York: Arno Press, 1974).

<sup>22</sup>Stockham mentions, for example, W.F. Evans, and R.W. Trine. Warren Felt Evans (1817-1899) wrote books illustrating the power of suggestion for curing physical and psychological diseases such as *The Mental Cure: Illustrating the Influence of the Mind on the Body, both in Health and Disease, and the Psychological Method of Treatment*, 1869. A Swedenborgian, he later opened a sanatorium in Salisbury, Massachusetts. Ralph Waldo Trine (1866-1958) was an American writer of a series known as "The Life Books." He wrote *In Tune with the Infinite*, and *In the Hollow of His Hand*, and *What All the World's A-Seeking*.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 25-26.

Here, Stockham describes the physical manifestation of what she calls *Karezza*: "...a symbol of the perfect union of two souls in marriage, it is the highest expression of mutual affection, and gives to those practicing it revelations of strength and power. It must be experienced upon a higher plane than the merely physical, and may always be made a means of spiritual unfoldment."<sup>24</sup>

There is no record of Tolstoy having read *Karezza*, but it seems plain that he would have had difficulty in accepting Dr. Stockham's prescription. It is hard to believe that he would have been able to perceive the act of sex in the passive, benign, or spiritualistic light that she does. *Karezza*, however, was the book length amplification of her views on the chaste marriage relationship that so impressed Tolstoy as prescribed in Chapter 11 of the *Tokology*. From Tolstoy's point of view, *Karezza* would have seemed a peculiarly unsatisfactory solution to the problem of sex in marriage: a pseudo-spiritualized sexual intercourse, yet just as much intercourse, even without orgasm, with willful disregard that Tolstoy considered to be one of Christ's most urgent injunctions: "Lead us not into temptation." *Karezza*, however ethereal it might render the sex act, would constantly present those who practiced it with "an occasion to stumble", i.e., to experience physical pleasure, and to gratify their own person (and this seems to be at the heart of what so vehemently troubled Tolstoy about sex) through the selfish use of another person. Nevertheless, if this was what lay behind Dr. Stockham's prescription for chaste relations in marriage, Tolstoy was still able to discern much good in the eleventh chapter of *The Tokology*, "Chastity in the Marriage Relation".

## II. THE COMPOSITION OF *THE KREUTZER SONATA*

Setting aside Dorothy Green's rather puzzling statement about *The Kreutzer Sonata*, that "...it is not at all certain that the intention of the story is to persuade one to follow a doctrine,"<sup>25</sup> it seems to me incontestable that here is a work where didactic message and artistic form are intrinsically and perfectly meshed. Green's article correctly emphasizes the relation between Beethoven's Sonata and the struggle for mastery between Pozdnyshev's spirit and flesh. Using *The Kreutzer Sonata* as a cautionary tale to illustrate the dangers of following the desires of the flesh even within the bonds of matrimony, the story is entertaining as art, but is ultimately a forthright summons to celibacy. The story succeeds as a work of art, but it is art with a message. Art for pleasure, like the seductive music of the sonata, is analogous to sex for pleasure. For Tolstoy, art without a message is like sex without the goal of procreation. His tale serves as a counterbalance to the music of the sonata itself, which is an invitation to carnality. Art without message is equivalent in Tolstoy's to sex without reproduction a mutual act of onanism for the pleasure of the artist and the audience, pleasure that has no goal but individual satisfaction. Tolstoy sees

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>25</sup>Dorothy Green, "*The Kreutzer Sonata: Tolstoy and Beethoven*," *Melbourne Slavic Studies* I (1967), quoted from Katz, p. 437.

Pozdnyshev's character as virtually driven mad by the inevitability of the man's enslavement to carnal desires, woman's enslavement as an object of pleasure for man, and the concomitant abasement of self for both.

The aspiration toward chaste relations between the sexes, for Tolstoy, at least inasmuch as he sees the ethical and aesthetic messages of the tale as integrated, is a way of stopping the seductive power of sex/music which falsely leads people to believe that they can abandon themselves by satisfying themselves, that they can shed their identities and share states of ecstasy with others when actually they are merely pursuing self-gratification. Saying no to sexual relations would have been a way of stopping the story, interrupting the sequence of the inevitable fast, slow, fast rhythm of the sonata,<sup>26</sup> of preventing the inevitable interplay and consequence of function of the physiological relations between male and female body parts when they are joined. The whole "inevitable" tale of Pozdnyshev's obsession and eventual murder of his wife is ineluctable. The train itself, on which the story is told, a vehicle moving between two fixed points on a prescribed schedule, serves as an emblem of this inevitability. The murder of his wife is an act he had countless times before practiced in the dehumanizing act of sex. Likewise, this mirrors the many hours of practice the musician must undertake in order to be able to weave a web of enchantment/delusion for the audience. The true audience is one which has likewise spent many hours attuning itself to appreciate the artist's work. Had Pozdnyshev heeded the promptings of his innocent heart when his friends first took him to a prostitute, he would have avoided the first step that permitted him to view women, and later his own wife, as objects for his pleasure.

Within months of completing *The Kreutzer Sonata*, Tolstoy began *Resurrection*, a novel whose plot is concerned with redressing the effect of yielding to the flesh. It further interrogates "common" wisdom concerning sexuality. The phrase "Vsegda tak, vse tak" (roughly: "This is how it always is, every one does it like this")<sup>27</sup> seems to hum incessantly in Nekhliudov's ears as he seduces Katyusha Maslova. He yields to temptation, Katyusha succumbs to his advances, and years later, when confronted with the responsibility for Maslova's life as a prostitute and the death of their child, he attempts step by step to redeem her and himself. With the earlier story, *The Kreutzer Sonata*, Pozdnyshev has been subjected to and yielded to the same social education as Nekhliudov concerning women and sex. Unlike Nekhliudov, Pozdnyshev realizes, too late, (*slishkom pozdno*) the error of such thinking,<sup>28</sup> and can only relate to a horrified, yet hypnotized listener, how step by step he yielded to the inevitable process of murdering his wife by

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<sup>26</sup>Green notes, "The word 'sonata' in general refers to instrumental music arranged usually in three or four movements in different speeds: for instance, fast, slow, fast, sometimes with a brief, slow introduction." p. 442.

<sup>27</sup>Л.Н. Толстой, Собрание сочинений в двадцати томах. *Воскресение*. Москва, Художественная литература, 1964, стр. 74.

<sup>28</sup>Stephen Baehr has also pointed out, "As Pozdnyshev's name suggests, he becomes aware of this result [of the violence or deception that inevitably results from contracting a counterfeit marriage] too "late." *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 10 (Spring 1976) 1: 39-46. Cited on p. 450 of *Tolstoy's Short Fiction*. The article is reprinted there on pp. 448-456.



accepting at face value what society had been telling him from boyhood about the necessity of sex and the desirability of romantic love. By assenting to the rationalization lurking behind the phrase "vsegda tak, vse tak", he abnegates the use of his individual conscience. Having dispensed with personal responsibility in his actions with women, and justifying those actions as being dictated by biological necessity, and accommodated by the necessary social institutions of marriage and prostitution, he does indeed think and act as everyone else does. He is profligate with prostitutes and women of easy virtue before marriage, and having found a pure young woman, uses her for his exclusive pleasure as he had done previously with other women. As Green justly remarks about *The Kreutzer Sonata*, "Behind the whole argument is the detestation of the idea that one human being should be used by another for his own purposes."<sup>29</sup> Tolstoy, in his capacity to argue a position to its extremes, proposed that sex has been used throughout all time for man's enjoyment. He could not see a compromise solution that would be less than immoral because, he felt, sex for the purpose of pleasure only, without the goal of procreation, even within marriage, reduced it simultaneously to prostitution and onanism. Indeed, the practice of sex by married couples was worse, since the legal status of their relation, conferred on them by society through religious rites that in fact ignored and obscured the true teaching of Christ (not to look with lust upon a woman-- *especially* one's wife), hid their sin from them.

Reviewing the eleventh chapter of the *Tokology* it is easy to see why Tolstoy saw Stockham's arguments to be supportive of his own views of chastity in marriage. Before laying out some of those views, a brief word about the book as a whole should be made. No matter how specious or quaint Stockham's views on sexual relations in marriage might seem, one has to see her work in the context of the time it was written, as a sensible and useful work, providing vital information on a topic that was virtually completely neglected in print. The fact that Stockham was unique in describing the process of reproduction in understandable language from the perspective of a physician who was a female and a mother, makes her work noteworthy. Because of her ethical sense of responsibility to disseminate this vital information, she founded a publishing house at her own expense to print and distribute the many editions of *The Tokology*.<sup>30</sup> She talks accurately and sensibly about how pregnancy occurs, its physiological aspects, what to expect during pregnancy, diseases of pregnancy, fetal development, "hygiene" in pregnancy (dress, bathing, and diet), labor and childbirth, post partum diseases, nursing and problems of breast feeding, infant care and diseases, diseases of women, and so forth. Everything is discussed in a clear and rational manner, and I cannot help but believe that her educative work in disseminating information about sex must have performed an inestimable service

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<sup>29</sup>Green, p. 440.

<sup>30</sup>In an advertisement printed in the back of the 1892 edition of the *Tokology* quoted from *The Union Signal*, 19 February 1891, "The book is in its 160th thousand [copy], an average of 20,000 a year having been sold, which gives a good idea of how successful this 'women's' enterprise' has been. An agent having this book in her hands finds no 'dead' territory." unnumbered page (483). 1892 edition.

in dispelling misinformation and ignorance about the basic processes of reproduction at the turn of the century.

In "Chastity in the Marriage Relations," Stockham makes recommendations about sex for married couples based upon her observations as a physician. Ernest Simmons was the first investigator to make the observation that *The Tokology* had an influence on the composition of *The Kreutzer Sonata*.<sup>31</sup>

In Chapter XI of this work on chastity in married life, Tolstoy was delighted to find his own views echoed. In fact, it would be more correct to say that he obtained ideas from the book, for not only his thought on the subject of chastity in married life in *The Kreutzer Sonata*, but even the very form of their expression suggest clearly the influence of *Tocology*.<sup>32</sup>

Dr. Stockham comes out squarely against sexual relations except for procreation. She feels impelled to speak out because "the agonizing cries of heart-broken, suffering women, the terrible death rate of little children [which] have proven that in the marriage relation there is such a perversion of nature, such grievous wrongs committed, that one needs a pen of fire to express the living, burning thoughts, and carry the conviction of truth into the very lives of men and women."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>According to Gudzy a note authored by "M" drew first drew the connection between Tokology and Tolstoy's story in *Nedelia*, No.4, 1892, pp. 127-130. [Kommentarii k "Kreutzerovoi sonate"]. Peter Ulf Møller identifies "M" as Mikhail Osipovich Menshikov (1859-1919) as *Nedelia*'s "leading contributor" during the 1890s, and claims that he had a reputation of being "more Catholic than the Pope himself...", at any rate as regards his work as a propagandist for Tolstoj's ideas on sexual morality in the 1890s." (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), p. 205. Møller also provides an extensive bibliography of the discussion of *The Kreutzer Sonata* in the contemporary Russian press from January 1890 to January 1892. pp. 314-328.

<sup>32</sup>Simmons, pp. 439-440. Indeed, it should be noted that Tolstoy's teaching about the celibate life has strong precedence in the teachings of the early Church fathers, both Greek and Latin, as A.N. Wilson points out in *Tolstoy*, p. 376. Tertullian, for example, in both Catholic and Montanist stages of thought maintains that it is better not to marry, if married, not to have sex, and if one's spouse dies, remarriage (as he claims while a Montanist) is tantamount to adultery. Adherents of Montanism, an ascetic movement of the second century started by Montanus of Phrygia (fl. ca. 156), expected the imminent return of Christ. Montanism was condemned as a heresy by the Church, and Justinian I, the Byzantine emperor, ordered the sect's extinction in the sixth century. There are interesting parallels between Montanism's radical insistence on perfection, its lack of tolerance for institutions, and its expectation of an early *parousia* and Tolstoy's views on celibacy, anarchy, his brand of "parousia": i.e., the human race coming to an end through the perfect practice of chastity). According to the eminent patrologist Johannes Quasten, for example, using the work *De exhortatione castitatis* (*An Exhortation to Chastity*) which falls within Tertullian's works before he was classified a heretic, the three stages of chastity sound remarkably like Tolstoy's ideal of relations between the sexes: "The first degree is to live a life of virginity from the time of one's birth; the second, to live a life of virginity from the time of one's second birth, that is to say, one's baptism, whether by the mutual agreement of husband and wife to practice continence in marriage or by the determination of a widow or widower not to remarry; the third degree is that of monogamy, which is practiced when, after the dissolution of a first marriage, one renounces all use of sex from that time on." *Tertullian: Treatises on Marriage and Remarriage*, eds. Johannes Quasten and Joseph C. Plumpe, trans. William P. Le Saint (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1951), p. 42.

<sup>33</sup>*Tokology: A Book for Every Woman*, p. 151.

She claims that, "Unless by some divine miracle, the eloquence of a thousand inspired pens can not stay the floodtide of wrong and injustice now done to women and children under the cover of the marriage law." She points out that among all other animals besides human beings, ("except in rare instances under domestication") ... "the female admits the male in sexual embrace only, only for procreation."<sup>34</sup> In a disdainful phrase which presages Tolstoy's disparagement of sex for pleasure she notes, "It remains for civilized people, boasting of their moral and religious codes, to hold, teach and practice that sexual union shall occur in season and out of season, averring this to be the fulfillment of nature's law." According to Stockham people hold three premises about sexual relations:

*First.* Those who hold that sexual intercourse is a 'physical necessity' to man but not to woman.

*Second.* Those who believe the act is a love relation mutually demanded and enjoyed by both sexes and serving other purposes besides that of procreation.

*Third.* Those who claim the relation should never be entered into save for procreation.<sup>35</sup>

She then describes in greater detail the claims of each view and the premises on which they are based, and discusses the merits and liabilities of each point of view. The first view, that sex is a "physical necessity for man" but not for woman, is based on the notion that "woman naturally has not so much passion as man, has not so much secretion, also has an outlet in menstruation, consequently has not the same demands nor the same injury if not gratified."<sup>36</sup> Stockham disputes the validity of this claim, explaining the male's greater sexual appetite is due to the fact that "We teach the girl *repression*, the boy *expression*, not simply by word and book, but the lessons are graven into their very being by all the traditions, prejudices and customs of society." Women are taught to be modest and repress their sexual appetite while men are taught to pursue theirs. In her view this accounts for the social institution of prostitution: "Women, licensed by men, make a business of prostitution, seeking their bodies that this demand-- this necessity-- of the male shall be supplied."<sup>37</sup> Men are simply following their nature in indulging their appetite for prostitutes, but the women who are licensed to supply their needs are deemed social outcasts.

Stockham, affronted by the hypocrisy underlying this socially sanctioned logic poses the question, "Can the fact that men are upheld, their crime even condoned, while

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<sup>34</sup>Tolstoy expresses the same sentiment in *The Kreutzer Sonata*, "The animals seem to know that their progeny continue their race, and they keep to a certain law in this matter. Man alone neither knows it nor wishes to know, but concerned only to get all the pleasure he can. And who is doing that? The lord of nature-- man! Animals, you see, only come together at times when they are capable of producing progeny, but the filthy lord of nature is at it any time if only it pleases him! And as if that were not sufficient, he exalts this apish occupation into the most precious pearl of creation, into love. In the name of this love, that is, this filth, he destroys-- what? Why, half the human race!" *Great Short Works of Tolstoy*, p. 384.

<sup>35</sup>*Tokology*, pp. 151-52.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 153.

women, as partners in this terrible evil, are not only ostracised but irretrievably lost, be explained in any other way?"<sup>38</sup> Then she asks a question that coincides very closely with the most disconcerting part of Tolstoy's message in *The Kreutzer Sonata*, that marital relations are in fact really only the extension of prostitution into the realm of "normal" sexual relations under the cover of law and religion:

Witness the effect of this same theory in the marriage relation! The man who has been accustomed to gratify his passions promiscuously, seeks and marries a lovely, virtuous girl. She is not supposed to have needs in this direction, neither has she learned that her body is her own and her soul is her Maker's. She gives up *ownership* of herself to her husband, and what is the difference between her and the life of the public woman? She is sold to one man, and is not half so well paid. Is it too strong language to say she is the one *prostitute* taking the place, for one man, of many, and not like her, having choice of time or conditions? In consequence she not only suffers physically, but feels disgraced and outraged to the depths of her soul.<sup>39</sup>

Pozdnyshv's period of courtship with his future wife, as depicted by Tolstoy, resembles a client looking over a madame's offering of girls at a brothel. Though he admits that arranged marriages are unfair, the modern method of courtship "is a thousand times worse!", "...but here the woman is a slave in a bazaar or the bait in a trap."<sup>40</sup> Whereas, most of the world has arranged marriages, debauched modern European society pretends that romantic love alone justifies marriage. Thus, young girls cultivate the arts, and knowledge about science, in order to trap a husband, (i.e., sell themselves to a man), as Pozdnyshv sardonically points out:

'Ah, the origin of the species, how interesting!' 'Oh, Lily takes such an interest in painting! And will you be going to the exhibition? How instructive!' And the troika-drives, and shows, and symphonies! 'Oh! how remarkable! My Lily is mad on music.' 'And why don't you share these convictions?' And boating ... But their one thought is: 'Take me, take me!' 'Take my Lily!' 'Or try-- at least!' Oh, what an abomination!

Pozdnyshv sees clearly through the gauze of sublime feeling known as romantic love to male lust, which denies the personhood of woman for the pleasure of the man. Romantic love is fostered in an aura of cultivated appreciation for the arts. It is this patina of "art" that serves as a legitimizing sanction for forming relationships between the sexes in the educated classes in a post-religious society.<sup>41</sup> In courtship,

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 153-154.

<sup>40</sup>In the discussion following I refer to the Louise and Aylmer Maude translation of *The Kreutzer Sonata* in *Great Short Works of Tolstoy*, ed. John Bayley, (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 373. Cited hereafter as *KS*.

<sup>41</sup>Stephen Baehr points out in "Art and *The Kreutzer Sonata*" that what Tolstoy sees as the infection of art which legitimizes romantic love, is itself a symptom of the depraved mentality of the educated classes. "In *The Kreutzer Sonata*, the sinister power of bad art is illustrated in the performance of Beethoven's "Kreutzer Sonata" by Trukhachevsky and Pozdnyshv's wife-- a musical liaison that legitimizes their sexual duets." p. 451. Moreover, as Baehr notes, "the central problem in Tolstoy's story is that the piece infects

...the men walk about, as at a bazaar, choosing. And the maids wait and think, but dare not say: "Me, please!" "No me!" "Not her, but me!" "Look what shoulders and other things I have!" And we men stroll around and look, and are very pleased. "Yes, I know! I won't be caught!" They stroll about and look, and are very pleased that everything is arranged like that for them. And then in an unguarded moment-- snap! He is caught!"<sup>42</sup>

It is only after the murder that Pozdnyshev is able to see things with this clarity. Stephen Baehr separates Pozdnyshev into the narrator (Pozdnyshev II), a man apart (*osobniak*) who knows, who understands, and is a genuine artist who represents what Tolstoy sees as true art, that which serves to unite all human beings in self-abnegating love, from the earlier Pozdnyshev (Pozdnyshev I) who had been "like all others of his circle": liable to be infected by the false art, exemplified in such a music that "makes me forget myself and my true situation; [and] it carries me into a new situation that is not my own. Under the influence of music it seems to me that I am feeling things which I, myself, am not really feeling or that I can do things which I really cannot."<sup>43</sup>

If art might momentarily envelope relations between the sexes in an alluring and elevated mist of high tone, still Tolstoy recognizes that women of the educated class quite frankly proffer their bodies to men in a manner scarcely distinguishable from prostitutes. For him this is proof that the lofty subjects the wealthy pretend to be interested in are simply used to incite men's passion in order to procure a permanent attachment. This relationship is callously based on a carnality. For Tolstoy, what is most shocking is that both marriage (sanctified by religion and legitimized by the state) and the casual engagement of the prostitute, use the same enticements. This is a manifestation of society's recognition of Alice Stockham's first point, that it believes that men enjoy sex, that it is a necessity for them, but that the sexual urge is very weak or absent in women, and that therefore there should be a class of women permitted by society to serve men's

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Pozdnyshev with the wrong kind of feelings, and makes him act immorally and irrationally, as if in a hypnotic trance..." p. 452.

<sup>42</sup>KS, pp. 372-373.

<sup>43</sup>Baehr, p. 453, quoting from *The Kreutzer Sonata* (in Katz's edition of *The Kreutzer Sonata*, p. 217). This state of intoxication through music seems to be akin to what Nabokov identifies as happening in Gregor Samsa when his sister Grete plays her violin: "...its stupefying, numbing, animallike quality." *Lectures on Literature*, ed. Fredson Bowers, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), p. 278. In "Lev Tolstoj: Esthetics and Art", Rimvydas Silbajoris traces Tolstoy's hatred for counterfeit art through his early works, as *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, *The Kreutzer Sonata* and *Resurrection* using the essay "What is Art?" as a pivotal statement on the topic of esthetics. He states, "There is a self-destructive tension in Tolstoy's work, arising from the juxtaposition of his emerging convictions on esthetics and the continued use, with growing uneasiness, of the very same artistic devices which Tolstoy was coming to regard as counterfeit." *Russian Literature* 1: 68-69. Møller discusses Tolstoy's "unmasking of love" and how he uses *The Kreutzer Sonata* as an example of "good contagious art": "He had a simple and well-meant piece of brotherly advice to give his fellow human beings, advice that would be of great significance for their daily lives. Through a tragic example of modern marriage, told by a repentant husband, he wished so to affect his readers' minds that they themselves would repent, become converted and strive for chastity." *Postlude to the Kreutzer Sonata*, p.11.

satisfaction. Tolstoy comes to the conclusion that marriage is a disguised form of prostitution:

The mothers know it, especially mothers educated by their own husbands-- they know it very well. While pretending to believe in the purity of men, they act quite differently. They know with what sort of bait to catch men for themselves and for their daughters.

You see it is only we men who don't know (because we don't wish to know) what women know very well, that the most exalted poetic love, as we call it, depends not on moral qualities but on physical nearness and on the coiffure, and the colour and cut of the dress. Ask any expert coquette who has set herself the task of captivating a man, which she would prefer to risk: to be convicted in his presence of lying, of cruelty, or even of dissoluteness, or to appear before him in an ugly and badly made dress-- she will always prefer the first. She knows that we are continually lying about high sentiments, but really only want her body and will therefore forgive any abomination except an ugly tasteless costume that is in bad style.

A coquette knows that consciously, and every innocent girl knows it unconsciously just as animals do.

That is why there are those detestable jerseys, bustles, and naked shoulders, arms, almost breasts. A woman, especially if she has passed the male school, knows very well that all the talk about elevated subjects is just talk, but that what a man wants is her body and all that presents it in the most deceptive but alluring light. If we only throw aside our familiarity with this indecency, which has become second nature to us, and look at the life of our upper classes as it is, in all its shamelessness-- why, it is simply a brothel.<sup>44</sup>

The second view of sexual relations is, according to Stockham, "more human." This is a "*love relation*, mutually demanded and enjoyed by both sexes, and serving other purposes besides that of procreation." As Tolstoy explains it, after a time, the once innocent female becomes infected with her husband's feeling of enjoyment for sex. Stockham dwells on this view much less than the others, but her treatment of it in contrast to Tolstoy's is of interest. Here, "... if the lives of married people accorded to this theory the demand of the man would be no more frequent than that of the woman."<sup>45</sup> For Stockham this is an intermediate position between total depravity in married relations, where the man exercises his exclusive will to the prostitute he exclusively owns-- his wife, and abstinence or near total abstinence in marriage. Stockham presents this position in the form of advice she had given to a woman who had asked her how to prevent conception. Stockham asked how great was the danger. "'She said: 'Unless my husband is absent from home, few nights have been exempt since we were married, except it may be three or four immediately after confinement.'" (She had had five children within five years). Stockham advised her: "Tell him I will give you treatment to improve your health, and if he will wait until you can respond, *take time for the act, have it entirely mutual from first to last*, the demand will not come so frequently."<sup>46</sup>

While for Tolstoy this would be an untenable compromise, which would lead to the corruption of a pure female, inducing her to regard physical relations with the same

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<sup>44</sup>KS, pp. 370-371.

<sup>45</sup>Tokology, p. 155.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 156.

enjoyment as a male (as Pozdnyshv's wife, having suffered terribly during her honeymoon period and afterwards, having fallen from purity, comes to enjoy carnality, is "primed" for the adulterous relationship she is set to enjoy with Trukhachevsky<sup>47</sup>), for Stockham, this stage is a door leading to the exact opposite position, that of chaste relations in marriage. Her assumption is that once sex is had as often as the female desires it, it is but a short step to having sex only when children are desired (something close to the parallel in the animal kingdom, where sexual relations are had only when progeny may result). When sex is confined to this purpose alone, as Stockham sees it, the element used in procreation is

...retained in the system, the mental powers being properly directed, is in some way absorbed and diffused throughout the whole organism, replacing waste, and imparting a peculiar vivifying influence. It is taken up by the brain and may be coined into new thoughts-- perhaps new inventions-- grand conceptions of the true, the beautiful, the useful, or into fresh emotions of joy and impulses of kindness, and blessings to all around. It is a procreation of the mental and spiritual planes instead of the physical. *It is just as really a part of the generative function as is the begetting of physical offspring.*<sup>48</sup>

Stockham claims that eminent persons of science and letters have adhered to this principle. She cites "Plato, Newton, Lamb, our own Irving, Whittier, and always remembering the humble Nazarene." Consequently, this third conception of relations between the sexes, the highest, devolves to the woman "'the creative power,' that she must choose when a new life shall be evolved, and only in adhering to this law can she be protected in the highest function of her being-- the function of maternity."<sup>49</sup>

Stockham does not go as far as Tolstoy in her idea of perfection in sexual practice between married couples-- total abstinence.<sup>50</sup> However, with the practice of *Karezza*, she demands an asceticism within physical relations that places sexuality in a dimension beyond anything Tolstoy was capable of suggesting (let alone of practicing). But in

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<sup>47</sup>Although it is unclear to me just to what extent his wife's putative infidelity or propensity to infidelity is cast in the light of the jealous narrator's state of mind. Tolstoy seems to pose this ambiguity on purpose.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 157. Stockham sent Tolstoy a copy of her *Koradine Letters* in 1893. Tolstoy read with approval a supplementary pamphlet published and enclosed with the book entitled *Creative Life: A Special Supplement to Young Girls*. Tolstoy wrote Chertkov that he was impressed with her premise that sexual energy could be channeled into higher manifestations of creativity. 18 October 1893. *PSS* 87: 227. Alice B. Stockham and Lida Hood Talbot, *Koradine Letters: A Girl's Own Book and Creative Life: A Special Letter to Young Girls*, (Chicago, Alice B. Stockham, 1893).

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup>In the second, intermediary stage that Stockham describes, where sex is had on the basis of the woman's desire, it would occur about once a month. In the third, and highest plane, it would only take place with the express purpose of having children. Incidentally, it is interesting to note that during the illegal circulation of the earlier versions of the Afterword to *The Kreutzer Sonata* Sonya, suspecting that she might be pregnant, wrote in her diary, "It would be terrible to become pregnant, for all would learn of this shame and would repeat with malicious joy a joke just now invented in Moscow society: 'There is the real Afterword of *The Kreutzer Sonata*.'" *Dnevnik Sofii Tolstogo* T. I: 1860-1891, ed. S.L. Tolstoj, (Leningrad: izd. M. i. S. Sabashnikovskh, 1928), p. 158. Quoted in Simmons, p. 446.

theory, if not in practice, Tolstoy was ready to admit the possibility of the extinction of the human race to serve the ideal of perfection in the relations between the sexes, as he explained in his "Afterword to *The Kreutzer Sonata*."

Whereas the Shakers abstained from sex in expectation of the *Parousia*, Christ's second coming, Tolstoy averred that once human nature had developed that level of purity and self-renunciation that would mean the end of the human race, it would at that moment have achieved the true *Parousia*-- the realization of the purity of Christ-- at the moment of its supreme annihilation.



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