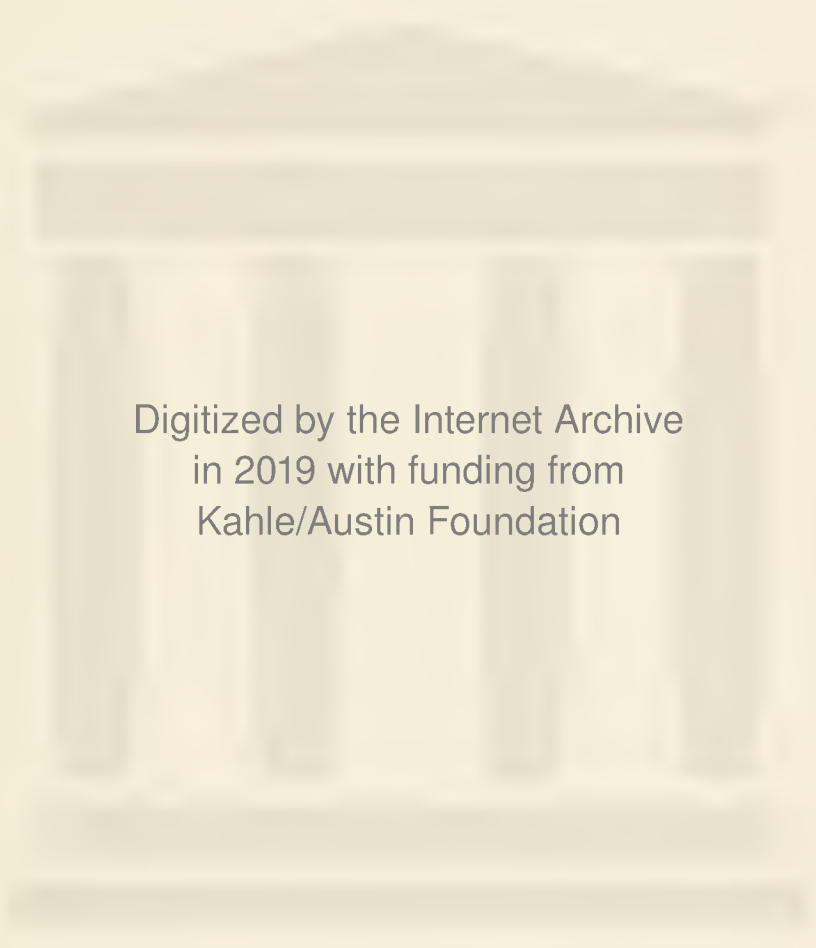


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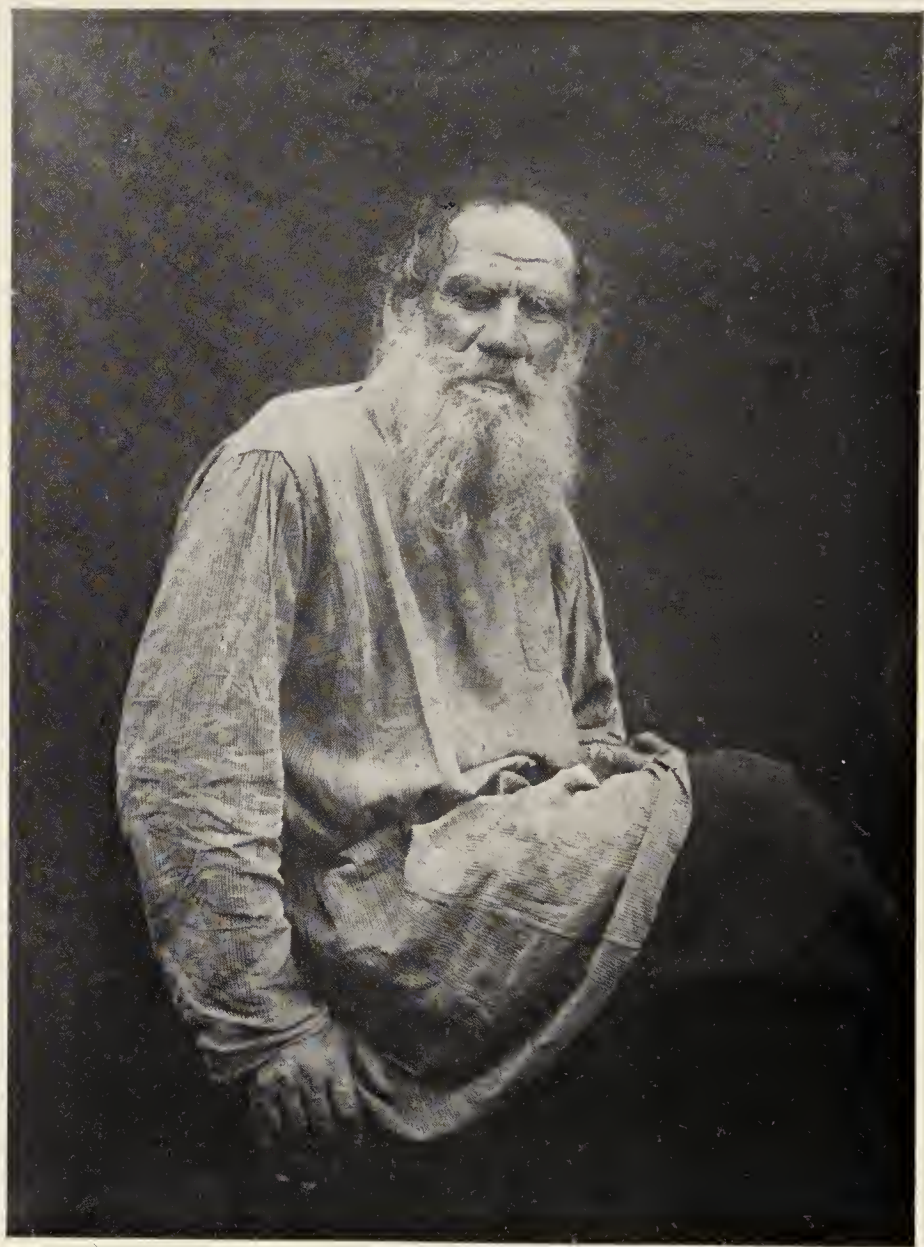


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NEW ESSAYS ON
TOLSTOY



Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910), photographed about 1887
(lent by the grandchildren of Aylmer Maude)

NEW ESSAYS ON TOLSTOY

edited by
MALCOLM JONES

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Editor's Preface

As we are reminded by more than one of the contributors to this volume, the British were among the first to take a serious interest in the life and work of Tolstoy. The range of this interest has extended from translations of the Russian writer's great masterpieces to personal commitment to experiments in communal living on 'Tolstoyan' principles. If the latter enthusiasm is now largely a thing of the past, the reputation of Tolstoy's great masterpieces endures and grows: for many decades now they have been regarded as classics of world literature. Indeed works on Tolstoy by specialists in English literature spring as readily to mind as those by specialists in Russian, and this is in itself in some measure a tribute to the work of British translators.

It therefore seemed appropriate – whatever reservations Tolstoy himself might have had about the idea – to mark the 150th anniversary of his birth in 1828 with a collection of essays by British scholars currently writing on Tolstoy. The impetus for this present volume came from an informal meeting at Easter 1976 of several members of the Nineteenth Century Russian Literature Seminar – a group which meets twice yearly in different British universities and has, naturally enough, included in its programme occasional seminars on Tolstoy. Most of the contributors to this volume are either regular members or have participated in meetings of the group.

Each of the essays, from its own particular standpoint, constitutes a reassessment of some aspect of Tolstoy's legacy to the modern reader: from Professor Gifford's appraisal of English-language translations and Mr Knowles's survey of the reactions of Tolstoy's contemporaries to the publication of *War and Peace*, by way of the fresh approaches to *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina* and *Hadji Murat* in the essays by Mr W. G. Jones, the present writer and Dr Briggs, to the second part of the book, which contains articles on Tolstoy's ideas and their influence (Professor Lampert's introductory essay; Mr Greenwood on Tolstoy and religion; Professor Seeley on Tolstoy's philosophy of history; and Mr Holman's fascinating

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account of an English Tolstoyan colony). Whilst it cannot be claimed that these essays cover, or even touch upon, all that is of interest in Tolstoy, it is hoped that their range is catholic enough and their treatment of individual subjects detailed and scholarly enough to afford an impression of the breadth of Tolstoy's achievement and at the same time make useful new contributions to the understanding of particular aspects of it.

Readers of Russian literature who do not know Russian will be aware of the confusion which can sometimes be caused by different systems of transliteration. The system employed here (with minor modifications) is that preferred by the *Slavonic and East European Review*, but, though it is used uniformly by contributors, it seemed undesirable and unnecessary to alter spellings in quotations from other sources. Nobody who recognises Chekhov in Tchekoff will think that Merezhkovsky is other than Merejkowski. It also seemed unnecessarily procrustean to insist that all contributors use exactly the same versions of the names of fictional characters, when they do, after all, appear in such a variety of forms in what for many readers are the primary sources: English translations. Therefore Gareth Jones's Princess Marya is Edward Greenwood's Princess Mary. Only once have I taken the liberty of tampering with a quotation in this respect: I feared that Merezhkovsky's translator's Ellen (from *War and Peace*) might not be instantly recognisable as Hélène!

The definitive Russian edition of Tolstoy's works is *Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy*, edited by V. G. Chertkov and others (90 vols., Moscow, 1928-58). It is referred to in the text and footnotes as *J.E.* - Jubilee Edition. However, in the case of detailed and extended studies of individual works, references to the text have been given by part and chapter numbers (or as appropriate) without page references to any particular edition.

Among those whom I wish to thank for their help in bringing this volume to the public, pride of place must go to Professor R. F. Christian who has contributed the Introduction. He also made numerous valuable suggestions for which I am most grateful and his assistance and encouragement at a time when he had many other pressing claims to contend with should not go unrecorded. I should like to thank all the contributors, whose efficiency, cooperation and good temper made my task such a pleasant one. Mr Garth Terry, who has contributed the final item, a bibliographical survey of British writing on Tolstoy, has constantly been on hand to answer queries, and I want to take the opportunity of thanking him here. The collection of photographs, mostly previously unpublished, has been included thanks to the kindness and ready cooperation of Mr Michael Holman. Permission to publish them is gratefully acknow-

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ledged in the commentaries which Mr Holman has written to accompany them. Mr Michael Black of the Cambridge University Press has rendered much invaluable assistance already at the time of writing and no doubt by the time that this volume appears my debt to him will be even more substantial. To his name should be added that of Mr T. W. Moore who was responsible for supervising the production of the book and to whom I am similarly grateful. Finally I should like to thank my daughter, Miss Helen Jones, for her anticipated help in compiling the index – a courtesy which I unforgivably omitted in my recent book on Dostoyevsky; I should also like to thank my son, Mr Alexander Jones, for similar willing assistance; and to my wife, Mrs Jennifer Jones, goes my sincere gratitude for her patience and support during the period when this book was being prepared.

University of Nottingham
November 1977

MALCOLM V. JONES

Introduction

R. F. CHRISTIAN

One Christmas, when I was a boy, my father gave me an English translation of *War and Peace* and a biography of Tolstoy, both by Aylmer Maude. These books were my first introduction to Russian life and literature. They were one of the reasons why I eventually transferred my allegiance from classical studies to Russian, and it was no mere chance that the first Russian novel which I read in the original was *Anna Karenina*. I can still remember the feeling of excitement when I first visited Yasnaya Polyana in 1949 – not entirely recovered then from deliberate vandalism at the hands of the German troops who had occupied it – and it was even more exciting to be allowed to live there for a few days in 1972, to roam at leisure round the vast and beautiful estate, to work in one of the rooms in the house, study the marginal inscriptions and pencilled comments in some of the books from Tolstoy's immensely rich private library, and even sleep in the room which had once been his daughter Tatyana's art studio.

When I was asked to contribute a foreword to this collection of essays, I happened to be rereading some thoughts about Tolstoy which I had jotted down on that memorable visit to the estate where he was born in 1828, and from which he set off on his last tragic journey in 1910. One of the things which had particularly impressed me at the time was what I had loosely called his cosmopolitanism – not 'physical', since he disliked travelling to other countries, but mental and spiritual. His library at Yasnaya Polyana provides striking evidence of his immensely wide-ranging mind, his ability to read French, English and German as easily as Russian, or to learn Greek and Hebrew when confronted by urgent problems of scriptural interpretation which allowed him no peace; evidence of his interest not only in the West but in the East, in Asia no less than Europe, in history, religion and philosophy as well as literature, art and music; of his respect for the past as well as the present, for tradition as well as innovation. Although so much of his life revolved

around the Moscow–Yasnaya Polyana axis, and although he loved a settled orderly pattern of existence, especially in the country, Tolstoy was among the least parochial of men, and a living reminder that there are no geographical boundaries to the activities of the mind or spirit.

My stay at Yasnaya Polyana also enabled me to appreciate more clearly than before Tolstoy's belief that the intellect is only one attribute of a human being, and that the fashionable exaltation of mental activity over physical, of sedentary work in the study over labour in the fields or in the garden, is injurious to the growth of a balanced and integrated personality. Just as man was for Tolstoy much more than his intellect, so was man's world much more than man; it also embraced for him all living things, animals, birds, trees and flowers, without which human life would be sadly impoverished. Tolstoy's concern for the preservation of nature, his love of the land and his humane attitude to animals in his later years all testify to the importance he attached to the sanctity of life in all its manifestations.

While walking slowly round the rooms of the big house at Yasnaya Polyana, I was also reminded once again that life for Tolstoy was a serious business, and that the possession of inherited wealth was not an excuse for self-indulgence, but an opportunity to exercise responsibility and to set an example to the less fortunate. I doubt if there is anything in England quite comparable to Tolstoy's ancestral home, for an Englishman of his aristocratic background and comparative affluence would not have been content with such modest furnishings, such simple, unpretentious and indeed uncomfortable living rooms and the lack of any outstanding pictures, *objets d'art* or collectors' items of one sort or another. Only his library can stand comparison with that of a wealthy English country house in the number of volumes it contains, but it is unmistakably a working library, not a repository for handsomely bound but largely unread sets of the classics.

Despite an extravagant and dissipated youth, Tolstoy was essentially an austere man, immensely industrious, unusually versatile, profoundly concerned with serious moral and spiritual issues and increasingly depressed by his situation in a wealthy landowning family which had little sympathy for his eccentric views and his unconventional and at times domineering behaviour. But these biographical facts would no doubt have attracted less interest had he not also been (like Dostoyevsky) one of Russia's two greatest novelists, and it is appropriate that this volume, which has been specially written to mark the celebration in 1978 of the 150th anniversary of his birth, should give rather more space to Tolstoy

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the writer than to Tolstoy the man. It owes its appearance to the initiative of Dr Malcolm Jones, and it is an exclusively British contribution to the anniversary by a group of scholars who are all attached (or have recently been attached) to British universities, but who are not all specialists in Russian literature. Tolstoy, with his well-known dislike of literary criticism and of birthday celebrations (especially as he grew older) would hardly have been pleased to see it. Nevertheless, it is hoped that it will have something to offer both to the general reader and to the Russian scholar in this country and abroad, and that it will help to sustain the growing interest in Tolstoy's life and works evinced by the huge sales of his writings outside Russia, the continuing spate of biographical and critical literature about him since the second world war and the enthusiasm aroused in Britain by the Tolstoy Exhibition at the British Museum in 1976 and, for a wider audience, by the serialisation on television of *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*.

Tolstoy's only visit to England, in 1861, was marred by toothache, a London fog and a tedious speech by Lord Palmerston. Nevertheless he had a great admiration for England and for English literature and institutions (if not for the English climate), and on one occasion he even contemplated going to live there with his wife and young family, because he believed it to be the only country where the freedom of the individual was guaranteed. He read English fluently and spoke and wrote it well. He engaged English governesses to teach his children. In later life he had in Aylmer Maude a good friend and ally and an excellent translator. Conversely, Tolstoy has always been widely read and admired in England, and Garth Terry's valuable bibliographical survey of Tolstoy studies in Great Britain which concludes this volume provides ample evidence of this. For reasons of space Mr Terry has had to confine his survey to post-1945 material on Tolstoy published in Great Britain (including translations of his works), but as he says in his introduction, the study of Tolstoy's life and works 'has a long tradition in British scholarship stretching back to the nineteenth century'. English was the first Western language into which a work by Tolstoy was translated; it was in England that the first critical article about him in a Western language was published; and the twenty-one-volume Centenary Edition of his works edited by Aylmer Maude 'is probably the best and most complete translation of Tolstoy ever made'. Among the better known volumes on Mr Terry's list, particular mention should perhaps be made of the biographies by Simmons, Troyat and Crankshaw; Sir Isaiah Berlin's little book on Tolstoy's philosophy of history, *The Hedgehog and the Fox*, and the critical studies by

Bayley, Steiner, Redpath, Greenwood and the present writer. His bibliography also reveals the constant demand for translations of nearly all Tolstoy's writings, fictional and non-fictional, and includes reprints of the well-established versions of the Maudes and Constance Garnett, as well as new renderings of the major novels by Rosemary Edmonds.

English translations of Tolstoy are the subject of the first article in the volume, by Professor Gifford. In comparison with many of his countrymen Tolstoy has fared well at the hands of his English translators, but, as Gifford demonstrates, there is still much room for improvement. Tolstoy was fortunate, of course, in not being a poet. Even such a gifted and versatile translator as Nabokov would not convince many English readers by his accurate but otherwise regrettable translation of *Eugeny Onegin* that Pushkin was Russia's greatest poet, while the same author's version of Russia's most famous mediaeval poem, *The Song of Igor's Campaign*, actually contains, among many startling eccentricities, the extraordinary couplet: 'Let us by ourselves grasp the anterior glory, and by ourselves share the posterior one'! Prose translation is happily a far simpler matter, and one is entitled to expect much higher standards; and yet when I browse through some of the standard translations of the Russian classics in my library at home, I am astonished how poor they are. In some cases the fault is simply that the translator's knowledge of Russian is inadequate. That was true of nearly all versions of *Dead Souls* published before the last war, which contain a rich assortment of howlers which Gogol' himself would surely have appreciated – one is ushered into the Presence, instead of the office; a vendor of a sweet honey drink becomes an urn for brewing honey tea, and so on. Even a relatively simple novel like Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* suffers in the same way, and in an Everyman translation dated 1946 the totally incomprehensible remark by Bazarov – 'Schiller it would be impossible to hide in a bag' – turns out to be an unfortunate rendering of *shila v meshke ne utaish'* – or, as we say, 'murder will out'. What is more serious, however, than the mistranslation of individual words is the impoverishment of the text of a Russian novel as a result of diluting the language and virtually paraphrasing some of the imagery. This is apparent even with such highly professional translators as Hayward and Harari, who were responsible for the standard English version of *Dr Zhivago*. In one passage Pasternak writes: 'The vegetation shook off the dew, preened itself and quivered as though it were being tickled'. Not a particularly remarkable image, perhaps, but certainly more evocative than the English equivalent which reads: 'The vegetation trembled with delight'!

Another serious fault with many of our translations of Russian

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novels is their utterly inappropriate dialogue. This is particularly apparent in the case of stories by Dostoyevsky or Solzhenitsyn, which attempt to reproduce the argot of common criminals or the language of the prison camps. Ralph Parker's translation of *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* betrays his middle-class upbringing in Britain (he was a *Times* correspondent before he chose to settle permanently in the Soviet Union), and the language of his semi-literate convicts reads at times like that of English public-school boys of the 1930s as retailed in *The Magnet*: 'I say, stop it, you fellows. . .'; 'Steady now, lads. . .'; 'Look out, one of you is going to catch it in a jiffy. . .'; 'Ugh!'

Another difficulty which confronts the translator (though not as a rule with Tolstoy) is the problem of literary allusions, parodies of other writers' styles, polemics with other authors, or even literal quotations from unacknowledged sources. In the past, far too many of our translators have either been insufficiently at home in one or other language, or, if they happened to know both English and Russian fluently, have lacked a proper background knowledge of Russian literature and history. My own feeling is that the best English translations of Russian fiction are being done by professors and lecturers in British and American universities, despite the fact that they rarely have the time which professional translators have to devote to their work, and that the practice of translation is still somewhat frowned upon in academic circles. Sir Isaiah Berlin's versions of Herzen's *From the Other Shore* and Turgenev's *First Love*, Professor Freeborn's rendering of Turgenev's *A Nest of the Gentry* or Mr Foote's of Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time* seem to me to be a vast improvement over anything done before, and to prove that there are no insuperable obstacles to a proper appreciation of Russian fiction by those who cannot read the language.

Professor Gifford, in discussing the relative merits of the standard versions of Tolstoy's major novels, rightly refers to Constance Garnett's sensibility and delicacy of touch, despite her less than perfect knowledge of Russian; to the Maudes' accuracy and sobriety, but lack of 'a creative sense of language'; and to the more convincing dialogue of Rosemary Edmonds, whose renderings, however, sometimes suffer from a certain laxness over detail. Where translators have not done justice to Tolstoy's style is in their inability, on the whole, to reproduce his many variations of repetition, his verbal mannerisms, the clusters of near synonyms which share a common root, his rhetorical devices, the painstaking balance and rhythm of his sentence structure, his syntactical inversions and deliberate variations of normal word order, and above all his subtle use of speech nuances to distinguish the spoken Russian of his characters,

especially the minor ones. Not all these stylistic peculiarities can be adequately conveyed in English, but, with time and patience, most of them can, and it is in their failure to reproduce the special flavour of Tolstoy's language, not in their inability to get across his meaning, that English translations of Tolstoy's fiction still leave something to be desired.

Mr Knowles, in his essay on the contemporary reception of Prince Andrey by Russian critics of the 1860s, reminds us, on the basis of a careful resumé of many now forgotten or inaccessible articles, that it was largely unfavourable. Numerous strictures were levelled against him as arrogant, heartless, melancholy, discontented, static, incapable of decisive action or coherent thought. Some critics attacked him as the mouthpiece of Tolstoy's eccentric and untenable ideas; others as being an inadequate 'hero' of a work of fiction. Liberals, radicals and female emancipationists all criticised him from their own points of view, but, not altogether surprisingly, were too near the novel to view it and its characters in the sort of perspective which distance invariably lends to literary judgements. It was not Mr Knowles's purpose to give his own appraisal of Prince Andrey's character, but any reader wishing to redress the balance will find much that is interesting and provocative in Mr Hagan's article 'A Pattern of Character Development in *War and Peace*: Prince Andrej', where he argues that in the course of the novel Prince Andrey charts a course 'from pride to humility, from ambition to renunciation, from skepticism to faith – in short, from freedom *of* self to freedom *from* self'¹ – a movement, in fact, from 'war' to 'peace' – as a result of which he learns to forgive his two former enemies, Natasha and Anatole, and eventually to accept death itself 'not only without fear, but with positive joy'.

It is a truism that characterisation was Tolstoy's *forte* as a novelist. Elsewhere I have drawn attention to some indirect or oblique methods of characterisation which he employed, suggesting that his heroes and heroines have all the virtues, as well as some of the failings, of a closely knit family.

They know each other instinctively. A gesture is more significant than a spoken word. There is a strong sense of belonging, of participating in each other's thoughts and feelings, of intuitive understanding. They do not have to prepare what they are going to say. Indeed they can take each other for granted to the extent of following their own train of thought, without paying attention to the conversations in which they are engaged.

Tolstoy was an acute observer of the various ways in which human beings communicate with each other, and it is fitting that some broader questions of communication – between author and reader,

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verbal and non-verbal – should form the subject of the two contributions by Mr W. G. Jones and Dr M. V. Jones. Mr Gareth Jones starts from the premise that while Tolstoy (not surprisingly) saw the writer's task as that of communicating with an audience, he also recognised the virtual impossibility of conveying an experience truthfully by word of mouth – of 'telling the truth' directly and unambiguously in a work of art. For, it is argued, however truthful the narrator may wish to be, he is inevitably influenced by what he thinks his audience expects to hear. Story-telling is deceitful; words are frail and deceptive; the conventions of narrative distort the truth. What is ultimately important for an author like Tolstoy is the *relationship* between narrator and listener; the *reactions* of an audience to a performer; the *method* of attempted communication rather than the message. A well-told story can make more impact than a true one. The conventions of fiction may distort the truth, but they can create a response and a rapport, and they can affect. Tolstoy appreciated that 'the paraphernalia of art is necessary for any human communication'; that 'the lie of art enhances the art of living'. The crux of the problem of communication for Tolstoy, in Mr Jones's view, is that if you tell stories you embroider the truth, while evoking a response, but if you are scrupulously honest, you fail to impress and direct rapport is lost. This is a conclusion which has much to commend it, and the careful reader will wish to test it for himself, not only in the context of *War and Peace*, from which the examples are drawn, but also in the wider framework of Tolstoy's fiction as a whole.

Dr Malcolm Jones takes us back seventy-five years to the publication in English of Merezhkovsky's stimulating and immensely influential *Tolstoi as Man and Artist*. Not all Merezhkovsky's confident generalisations, felicitous mots and clever antitheses have stood the test of time, but his is a book which lingers in the memory, and it is difficult to forget brilliant paradoxes such as: 'With Tolstoy we hear because we see'; with Dostoyevsky 'we see because we hear'; or his uncompromising assertion that 'In all literature there is no writer equal to Tolstoy in depicting the human body.' It is Merezhkovsky's emphasis on Tolstoy's sensitivity to the physical aspects of human experience which particularly impresses Dr Jones, and his perceptive reading of *Anna Karenina* derives its initial impetus from Merezhkovsky's illustrations of the ways in which physical gestures are used by Tolstoy for purposes of communication. Dr Jones goes on to argue that Anna's tragedy is at least in part a tragedy of communication. He is therefore interested in the methods whereby feelings are, or are not, transmitted between characters – especially Anna and Vronsky and Anna and Karenin – which in

turn influence a reader's attitudes to those characters and the judgments he forms about their behaviour. Among the more obvious examples of non-verbal communication are facial expressions, looks, smiles, frowns, blushes, pouts, involuntary twitches and muscular contractions, movements of the hands, tone of voice, speed of delivery, the manner of one's dress, and a sort of intuitive sixth sense which saves people who are very close to one another from having to ask each other questions. But although there are so many ways of transmitting thoughts and feelings, and although Tolstoy exploits them to the fullest advantage, people continue to misunderstand one another and fail to communicate. In the case of Anna, Dr Jones concentrates his study of the progressive breakdown of communication between her and her husband and lover on three aspects in particular: 'the conscious withholding of information, the conscious narrowing of the range in which communication is possible, and conscious deception'. Her need for emotional security is never satisfied by Vronsky; having cut herself off completely from her husband, she denies her lover access to those areas of feeling where she most needs his help. She wilfully closes her soul to Karenin, and is never able to open it to Vronsky, least of all on the subject of her son. Such a condensed summary of Dr Jones's thesis cannot do justice to its plausibility; but even those readers who may not be entirely convinced by it will surely welcome its freshness of approach, not least because it contrives to avoid all reference to D. H. Lawrence, whose insensitive lack of understanding of Anna's predicament has been given far too much prominence in recent critical literature in this country.

The final article in Part One, by Dr Briggs, is devoted to Tolstoy's posthumously published masterpiece *Hadji Murat*, of which a new and much improved English translation by Mr I. P. Foote was published by Penguin Classics in 1977. *Hadji Murat* occupies a unique place in Tolstoy's fiction, and it has still not won the recognition it deserves. In an introduction to his translation Mr Foote writes:

A feature of *Hadji Murat* (even, arguably, one of its strengths) is its lack of a Tolstoyan hero. Nobody in the story undergoes a moral crisis, seeks perfection or proclaims a truth. The story is didactic, but didacticism is not the major concern... First and foremost, it is the story of a man of action, and the chief stimulus to its composition was not a moral purpose, but the simple admiration inspired in Tolstoy by the strength, courage and dignity of a man whom he saw, like the thistle in the prologue to the story, as an embodiment of the life-force of nature itself.

The 'hero' of the novel is one of the leaders of the mountain tribes-

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men who fought under Shamil to resist the Russian conquest of the Caucasus in the 1850s, and its theme took Tolstoy – now an old man and a pacifist – back to the fighting in which he had himself been involved as a young soldier. Dr Briggs recalls Wittgenstein's having said, when advising a friend to read the book, that 'I hope you'll get a lot out of it, because there's a lot in it', and he contends that it is still, in his words, 'under-researched'. His own article makes out a good case for Tolstoy's artistic self-discipline and restraint in this late work, which he confessed to having written 'on the sly', his masterly blend of narrative skill and moral argument and the powerful effects he obtained by controlled understatement. Above all, he emphasises its formally satisfying cyclical design, and concludes with some justice that it triumphantly reconciles 'the competing claims of history, literature and moral instruction'.

A major contribution to the second part of the volume, which concerns Tolstoy's ideas and their reception, is Mr Greenwood's article on Tolstoy and religion. In his recent book, *Tolstoy: the Comprehensive Vision*, Mr Greenwood took exception in his chapter on Tolstoy, the Gospels and Jesus to the not uncommon view that Tolstoy was too much of an eighteenth-century rationalist to understand religion. He maintained, rather, that Tolstoy used his formidable powers of reasoning to attempt to find out what Jesus taught, whether it was true, and what obedience to it involved in practical terms – and what it involved above all was a change of heart and a refusal, as far as humanly possible, to compromise with the world. His present article grows out of this chapter to a considerable extent and builds upon it. His answer to the first question he asks – whether Tolstoy was purely a rationalist of the Enlightenment with no 'gift for religion', in the curious expression attributed to Father Florovsky – is that he most certainly was not. Nevertheless it is common knowledge that he was profoundly influenced by one eighteenth-century thinker in particular – Jean-Jacques Rousseau – and especially by his belief in man's need for religion and a religious awareness of his own place in the world. Mr Greenwood singles out various aspects of Rousseau's thought which appealed to Tolstoy, such as, for example, the distinction he made between *amour de soi* and *amour propre*, and goes on to assert that both men wished to preserve the essentials of the Christian religion, and not to replace it or modify it to suit the spirit of the age. (One wonders, however, how far this view is compatible with Tolstoy's equally strong desire to purge it of miracle and dogma.) The middle section of the article is a study of religion as reflected in Tolstoy's two major novels. In *War and Peace* he seems to capitulate in his own name to Christian

Providentialism, while allowing religious insights to be articulated by his 'seekers', especially Pierre and Prince Andrey. In *Anna Karenina*, however, the development of Levin is seen rather as mirroring the crisis of his own age – a man unable to live with the religion he had inherited, and yet unable to live without a religion at all. The religion of progress was, of course, no substitute, either for Levin or for Tolstoy. Nor did Tolstoy subscribe to a nineteenth-century belief in history revealing the rational plan of a mind unfolding itself in the course of time, or in Christianity as a 'historical religion'. Rather did he seek for an un-historical or 'de-historicised' Jesus and the historically unconditioned core of his teaching, uncontaminated by progress and the passage of time. Mr Greenwood reaffirms that for Tolstoy the core of that teaching was Christ's moral commandments, especially turning the other cheek, non-resistance to evil and the forgiving of one's enemies. These commandments needed no supernatural authority or historical sanctions to justify them, but made eminently good sense as a guide to living to any man or woman prepared to accept them without reservation, and constituted in Tolstoy's eyes the only prescription for true happiness.

Was Tolstoy a Christian? I would say not. He did not observe the ritual of the Orthodox Church or subscribe to its dogmas. He did not recognise Christ as the only-begotten Son of God or believe in His physical resurrection. He had no strong faith in a life after death, although his views on the subject were not rigid. At times he seemed more of a Hindu or a Buddhist than a Christian. He was excommunicated by the Orthodox Church and buried without any rites on his own estate at his request. Tolstoy was essentially a man who tried to live a religious life without the help of a spiritual director and without any links with an established church or religious organisation. Religion for him was not Christianity in any normally accepted sense, but a moral code of practice summed up by the five commandments which he deduced from Christ's teaching as he understood it. Morality had the sanction of a great, if not the greatest religious teacher, but the way a man lived mattered more in the final analysis than what he believed. In *Religion and Morality* he wrote: 'Religion is a certain relationship established by a man between his individual personality and the infinite universe or its source. Morality is the ever-present guide to life resulting from that relationship.' This leaves many questions unanswered, but gives some indication of priorities.

Professor Seeley's article on Tolstoy's philosophy of history may be seen as a reaction against a reaction. For many years it was fashionable to dismiss the digressions in *War and Peace* as unworthy

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of serious academic consideration. Tolstoy's long-winded disquisitions on the nature of power, the problem of free will and determinism or the role of great men in history were commonly brushed aside as being extremist, intellectually feeble, vitiated by errors of fact, repetitive, pedestrian or simply irrelevant. Sir Isaiah Berlin's widely acclaimed essay *The Hedgehog and the Fox* rightly, in my opinion, took up the cudgels on Tolstoy's behalf, arguing that his philosophy of history had not received the attention it deserved, finding some of the charges levelled against his intellectual powers grotesquely implausible and attempting to understand its merits and original insights while not overlooking its excesses or factual inaccuracies. Professor Seeley is not impressed, however, and his article is a devastating attack on Tolstoy the logician and philosopher, which castigates his 'all or nothing mentality', his abuse of the words 'all' and 'always', his failure to explain the meaning of 'cause', his confusion of necessary and sufficient causes and his misleading analogies and parables, about one of which 'the kindest thing one can say is that it is beneath criticism'. Of Tolstoy's philosophising, he is tempted to say that 'when it is thinking, it is not original, and when it is original, it is not thinking'. He regards him, indeed, not as a thinker, but as an ideologue, a heresiarch, a polemicist. Not even Tolstoy's analytical or critical powers escape the charges brought against his synthetic or positive thinking, and Professor Seeley is forced to conclude that one must look for an explanation in terms of the thought of a child in the pre-logical stages of its development (in Piaget's terminology) which is characterised by egocentricity and concreteness and has as its aim emotional satisfaction, not truth.

Some of Professor Seeley's points are perhaps too obvious to need making; some have been made before; some are original. As a piece of polemical writing his essay invites comparison with the best passages of the second epilogue of *War and Peace*. Like Tolstoy he overstates his case, and, as with Tolstoy, one is left wondering why. I personally doubt, however, if the reasons for the logical flaws and excesses in Tolstoy's thinking have anything to do with child psychology. I very much doubt if his ability to think clearly was inferior to that of the average intelligent professor (outside, perhaps, departments of logic and metaphysics!). Surely the crux of the matter is the lurking assumption intelligent people have that a mastery of the art of logic or 'the technique of thinking', to use Professor Seeley's words, makes it likely that the conclusions arrived at on the important problems of life will somehow be more sensible for that reason. History affords ample evidence that brilliant thinkers say silly things. Bertrand Russell was presumably a far better logician and had mastered 'the technique of thinking' to a higher degree

than Tolstoy, but this does not mean that his views on, for example, communism are *ipso facto* more sensible than those of a man who has never studied mathematics or philosophy. Tolstoy also says some silly things, but his distrust of received historical opinion and history textbooks, his reaction against the adulation of 'great men', his conviction that the role of the masses and of countless unquantifiable impersonal forces is more important in shaping history than that of individual representatives of power, and his belief that man cannot consciously produce the result he wishes of an action which is of any significance and which involves more people than himself, deserve as much serious attention in an assessment of his philosophy of history as do his logical shortcomings and exaggerations.

I would also venture to disagree with Professor Seeley's assertion that Tolstoy's life was a largely unavailing struggle to harmonise his behaviour with his principles. Tolstoy set himself impossibly high standards because he believed that he was bound to fall below them, and that the higher he pitched them, the higher the level would be to which he eventually fell. In a letter to W. L. Kantor of 9 April 1890, he wrote: 'It's impossible to admit the slightest compromise over an idea. Compromise will inevitably come in practice, and therefore it's all the less possible to admit it in theory.' Tolstoy recognised that he could never 'harmonise his behaviour with his principles', but he stood out from the mass of mankind by choosing principles to follow which could not be reconciled to any degree with his existing way of life. He gave up hunting, shooting, tobacco and alcohol. He became a strict vegetarian. He renounced his property and the copyright of his works. An ex-army officer, he became an uncompromising pacifist. A sexually promiscuous man until his marriage at the age of thirty-four, he remained unswervingly loyal to his wife for the forty-eight years of their married life. He tried desperately hard to turn the other cheek, to humble himself, to forgive. How much easier it would have been for him to have continued to do what he enjoyed doing and to have justified it like the overwhelming majority of his contemporaries and denigrators by saying that he practised what he preached and that his behaviour harmonised with his principles! Professor Seeley's incisive, abrasive and well-written essay will nevertheless provide the sort of stimulus to thought that Tolstoy himself would have welcomed, and will encourage readers to turn back again both to the philosophical passages themselves and to Sir Isaiah Berlin's more sympathetic approach to them.

The contributions by Professor Lampert and Mr Holman were unfortunately not available to me when I wrote this Introduction. I have, however, heard Mr Holman speak on the subject of Tolstoyan colonies in this country, and his article will be particularly

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appropriate at a time when there is a marked growth of interest in Great Britain in alternative forms of society and experiments in communal living. The popularity of Tolstoy's ideas and the extent of their influence have fluctuated considerably in the course of this century; admiration for his works of fiction on the other hand has never flagged. Not everyone will agree with Professor Seeley when he writes that 'Tolstoy never bothered, or never managed to learn the technique of thinking', but nobody will quarrel with him when he goes on to say: 'He did learn the techniques of writing, and so he was able to transcend them – and become a Napoleon of literature.'

NOTE

1. John Hagan, 'A Pattern of Character Development in *War and Peace*: Prince Andrej', *Slavic and East European Journal*, 13 (Summer 1969), 164–90. See p. 169.

PART ONE

On translating Tolstoy

HENRY GIFFORD

I

One may guess that Tolstoy's readers in the English language are not greatly outnumbered by those who read him in Russian. *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, *Resurrection*, no less than the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, have their place in world literature. So it is reasonable to recall Matthew Arnold's classic essay 'On Translating Homer' (1861), not only because the appeal of Tolstoy in his freshness and wide scope is not unlike that of Homer, but because with so many readers depending upon English translation for their knowledge of a very important writer, the question of how to communicate his effect is quite as central for us as that of how to represent Homer was for Arnold. And of all Arnold's 'practical advice to a translator', the most pressing is that Homer 'should be approached...in the simplest frame of mind possible'. He recognised that Homer was in many ways remote from the modern age, whereas Tolstoy's milieu still, of course, remains largely accessible to us. The Russian language he wrote is no more strange to the ears of his countrymen today than the language of Dickens, George Eliot or, for that matter, Arnold is to ours. Despite the immense upheavals of political and industrial revolution in Russia, the last five or six decades of the Empire, during which Tolstoy wrote, are more present to our imaginations than the age of Peter the First was to his. At the beginning of the 1870s he was forced to abandon a projected novel on the life and times of Peter. All the characters, as his wife pointed out to him, were dressed and in their places; but they did not breathe.¹ Tolstoy, of course, brings his own time alive for us as no contemporary of Peter's could bring alive that earlier period for him. Yet the historical imagination is hardly needed to call up the world in which Tolstoy lived. The nineteenth century is still part of what we term the modern age.

Arnold required that his translator should not take Homer's text in the wrong spirit. He cites the misunderstanding by Ruskin of two

lines from the *Iliad*. Helen has just mentioned her brothers Castor and Pollux who she thinks are alive:

So she spoke; but them there already covered the life-giving earth
Away in Lacedaemon in their dear fatherland.

(III.243-4)

Ruskin commented: 'The poet has to speak of the earth in sadness; but he will not let that sadness affect or change his thought of it. No; though Castor and Pollux be dead, yet the earth is our mother still, – fruitful, life-giving.' That kind of sophistication is not likely to arise today when we read Tolstoy: no modern habits of feeling have to be unlearned.

And yet fidelity to Tolstoy's meaning is not so easily won. He complained about the translators of Homer who gave 'boiled and distilled tepid water' instead of what was really there: 'water from a spring causing the teeth to ache, – with glitter and sun and even with little splinters and dust-specks'.² The translations we shall look at are certainly not 'tepid'; but Tolstoy in his own fashion can set the teeth aching, and the translator may often want to discard the 'little splinters and dust-specks'.

When Robert Bridges put two passages from Tolstoy into his anthology *The Spirit of Man* (1916), he allowed himself the same liberties as with Plato, in rendering whom, he said 'I have aimed at pleasing myself'. Nevill Forbes gave him a literal translation; but this compiler who had been 'guided by his own moods' did not hesitate to touch up the description of Prince Andrey and Pierre philosophising on the ferry (*War and Peace*, II.II.12) so that the general tone would not jar with that of his passages from Plato, Marcus Aurelius or St Augustine. The idiom of all these translations is more deliberately archaising; but the rhythms of the King James Bible played a subtle part in changing the rhetoric of Tolstoy here into one that is not quite the same in cadence:

Neither have I seen it: nor is it possible for any one to see it who looks upon this life as the sum and end of all...in the universe, in the whole universe, truth has its kingdom; and we who are now children of the earth are none the less children of the universe. Do I not feel in my soul that I am actually a member of this vast harmonious whole?...I feel not only that I cannot utterly perish, since nothing in the universe is annihilated, but that I always shall be and always was...

The original has not the organ music of this which seemed appropriate to Bridges. Pierre says 'the end of all' (*konets vsego*), not 'the sum and end'; and in the latter part of the second sentence he is less smoothly elegant than Bridges: 'and we are now the children of

earth, but eternally the children of the whole universe'. He feels that 'I form a part' (*sostavlyayu chast'*), not that 'I am actually a member', of 'this vast harmonious whole'. (Had Bridges somewhere in mind St Paul's saying 'for we are members one of another'?)³ Finally, Pierre does not seek to vary his phrases: he will say with an awkward insistence, 'I feel that I not only cannot disappear as nothing disappears in the universe, but that I always shall be and always was.' 'I cannot utterly perish' is surely Biblical, perhaps by way of the Gettysburg address 'shall not perish from the earth'; and 'nothing is annihilated' seems to be invoking a scientific law, whereas Pierre's word 'disappear' (*ischeznut'*) gives the bare fact, shocking the mind which cannot conceive of itself as no longer present.

More may be said about the ways in which Bridges has manipulated the entire paragraph from which the quotations were taken. After Pierre's question 'Do I not feel. . . that I am actually a member', there follows a second which Bridges has rendered 'Do I not feel that. . . I make one link. . .?' But the word he translates 'I make' is the same *sostavlyayu*, 'I form', of the previous sentence. Tolstoy then refers to a 'ladder that leads from plant to man'; but the next sentence, which once again has the ladder, is dropped by Bridges, perhaps as being redundant, and thus he avoids a threefold emphasis on the same image. And his rendering of the previous clauses – 'then why must I suppose that it breaks off at me, and does not lead on further and beyond?' – has a deftness not to be found in the Russian words: 'then why do I suppose that this ladder, to which I do not see an end below, it [*sic*] is lost among the plants?' There would be no point in preserving Tolstoy's faulty grammar; but at least the clumsy original should remind us that Pierre's eloquence has its basis in the irregularities of conversation. This oversight makes his voice actual to us, behind the rhetorical cadences.

Bridges was also tempted to poeticise the text. Where Tolstoy notes that now 'the evening frost was covering with stars the puddles at the ferry', the effect is made more ornamental by Bridges: 'the evening frost was beginning to incrust the little pools on the shore with starry crystals. . .', and the closing lines almost transfer the scene to Innisfree: 'The ferry-boat lay drifted along the bank, and only the ripples of the current could be heard lapping feebly against its sides. Prince André fancied that this patter of the water babbled a refrain to Pierre's words "That is sooth, accept it: that is sooth, accept it." ' Tolstoy's description was sturdier and more direct: 'The ferry-boat had long since put in, and only the waves of the stream with a feeble sound struck against the bottom of the ferry-boat. To Prince Andrey it seemed that this gurgling of the waves to Pierre's words kept repeating: "True, believe this." ' The final

phrase in Russian, *Pravda, ver' etomu*, plays lightly with onomatopoeia. But it is not a babbled refrain. The rendering by Bridges might conceivably have done for Turgenev, and there was a time earlier in his career when Tolstoy aspired to write in Turgenev's manner. It is not, however, the mood of the scene that counts for him in this passage, but its appropriateness to the metaphysical ideas expressed by Pierre. Prince Andrey would like to believe him, and fancies that the sound of the water has lulled his own doubts.

II

The translator of Tolstoy will find himself in varying degrees wanting to mediate between that 'continuous literary decorum' so much prized by Bridges and the literal text a good dictionary can supply. Arnold would have him 'penetrated by a sense' of the author's eminent qualities, and what these are, in Tolstoy no less than in Homer, should be plain enough. Yet we all make assumptions about style, and may impose them without fully recognising the fact. 'The simplest frame of mind possible' will be complicated by an awareness that the English reader has formed certain expectations, based on what he regards as the appropriate idiom for a modern novel. If Tolstoy seems to him outlandish or pedantic, he will feel let down by the translator. Everyone concedes that the rendering of poetry must be imperfect. Not everyone realises that the rendering of imaginative prose has its pitfalls, and that the great majority of translators, partly through the sheer bulk of their undertaking, and partly through inattention, fail to accomplish what is possible.

There are four translators of Tolstoy ahead of all others in English – Louise and Aylmer Maude, working usually together but sometimes separately; Constance Garnett; and Rosemary Edmonds whose Penguin versions are now widely known. It seems better to leave N. H. Dole and Professor Leo Wiener out of the reckoning. They were pioneers, but nobody is going to argue that the quality of their work has earned them more than a wayside cross. The other four have more solid claims to attention. The Maudes indeed, with their *Tolstóy Centenary Edition* (1928–37), made their bid to establish an Authorised Version. They were not unreasonable in hoping this might be so. The Norton Critical Editions of *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* did well to use the Maude rendering. It is the soundest we have, and Tolstoy himself admired their work.

Constance Garnett preceded them in the translation of *Anna Karenina* (1901), *The Death of Ivan Ilyitch, and other stories* (1902), and *War and Peace* (1904), though Louise Maude's *Resurrection* dates from 1900 (revised edition 1902). Mrs Garnett then moved on to other writers – Dostoyevsky and Chekhov (having already trans-

lated Turgenev). She has been much praised as a translator, in one respect immoderately so: it is now well understood that her Russian was not dependable. Maude in an appendix to his first volume of Tolstoy's *Life*⁴ has pointed out some definite mistakes, and these are not untypical, as any close reading of her work against the original will show. To give a random example (not quoted by Maude): when Levin waits in the hotel before going to Kitty's house as her accepted lover, he overhears the people in the next room (*Anna Karenina*, IV. 15). Tolstoy wrote: 'they were saying something about machines and fraud and they were coughing a morning cough.' Mrs Garnett translates: 'they were talking about some sort of machines, and swindling, and coughing their morning coughs.' The first clause is wrong; the second could appear to state that swindling was their activity, not their topic; and the third misses the point of a 'morning cough' – which has a particular sound of its own. 'Their morning coughs' suggest a routine. But Levin in his heightened awareness notices that a morning cough is something different.

The appeal of Constance Garnett consists in her sensibility. She can write with a delicacy of touch which the Maudes, for all their diligence and good sense, seldom achieve. This shows particularly when she hits on some phrase so apt as to seem definitive: '“When I'm old and ugly I'll be the same”, Betsy used to say, “but for a pretty young woman like you *it's early days for that house of charity*”' (II.4, my italics). Again it seems right that the exclamation used both by Anna and Vronsky in the distress that follows the consummating of their love, *radi Boga*, should be rendered as 'for pity's sake' (II.11); and that (earlier) Anna on seeing her husband at the station in St Petersburg should have found herself saying: 'Oh, mercy! why do his ears look like that?' (I.30). Mrs Garnett muddles at least one of those utterances from Fyodor after the threshing scene which matter so much to Levin (VIII.11); but his final remark comes over in her version with a naturalness not approached here by the Maudes. They put it, stiffly: 'Take you, for instance, you won't injure anyone either. . . .' Constance Garnett overlooks the 'either' (*tozhe*); but she catches the rhythm of ordinary speech: 'Take you now, you wouldn't wrong a man. . .' This translation comes alive because it is not cluttered with terms alien to a rustic vocabulary – 'for instance', 'injure' – and because there is the sanction of a traditional way of life expressed in that simple phrase 'wrong a man'. The emphasis on 'man' is correct. Fyodor several times uses the word *chelovek*. He expounds a morality in which the due relation with God ensures a proper regard for man. But the precept falls differently in the Maudes' version: it has not been realised, and the insensitivity to rhythm betrays that.

Constance Garnett may also be commended for her refusal to tamper with Tolstoy's syntax. She had an ear for the cadencing of prose to the same degree as Bridges; but she would accept the angularities in Tolstoy and not shrink from his repetitions:

every day he made ready to talk to her. But every time he began talking to her, he felt that the spirit of evil and deceit, which had taken possession of her, had possession of him too, and he talked to her in a tone quite unlike that in which he had meant to talk. Involuntarily he talked to her in his habitual tone. . . . (II.10)

Here it is the Maudes who depart from absolute fidelity to the text:

Every day he prepared himself to have a talk with her. But each time he began to speak with her he felt the same spirit of evil and falsehood which had taken possession of her master him also, and he neither said the things he meant to, nor spoke in the tone he had meant to adopt. He spoke involuntarily. . . .

The many small changes in this may seem preferable to Tolstoy's reiterations, which have an aggressive note. Mrs Garnett, however, serves him better. She has reproduced his mannerism, and yet contrives to write an English that does not seem uncouth or defiant, as a literal translation without her modest harmonies probably would.

Aylmer Maude and his wife were qualified in everything except a creative sense of language to make the ideal translation. They had lived long in Russia (Louise Maude was born there); they knew Tolstoy intimately, and Aylmer Maude understood, and appraised with an independent mind, the ideas and aims of Tolstoy. Also, as he tells us, they kept each a vigilant eye on the other's performance. The result is a lucid and accurate version, at home with the peculiarities of Russian life, and written in a serviceable prosaic English of the kind we associate with Mark Rutherford or Gissing. Their work can always be counted on for those negative virtues which temper a style: sobriety, explicitness, a firm hold on the argument. However, their resources are limited in range of tone. They have little sense of colloquial idiom, and certainly not the inventiveness to match the elliptical and wary speech of the Russian peasant. In rendering such plays as *The Power of Darkness* they are competent to give a neutral paraphrase; but the effect is almost that of the interpreter who explains to the foreign bystander 'What he is saying, is. . . '.

For the general reader today it is probably Rosemary Edmonds, the Penguin translator, who represents Tolstoy. Her *Anna Karenina* (1954), *War and Peace* (1957) and *Resurrection* (1966) are very widely available. Like all translations issued by Penguin Books, her

work is readable and it moves lightly and freely; the dialogue in particular is much more convincing than that contrived by the Maudes. There is a moment in *The Cossacks* when Maryana rounds upon Olenin with the indignant words translated in the Maudes' version as 'Leave me alone, you pitch!' (chapter 31). It sounds bizarre, and reminiscent of Fluellen; but they have, with unblinking fidelity, given the sense of *Otstan'*, *smola!* 'Let go, you wicked man' from Rosemary Edmonds loses the smirching effect, and faintly suggests a Victorian melodrama, but at least it can pass for living speech.

In dealing with the many hundreds of pages in a major novel by Tolstoy, the translator may be expected now and again to slip. Tolstoy himself was an indefatigable reviser, always prone to jettison whole sentences in proof. Ideally his translator should approach the text with a similar resolve to make every word justify its presence. Miss Edmonds is sometimes lax about detail – and in Tolstoy's writing detail is always significant. At the close of a chapter to which I have already referred – that describing Levin's visit to Kitty and his future parents-in-law (*Anna Karenina*, IV.15) – he is overcome with tenderness for the old prince on seeing how Kitty responds to her father's embrace and blessing. If we follow Miss Edmonds, it would seem that he noticed 'how fervently and tenderly Kitty kissed his strong hand'. But she kissed it *long*, not fervently, and the hand was *fleshy*. Hands are expressive for Tolstoy – think of Napoleon's, or Speransky's, or the small energetic hands of Anna. Miss Edmonds, and Mrs Garnett too who changes it to 'muscular', presumably did not want the prince to have a 'fleshy' hand.

It is in small but damaging ways like this that a translator can falsify the effect of Tolstoy. These are indeed minute particulars, but they are far from being trivial.

III

At this point we are brought up against those qualities in Tolstoy's style about which the translator, if he takes the advice of Arnold, should be clear in his mind. R. F. Christian's study of *War and Peace* has a chapter that will greatly help him to do this.⁵ The first thing that a translator should note is Tolstoy's lifelong preoccupation with different kinds of rhetoric. Christian claims that he used in *War and Peace* 'every device of arrangement and balance known to Cicero and Demosthenes', and shows for example how he would set his clauses in groups of three.⁶ The general impression among readers may be that Tolstoy is an exceedingly natural writer, blunt to the point of gracelessness. But he was always a rhetorician, though his style over a span of sixty years did not remain fixed in one pattern.

Eykhenbaum emphasises that the opening of *Sevastopol in May* (1855) has the 'exalted and pathetic' style of a declamation, and points out how much in constructing it he had learned from reading verse and particularly that of Lermontov.⁷ At the start of the 1870s, between *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy was teaching the peasant boys on his estate, and came to feel more and more dissatisfied with his previous manner of writing. He decided that the language used by the peasants was 'the best poetic regulator. You may want to say what is superfluous, high-flown, unhealthy – the language will not allow it, while our literary language has no bones; so pampered, you may talk whatever rubbish you like – it all resembles literature.'⁸

The stories he wrote for his *ABC* (*Azbuka*) were to achieve that simplicity of outline which he admired in Russian folk poetry and in Homer – like 'pencil sketches without shading'.⁹ The supreme example is of course *A Prisoner in the Caucasus* (1872). Soon afterwards the reading of Pushkin's prose tales gave him a fresh incentive to simplicity which can be felt in the style of *Anna Karenina* when compared with that of *War and Peace*. Then at the beginning of the next decade there was another change of manner, arising from his deep spiritual crisis, and resulting in the brilliant expository prose of *A Confession*. In all these phases much persisted from the original character revealed first of all in his diary:¹⁰ the same blend of acute observation and laboured analysis under heads, the working of a mind almost excessively precise, which sought out fixities, the irreducible elements in feeling. He has no patience with ambiguity or with anything that resists definition.

Tolstoy is in one respect easy to translate. Vladimir Nabokov's revised version of *Eugene Onegin* now includes in the commentary what he calls a 'Correlative Lexicon', the purpose of which is to fix in English the exact shade of meaning for the words most often used by Pushkin. Many of these, which express nuances of feeling, are extremely hard to match in another language: *umileniye*, *skuka*, *toska*, *nega* to name merely a few. But Tolstoy is not concerned with this kind of sensibility. More interesting and tangible to him are such conditions as *styd* (shame) and *nelovkost'* (awkwardness), in which his characters so often find themselves. Penetrating though Tolstoy's analysis never fails to be, his moral vocabulary is transparent.

All the same, this definiteness can present problems. These are not in the recognition of terms, but spring rather from his peculiar syntax. More than most writers of prose fiction, Tolstoy would ignore the conventional order of words for the sake of registering his impression more faithfully. *A Prisoner in the Caucasus* might

have been considered the very plainest of narratives, offering no difficulties. But extreme honesty – the willingness to see things exactly as they are – calls for the closest attention from a translator. Just before Zhilin is captured, we are told in the Maude version: ‘He saw a red-bearded Tartar on a grey horse, with his gun raised, come at him yelling and showing his teeth.’¹¹ But Tolstoy put it differently: ‘He sees – there draws near to him a red-bearded Tartar on a grey horse. He yelps, he has bared his teeth, gun at the ready.’ The historical present should be kept. The integrity of the two sentences is important – their separation marks two stages of consciousness. Finally, the order of words is precisely that of Zhilin’s taking in the facts; and the climax of all is the sign of imminent danger, the ‘gun at the ready’.

In more elaborate writing than this tale, Tolstoy will delay the appearance of a noun by a cluster of adjectives or by participial clauses.¹² Here the English language cannot be bent to reflect his purpose. But in another way it can. Christian has singled out the colossally long sentence (above 230 words) describing the futile and contradictory orders of Rostopchin when Moscow is about to fall (*War and Peace*, III.iii.5). It is preserved in one piece by the Maudes, but Rosemary Edmonds breaks it near the end. Tolstoy’s final image in this sentence is of a ‘vast popular torrent’ that sweeps Rostopchin along in its course; the sentence should be left as a torrent.

It has also to be recognised that Tolstoy is very sensitive to the tone of his characters and their peculiar idiom, whether this reproduces the language of the soldiers in *The Wood-Felling*,¹³ or of independent and old-fashioned aristocrats like Akhrosimova or old Prince Bolkonsky in *War and Peace*. Both the latter are somewhat intractable. Akhrosimova’s speech (*War and Peace*, I.i.15) is not very far from that of her own peasants, full of quick turns, not a word wasted – but overbearing as they could never be. Prince Bolkonsky talks as a survivor of Catherine’s age. He is even capable of modelling a sentence on the Latin–German pattern favoured by Lomonosov. The Maudes render his question to Andrey: ‘Well, go on, . . . tell me how the Germans have taught you to fight Buonaparte by this new science you call “strategy”?’ The old man’s utterance in the original is more contorted. Literally it reads: ‘Come on, tell . . . how you the Germans with Buonaparte to fight by your new science, “strategy” named, have taught?’ (I.i.23). After his opening words *kak vas nemtsy* the syntax loses all touch with colloquial Russian. It would be difficult to simulate in English, but some indication is needed that he speaks with an old-fashioned formality. So too the translator ought not to let pass his fondness for the diction of an earlier time, as when he uses the outmoded word *propozitsiya* for

a proposal of marriage (i.iii.5), or refers to some notes he has made as *remarki* (i.i.25). The Maudes are content to translate this as 'jottings'; so is Miss Edmonds. But some such term as 'memorials' would better convey its antique flavour.

Leontiev said of Pushkin's historical novel *The Captain's Daughter* that 'the narrative of Grinyov [its hero] is redolent of the eighteenth century'.¹⁴ But Tolstoy did not try to narrate his story of Alexander I's time in the language that would then have been used: he narrates in his own voice, not assuming a *persona* (as Pushkin did for *The Tales of Belkin*). Nor, Leontiev insists, does Prince Andrey or Pierre really belong to the first decades of the nineteenth century. Their mode of thought and expression is Tolstoy's own in the 1860s.¹⁵ One cannot imagine Tolstoy setting himself to imitate Thackeray's *Esmond*, in which a deliberate patina of archaism is laid on the prose. He was concerned with not the peculiar tone of a bygone epoch, but enduring moral problems; with the laws that govern history, and not its local colouring.

IV

The most remarkable of Tolstoy's talents as a writer has often been noticed – an unfailing ability to penetrate the consciousness of his characters. Except when he dogmatizes upon questions of principle in his own person, habitually it is as an impressionist of a particular kind that he sees human life. He does not, like Flaubert and other French contemporaries, satisfy himself with a *pointilliste* rendering of sensations, in which moral concern is so far as possible suspended. Rather he identifies with the character at the given moment, intensely aware of what passes through a mind that may seek to escape from moral issues, but before very long will have to face them. This applies most obviously to the people with whose problems Tolstoy is engaged throughout a story; but even those on the fringes illuminate in some way or other the same problems, however indirectly. Thus each impression, it might be claimed, is a link in Tolstoy's system of linkings; and since the chain is no stronger than its weakest link, the blurring of episodes will diminish the effect of the whole novel. Tolstoy used the expression 'labyrinth of linkings' to account for his method in *Anna Karenina*.¹⁶ There are two aspects of this procedure to be considered.

Tolstoy, as I have said above, sought out fixities. Behind the notation of experience as unpredictably and in manifold form it plays upon the individual consciousness, he looks for the moral values that are to emerge; and these, not surprisingly, are constants. When Levin at the end of his night on the hayrick thinks over what he ought to do, life as led by the peasants seemingly offers him 'that

satisfaction, calm and dignity the absence of which he so painfully felt' (*Anna Karenina*, III.12). Two of those three terms, translated here as 'calm' and 'dignity' (*uspokoyeniye i dostoinstvo*), recur with slight modification at key points in the book. Earlier Kitty has admired Varenka at the German watering-place for 'her enviable calmness and dignity' (*spokoystviye i dostoinstvo*) (II.32), just as Vronsky had regretted that Anna, in her deep involvement with himself, cannot be 'calm and dignified' (*spokoyna i dostoyna*) (III.21). He learns the same day that she is pregnant, and her agitation quickly affects him. 'I cannot be calm', he tells her, 'when you cannot be calm' (II.23); and it is this disturbance that leads him inadvertently to kill his horse, thereby receiving 'the most oppressive and tormenting memory of his life' (II.25). Neither of them will ever attain to the calm and dignity they desire. Levin finds when eventually he does meet Anna that a sudden inexplicable change of feeling comes over her face, 'before so beautiful in its calmness' (*spokoystviye*) (VII.10); while Kitty on the very last page of the book sees from his face that he is 'calm and joyful' (VIII.19).

It surely matters, trifling though the point may seem, that the translator should emphasise the common element in the words *uspokoyeniye*, *spokoystviye*, *pokoy*, *spokoynyy* which recur so often in *Anna Karenina*. The alternatives they use – 'peace', 'calm', 'tranquillity' – are hardly to be differentiated from one another; but when Tolstoy's moral vocabulary is so spare, reduced to the bedrock essentials, something of the novel's steady, even obsessive, preoccupation with certain values is lost should the translator retreat however slightly from singleness of meaning.

The other point is I daresay more substantial. Since the whole process of the novel involves scrutinising a character's thought and feeling at a particular moment, no detail in the registration should be tampered with. The order imposed by syntax, as we have seen with reference to *A Prisoner in the Caucasus*, counts for no less than does the connotation of individual words. Fortunately it can come across in an English rendering with no serious dislocation. The priorities of Tolstoy's syntax in any sentence, its weight, speed and where possible its rhythm, all need to be reproduced. And sufficient to itself as a particular scene may appear, the translator must never forget the linkages to other scenes in the novel, which has been constructed with an internal organisation so close and so richly ramified as to deserve the name 'Shakespearian' (though Tolstoy would doubtless not have cared for it).

Take for example once more the scene when Levin has just been accepted by Kitty (IV.15). 'The whole of that night and morning Levin lived altogether unconsciously and felt altogether withdrawn

from the conditions of material life.' He 'felt altogether independent of his body'. So his perceptions are most likely to have the quality of a trance. For him, as for Anna in a totally different scene, the obverse of this, her last journey to the station, common life has revealed itself under a new light of transformation. But whereas Anna can see only its emptiness, the spite and hypocrisy which seem to define all relations between people, Levin is in a state bordering on religious ecstasy. He has that inviolable calm known to Wordsworth, when

with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.¹⁷

(But this does not prevent him from 'continually glancing at his watch and looking round on all sides'.) So everything that appears before him will be revelatory. The emotion he feels for Kitty is a joy that spreads over the entire scene.

And what he saw then, that afterwards he never saw. Particularly the children on their way to school, the blue-grey pigeons flown down from roof to pavement, and the rolls sprinkled with flour, which were set out by an unseen hand, touched him. These rolls, the pigeons and the two boys were unearthly beings. All this happened at one time: a boy ran up to a pigeon and smiling glanced at Levin; the pigeon whirled its wings and fluttered off, shining in the sun between specks of snow quivering in the air, and from the little window came the scent of baked bread and there were set out the rolls. All this together was so extraordinarily nice that Levin began to laugh and to cry from joy.

In *Anna Karenina* there are two modes of symbolism. One is as it were conscripted by the story, the other is free. The first mode can be seen most clearly in the insistent reminders that Anna is to die on the railway, as when Vronsky's declaration of love in the blizzard-swept station between Moscow and St Petersburg is commented on by the forlorn whistling of the locomotive (1.30). But the blizzard itself belongs, I suggest, to the second mode. It seems to overcome an obstacle at the moment he speaks, and the detail of an iron sheet that has been worked loose and clatters, aptly corresponds to the undoing of a moral structure in Anna's mind. Here the pigeons and the unseen hand belong to the second mode. They are no more than Moscow street pigeons, but they have become, like the boys and even the rolls, 'unearthly beings' – and the connotations they carry are of human affection – as in Krylov's famous poem, 'Dva golubya' – and probably of divine love. (The Russian word can mean dove as well as pigeon.) That unseen hand 'works in a mysterious way'; and

it does not seem accidental that the verb immediately following – though not governed by – the hand should be ‘touched him’. When the pigeon, impelled by the smiling boy, flies up into the air it is transfigured among the quivering particles of snow. And these share in the trepidation of Levin’s heart.

The translators have not handled the detail here scrupulously enough. The Maudes unaccountably omit the pavement to which the pigeons have descended, and the rolls are not in their translation sprinkled with flour. They begin specifically with ‘two children’, following this by ‘some pigeons’; but at the beginning it is not the number of these living things that interests Tolstoy so much as their epiphany. Rosemary Edmonds has made them ‘silver-grey pigeons’, which is inaccurate, and has the effect of anticipating the way they will shine in the sun. However, Tolstoy – again like Wordsworth – prefers to show the things as they normally are, the morning incidents of a Moscow street, before the vision transforms them. ‘All this together’ – and ‘together’, omitted by the Maudes, is important – harmonises into a mystery. The Maudes (and Miss Edmonds too) have not the courage of Tolstoy’s conviction: according to the former, the rolls, the pigeons and the two boys ‘seemed creatures not of this earth’. However, for Levin unquestionably they *were* unearthly, as Mrs Garnett has recognised. Rosemary Edmonds says ‘seemed not of this earth’, dropping the idea of ‘creatures’, but the others translate *sushchestva* in this way. This can be defended, but in spite of the symbolism in the pigeons and the invisible hand, I think that Tolstoy wants to stress the fact of their *being* (as Wordsworth would) rather than their dependence on a creator. This idea would better be conveyed by one of two other nouns: *sozdaniye* or *tvar’*.

V

After his profound crisis, foreshadowed in the last part of *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy wrote *A Confession* in 1879, which Mirsky praised very highly, considering it to be ‘in some ways his greatest artistic work’, and as a ‘piece of oratory’ unparalleled in Russian literature.¹⁸ Its precision and energy bring to mind the unremitting pressure in Swift’s polemical writing. Mirsky further observed that ‘a good translation (like Aylmer Maude’s) will preserve the oratorical movement of the original’. It is a movement which keeps to the cadences of ordinary speech, and which should not be orchestrated in English with the rhythms of the King James Bible. There is no hieratic solemnity in Tolstoy’s statement. Its graces are strictly functional; the clauses have been arranged to further the argument by consolidating every step, never skipping repetition where this will drive

the point home, and its sonorities seem to arise almost involuntarily from his anguish.

The voice heard in *A Confession* is very much Tolstoy's own, that of the diarist who had read and admired Rousseau, but long since freed himself of Rousseau's affectations. It is a voice that has nothing in common with the monotonous accents of Chernyshevsky, Pisarev and their school. Tolstoy had parodied the intellectual jargon of the time in his comedy *A Contaminated Family* (1862-4). One who sympathised, like Maude, with Tolstoy's ideas and shared his culture could be expected to succeed in rendering the authentic power of *A Confession*. But Tolstoy in his last period still raises problems for the translator. He had renounced the literature in which his own part had been so conspicuous as self-seeking and futile, with no right whatsoever to take upon itself the instruction of the masses. And he wanted even earlier to redeem his language by learning from the example of the uneducated peasant, who could express all that really needed to be said, and without distortion.¹⁹ There were critics who complained that in the *ABC* he 'tried to expound everything in a strange Orel-Kaluga dialect, full of provincialisms and peculiarities'.²⁰ But as Eykhenbaum points out, Tolstoy did not make *A Prisoner in the Caucasus* the imitation folklore one might have expected; it was the purity and simplicity of popular speech that he aimed at.²¹ Some of the *ABC* components – for example, the very well-known *Story of Ivan the Fool* – are modelled on folk tale; however, its language (though obviously it belongs to an oral tradition) is neither strange nor a dialect. Tolstoy was attentive to the idioms of peasant speech, but he would not allow himself to exploit it like Leskov. A letter of 1890 expresses delight in Leskov's 'unusual mastery of the language', but warns him against 'exuberance of images, tones, characteristic expressions'.²² At the same time, in writing his play about peasant life, *The Power of Darkness* (1886), he catches the intonations of popular speech, the tricks of phrase, and the elliptical syntax. Here, as I have mentioned above, the Maudes are at a loss for anything equivalent. Even when their diction is plausible, it fails to account for many points of detail which together make the Russian far more subtle and characteristic of the speaker. Take one short utterance of Nikita (Act v, Scene i), as presented by them: 'Ah, now that I've seen her, life seems more sickening than ever! It was only with her that I ever really lived! I've ruined my life for nothing! I've done for myself! [*Lies down.*] Where can I go? If mother earth would but open and swallow me.'²³ This lacks the force of the original. The first sentence was loosely paratactic in Tolstoy's Russian; here it acquires the casual 'now that...'. The second is much less idiomatic as rendered.

Nikita protests: *Tol'ko i bylo zhizni, chto s neyu*. 'Life wasn't life without her' comes a little closer. 'I've ruined my life for nothing' is only a pale shadow of *Ni za chto pro chto zagubil svoe vek*, with its odd double emphasis at the start: 'Without why or wherefore have I ruined my life.' *Zagubil* here leads to the variant *pogubil* in the following clause, colourlessly rendered as 'I've done for myself'. But he has 'brought ruin' on his 'head'. The final exclamation 'Open, damp mother earth!' – *Rasstupis', mat' syra zemlya!* – uses the traditional phrase of folklore – the dampness being no more realised in the popular mind than Homer's 'life-giving' quality of which Ruskin made so much.

Admittedly, these are tricky idioms to match. Long ago Maurice Baring observed: 'There is, perhaps, nothing so difficult in the world to translate as stories dealing with Russian peasants.' He recommended Kipling's example: 'When Rudyard Kipling gives us the speech of an Indian, he translates it into simple and biblical English. There is no doubt this is the right way to deal with the matter. . .'²⁴ Doubt will remain if one looks at *Kim*. In his novel of the Spanish civil war, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Hemingway made a grotesque attempt to convey the speech of Spanish peasants in a wayward English that had strayed into no-man's-land. The only true equivalent would have to be found in genuine rustic speech. This was still available to T. F. Powys in *Mr Weston's Good Wine* (1927): 'We be asking whether 'tis God or your own carnal body who do hurt they maidens.'²⁵ But the Dorset dialect must have been declining rapidly when he wrote – and even if a translator today could still hear such phrases and be at home among them as Powys was, can we accept Tolstoy's peasants saying, for instance, 'Twas a good thing she's doings were put a stop to by they little worms', or 'I be nothing, and so I mid hang meself'?²⁶ The answer for us today cannot lie in the use of dialect. But the translator should at least try for an English that is the genuine mother tongue, not an uneasily assumed demotic. Russian peasant speech is of a kind to stir up the sense of potentialities in our own language. With persistence and a little daring the appropriate idiom could even now be devised.

VI

After Tolstoy had finished his treatise *What is Art?* he wrote on 3 December 1897 in his diary: 'My work on "Art" has clarified much for me. If God wills that I should write fictional pieces [*khudozhestvennyye veshchi*] – they will be quite different. Writing them will be both easier and harder.'²⁷ Easier because the new novel, *Resurrection* (1899), would no longer be 'unconscious art', as he had foretold in another diary note of 1891; henceforth he could claim

'Now I know what's what.'²⁸ Harder, one assumes, because of the more rigorous demands he would make on himself, and the greater distrust with which he viewed writing even the most moral of fiction.

The ease and the difficulty are revealed in the opening paragraph, which I translate as literally as possible:

However much men tried, having been gathered several hundred thousands into one small place, to disfigure that earth upon which they huddled, however much they blocked up with stones the earth, so that nothing should grow on it, however much they cleared away every blade of grass striking through, however much they made smoke with coal and oil, however much they lopped the trees and drove out all the animals and birds – spring was spring even in the city. The sun warmed, the grass reviving grew and showed green everywhere, if only they did not scrape it away, not only on the grass-plots of the boulevards, but also between flagstones, and the birch trees, poplars, bird-cherry opened their sticky and fragrant leaves, limes swelled up their bursting buds; jackdaws, sparrows, and pigeons in the way of spring joyfully prepared already their nests, and flies buzzed on walls made warm by the sun. Merry were plants, and birds, and insects, and children. But men – great, grown men – did not cease from cheating and tormenting themselves and one another. Men reckoned that what was sacred and important was not this spring morning, not this beauty of God's world, given for the good of all beings – a beauty disposing towards peace, concord and love, but what was sacred and important was what they themselves had devised in order to dominate one over another.

The difficulty shows in the laboured insistence upon his moral message – the ease in the joyful attention to the signs of spring. And yet it can also be said that the laboured parts meet with very little resistance from Tolstoy, who 'now knows what's what', but the delight in sensuous life has, not unlike the grass, to push its way through his doubt and distrust, which it does joyfully. Leonid Pasternak, who illustrated *Resurrection*, describes the extraordinary sense of happiness that Tolstoy conveyed at the time of working on this novel, which was meant to be 'the best thing he had ever written'.²⁹ The moral resurrection of Nekhlyudov is the novel's ostensible theme, which at the close is 'both easier and harder' for Tolstoy to realise. But the book also celebrates, as in the opening paragraph, the resurrection of Tolstoy's creative powers. Their use was more fitful, and restricted by the schematisation of which so many critics have justly complained; but in one notable episode they returned in full strength, and it is with the central chapter of this episode (1.17) that I propose to round off the present enquiry.

It narrates what happened on the night following that in which Nekhlyudov, his aunts and Katyusha have celebrated Easter, the morning of Christ's resurrection.

So passed the whole evening, and there came on the night. The doctor had gone off to sleep. The aunts had retired. Nekhlyudov knew that Katryona Pavlovna was now in the bedroom with the aunts and Katyusha in the maids' room – alone. He again went out on to the porch. Outside it was dark, humid, warm, and that white mist which in spring drives away the last snow or spreads out from the last snow while melting, filled all the air. From the river, which was a hundred paces under the steep slope before the house, were heard strange sounds: this was the breaking up of the ice.

Nekhlyudov came down from the porch and, stepping through the puddles on frozen snow, went up to the window of the maids' room. His heart thumped in his chest so that he heard it; the breath now stopped, now escaped as a heavy sigh. In the maids' room was burning a small lamp. Katyusha alone sat at the table, grown pensive, and was looking before her. Nekhlyudov long, without stirring, looked at her, wanting to know what she would do, assuming that nobody saw her. For some two minutes she sat motionless, then lifted her eyes, smiled, shook as though reproaching herself her head, and changing position, abruptly put both hands on the table and directed her eyes in front of her.

He stood and looked at her and involuntarily heard at the same time both the knock of his own heart and the strange sounds which came up from the river. There on the river in the mist was going on some kind of ceaseless slow working, and now something wheezed, now crackled, now was shattered, now there rang like glass the thin ice-floes.

He stood, looking at the pensive face, tormented by inward working, of Katyusha, and he pitied her, but – a strange thing – this pity only intensified his desire for her.

Desire possessed him entirely.

Some fifteen years later Lawrence wrote a passage in *The Rainbow* which has certain marked similarities to this. It tells how Tom Brangwen made his resolution to call on the Polish woman at the vicarage and ask her to marry him.³⁰ There was a 'wind. . .roaring in the apple-trees', and he caught the 'fine whisper of their spears' when he stooped to pick some daffodils, and later, as night was falling, he heard how 'the bare trees drummed and whistled'. Through the kitchen window he could see the Polish woman alone with her child: 'The mother's face was dark and still, and he saw, with a pang, that she was away back in the life that had been. . .The wind boomed strongly. Mother and child sat motionless, silent, the child staring with vacant dark eyes into the fire, the mother looking into space. . .'³¹ I mention this passage because in its notation it stands fairly close to that by Tolstoy: in each the lover is keenly aware of the non-human world around him and its noises, which become an accompaniment to his passion, and in each the woman is seen through a window, shut off momentarily with her own thoughts. Lawrence about this time praised Tolstoy for his 'marvellous sensuous

understanding';³² and it is nowhere better demonstrated than in this chapter from *Resurrection*. It depends very much on the precision with which detail is registered.

Louise Maude and Rosemary Edmonds have both translated this novel. There are a number of faults in the earlier version, some of which persist in the later one. Nekhlyudov hears not 'a strange sound' but sounds in the plural (put right by Miss Edmonds). Each translator has his heart beating 'fiercely in his breast', but for Maude he only seems to hear it. Edmonds improves on Maude who says Katyusha 'changed her pose and dropped both her arms on the table'. 'Placed both her hands' recognises that the Russian verb *polozhila* is cognate with the word used in the previous clause *polozheniye*, 'position'. Maude has Katyusha 'gazing down before her' ('down' is omitted by Edmonds). Again, Maude has failed to see a point not missed by Edmonds – that there are two short paragraphs describing Nekhlyudov's condition after Katyusha has moved, and each begins with 'He stood'. Maude has 'He stood and looked at her' as part of the first paragraph, then begins a new paragraph with 'There he stood...'. A much more serious criticism is that neither of them has noticed the linkage between the 'working' (*rabota*) on the river and the 'working' on Katyusha's unhappy face: each translation refers to the 'inner struggle of her soul' which follows upon the river's 'labour'.

Tolstoy's narrative continues:

He knocked at the window. She, as if from an electric shock, started with her whole body, and terror was depicted upon her face. Then she sprang up, came over to the window and moved her face up to the glass. The expression of terror did not leave her face even when, placing both palms as shades to her eyes, she recognised him. Her face was unusually serious – he had never seen it like that. She smiled only when he smiled, smiled only as it were in submission to him, but in her heart there was no smile – there was fear. He made her a sign with his hand, calling her out in the yard to him. But she shook her head, she wouldn't come out, and stayed standing at the window. He brought near once again his face to the glass and wanted to call to her that she should come out, but at that moment she turned to the door – evidently somebody had called out for her. Nekhlyudov went away from the window. The mist was so heavy that going five paces away from the house no longer could you see its windows, but only a mass showing black, out of which shone the red, enormous-seeming light from the lamp. On the river there went on the same strange wheezing, rustling, the crack and ring of the ice. Not far away out of the mist in the yard crowed one cock, nearby others answered, and far off from the village were heard, interrupting one another and merging into one, the cocks' crowings. Everything around but the river was completely still. It was already second cockcrow.

Passing twice backwards and forwards beyond the corner of the house and putting his foot several times in a puddle, Nekhlyudov again went up to the window of the maids' room. The lamp was still burning, and Katyusha again sat alone at the table, as though in irresolution. As soon as he came up to the window, she glanced at him. He knocked. And, not looking to see who had knocked, she at once ran from the maids' room, and he heard how there came free and then creaked the outside door. He was waiting for her already by the entrance and at once silently embraced her. She pressed against him, lifted her head and with her lips met his kiss. They were standing round the corner of the entrance on a melted dry spot, and he was all full of tormenting, unsatisfied longing. Suddenly once again there smacked open and creaked with the same creak the outside door, and they could hear the cross voice of Matryona Pavlovna:

'Katyusha!'

She tore herself away from him and went back to the maids' room. He heard the click of the catch. After this all became still, the red eye in the window vanished, there remained only the mist and the discord on the river.

At this stage Nekhlyudov's awareness is fixed upon certain details in the scene which acquire a portentous meaning – her face (three times mentioned) towards which he brings nearer his own, separated by the window pane; her constrained smile in answer to his (twice only in Maude who breaks the spell by translating 'She returned his smile, but only in submission to him'); the mist that now becomes 'heavy' (*tyazhol*), with implications of 'oppressive' (like his longing), missed by both translators; the huge red eye of the lamp, which vanishes at the end of this passage when momentarily his desire has been frustrated; and the continuing sounds on the river (both translators have inexplicably changed *sopen'ye*, 'wheezing', into 'sobbing'). Finally there is the crowing of the cocks (in Maude they fail to interrupt each other), and their crowing a second time in a narrative with Easter as its background carries a hint of betrayal to come soon.

There follows the second attempt leading to Katyusha's seduction:

Nekhlyudov went up to the window – nobody could be seen. He knocked – nothing answered him. Nekhlyudov returned to the house from the front porch, but did not go to sleep. He took off his boots and barefoot went along the passage to her door beside Matryona Pavlovna's room. At first he heard how peacefully Matryona Pavlovna was snoring, and he wanted just then to go in, when suddenly she began to cough and turned over on the creaking bed. He froze and stood like that for about five minutes. When once more everything was still and there could be heard again the peaceful snoring, he, trying to step on floor boards that did not creak, went further and went up to her door. Nothing was to be heard. She evidently was not sleeping because he could not hear her breathing. But

once he had whispered 'Katyusha!' she sprang up, went to the door and crossly, as it seemed to him, began to urge him to go away.

'What on earth. . .How can you? The aunts will hear,' said her lips, but all her being said 'I am all yours.'

And only *this* did Nekhlyudov understand.

'Come, open for a minute. I implore you,' he said the insensate words.

She fell silent, then he heard the rustle of her hand seeking the catch. The catch snapped, and he passed through the opened door.

He seized her just as she was in the stiff unbleached smock with bare arms, lifted her up and carried her off.

'Oh, what are you doing?' she whispered.

But he paid no attention to her words, carrying her off to his room.

'Oh, please, let me go,' she said, but herself pressed against him.

Louise Maude has blurred or omitted a few details which in these moments of high tension are all significant. According to her Nekhlyudov 'got up' but did not take off his boots, though he does proceed barefoot down the passage; her translation fails to make the points that '*at first* he heard' and that Matryona Pavlovna '*began* to cough' – but the contrast is needed between these indications of individual moments and the following five long minutes of utter suspense. And in her version Nekhlyudov concludes that 'probably' (and not 'evidently') Katyusha is still awake. Rosemary Edmonds avoids all these mistakes. But she cannot bring herself to accept the flatness of Tolstoy's expression: 'said her lips but all her being said'. This paradox he judges to need the downright repetition, echoed in '*all* her being', 'I am *all* yours'. In such a moment the reiteration of words testifies to the overwhelming power of the experience. The words in which Beatrice discloses herself to Dante have a similar effect: *Guardaci ben! Ben son, ben son Beatrice*.³³ Rosemary Edmonds puts it: 'said her lips, but her whole being cried "I am yours"'. This almost evokes Elinor Glyn; and Louise Maude introduces a false note of another kind when she gives to Katyusha the mincing words: 'Oh, dear! What are you about?'

VII

After the disappearance of the lovers into Nekhlyudov's room there are three short paragraphs of epilogue in which he reflects on his new situation:

When she, trembling and silent, answering not at all to his words, went from him he went out on to the porch and stayed there, trying to realise the significance of all that had happened.

Outside it was lighter; below on the river the crack and ring and wheezing of the ice-floes had grown still stronger, and to the previous sounds was added a babbling. The mist began to settle below, and from the wall of

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mist sailed out a waning moon, gloomily lighting up something black and terrible.

'What is it, a great happiness or a great unhappiness has befallen me?' he asked himself.

'Every time it's like this, for everyone,' he said to himself and went off to bed.

All the desolation of the moment is summed up in that waning moon and the black and terrible object not made fully clear by its light. Appropriately Nekhlyudov's words are inexorably brief – the essentials of a common plight from which there is no escape: *Vsegda tak, vse tak* – literally 'Always thus, everyone thus.'

His attention has now awakened to a scene that corresponds to the new state of his being. He cannot tell whether he has met with 'a great happiness' or 'a great unhappiness' – the translators do not point the starkness of the ambiguity with 'joy' and 'misfortune' (Maude), 'happiness' and 'misfortune' (Edmonds) – and there is something of the same irresolution in the natural world. Light has come back, and the 'babbling' (*zhurchan'ye*) means that the spring waters are released. But there too, as in Nekhlyudov's inner world, the final impression is one of gloom and disaster.

That comment of Nekhlyudov's cannot be rendered with the concentrated force and bleakness of the original. Both Louise Maude and Rosemary Edmonds fall back, not unworthily, on: 'It happens to everybody, everybody does it.' The four simple Russian words are characteristic of Tolstoy in his passion for the essential. The note of determinism, as so often with him, is to be heard. They are also characteristic of the Russian language, which like our own has its inimitable brevities. It is in such small but crucial points that the translator meets his supreme challenge, and unless he can snatch a grace beyond the reach of art he will inevitably be defeated.

NOTES

1. B. Eykhenbaum, *Lev Tolstoy: semidesyatytye gody* (Leningrad, 1960), pp. 127–8.
2. L. N. Tolstoy, *O literature: stat'i, pis'ma, dnevniki* (Moscow, 1955), pp. 134–5; letter to A. A. Fet, 1–6 January 1871.
3. Ephesians 4.25.
4. 'English Translations of Tolstoy' in *The Life of Tolstoy: First Fifty Years* (London, 1930), pp. 456ff.
5. R. F. Christian, *Tolstoy's 'War and Peace': A Study* (Oxford, 1962), chapter 5.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

7. B. M. Eykhenbaum, *Lev Tolstoy* (Munich, 1968), vol. 1, pp. 170-2.
8. Letter to N. N. Strakhov, 25 March 1872, quoted by Eykhenbaum, *Lev Tolstoy: semidesyatyie gody*, p. 80.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
10. B. M. Eykhenbaum, *Molodoy Tolstoy* (Munich, 1968), p. 56.
11. *Twenty-three Tales* (London, 1956), p. 13 (chapter 1).
12. Christian, *Tolstoy's 'War and Peace'*, p. 156.
13. Eykhenbaum, *Molodoy Tolstoy*, p. 102.
14. K. Leontiev, *Analiz, stil' i veyaniye: o romanakh gr. L. N. Tolstogo* (Providence, 1965), p. 30.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
16. See the letter to N. N. Strakhov, 23 April 1876 (Tolstoy, *O literature*, p. 156).
17. 'Lines composed. . . above Tintern Abbey', lines 47-9.
18. D. S. Mirsky, *A History of Russian Literature*, edited and abridged by Francis J. Whitfield (London, 1964), pp. 299-300.
19. See again the letter to Strakhov, 25 March 1872.
20. Eykhenbaum, *Lev Tolstoy: semidesyatyie gody*, p. 75.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
22. To N. S. Leskov, 3 December 1890 (Tolstoy, *O literature*, p. 249).
23. Leo Tolstoy, *Plays* (London, 1957), p. 106.
24. Maurice Baring, *Landmarks in Russian Literature* (London, 1960), p. 65.
25. T. F. Powys, *Mr Weston's Good Wine* (London, 1930), p. 137.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 106-7.
27. Tolstoy, *O literature*, p. 317.
28. Quoted by Eykhenbaum, *Lev Tolstoy: semidesyatyie gody*, p. 266. The note was made on 26 January.
29. L. O. Pasternak, *Zapisi raznykh let* (Moscow, 1975), p. 188.
30. D. H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow* (London, 1958), pp. 42-9 (end of chapter 1).
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-3.
32. *Study of Thomas Hardy in Phoenix* (London, 1967), p. 479.
33. *Purgatorio*, xxx.73.

War over *War and Peace*:
 Prince Andrey Bolkonsky and critical
 literature of the 1860s and early 1870s

A. V. KNOWLES

Throughout its publication, from 1865 to 1869, *War and Peace* received a mixed reception, most of it adverse, from its Russian critics.¹ Of the hundreds of reviews and notices very few showed any clear understanding of either its form or its content. Although N. N. Strakhov described it in 1870 as 'a complete picture of human life, a complete picture of Russia at that time, a complete picture of what is called History and the struggle between nations, and a complete picture of everything in which people find their happiness and their grandeur',² most commentators thought it nothing of the sort. They wrote that it had neither plot nor action. It was clearly neither a novel nor an historical chronicle, indeed whatever it was supposed to be, Tolstoy had failed. It lacked an identifiable hero. Its portraits of the people of the time were very poorly drawn, for they were not much like anyone. If the early chapters contained too much bad French, the later ones had worse Russian. If it was concerned primarily with Russian society at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was extremely exclusive. If it was a treatise on the philosophy of history, its history was wrong (and unpatriotic) and its philosophy untenable. Furthermore few of its critics could cope with its immense length, its multitude of characters or its mass of ideas. They were also antagonistic to what they saw as its superfluity of detail, its glorification of a conservative family life, its fatalism and intellectual nihilism, its concentration on the upper classes and its idealisation of the peasantry. When Tolstoy published his interesting but hardly convincingly argued defence of his work,³ he only added to the confusion.

The majority of the critics started off with the assumption that what they were reading was in fact a novel. Consequently they looked for the traditional virtues of a plot and a hero. Not managing to discover much evidence of the former, they were determined to find the latter. Their choice, not unnaturally in the circumstances, fell upon Prince Andrey Bolkonsky, and it was often through a

discussion of him that much of their criticism of *War and Peace* was expressed.

Two comments from Tolstoy's own circle, and his replies, set the scene for the critics' dilemma. Firstly, in May 1865 he responded to a request from Luiza Volkonskaya, the wife of one of his second cousins, for details concerning the prototype of his hero. The closeness of their surnames had clearly intrigued her. Tolstoy replied that Prince Andrey was based on no-one in particular. In the description of the Austerlitz campaign which he still had to write (he completed it in the November) he needed a brilliant young man to be killed. In the further development of the novel he wanted only old Bolkonsky and his daughter (i.e. Princess Marya). Then, he continued, the character began to interest him and he made him the son of old Bolkonsky. He therefore decided to spare him and only have him seriously wounded instead.⁴ Whether or not Tolstoy had originally based him on no-one in particular, it is clear that the 'spared' Prince Andrey was as much a part of his own experience as any of his fictional characters, of either sex. However that may be, young Luiza would no doubt have been glad she had not asked Tolstoy on whom he had based Prince Andrey's wife Liza, for that empty, selfish, social butterfly had stemmed from Luiza herself.⁵ Secondly, in July 1866 the poet A. A. Fet, whom Tolstoy had been pressing for over a year for his opinion, at last told him something of what he thought.⁶ He began by defending Tolstoy from the attacks of those who found the portrayal of the historical side of things bizarre or wrong. He continued though that once having made Prince Andrey interesting and so obviously a *hero* of the novel when he appeared in society, Tolstoy had erred in making him so tedious when he was in a military setting. Tolstoy agreed that Prince Andrey had turned out monotonous throughout the whole of the first part and he was prepared to take the blame himself. The excuse for the fact that Prince Andrey appeared to be without development was that Tolstoy was trying to include some of his ideas on history and consequently had neglected his characters. He promised to rewrite these sections and improve matters.⁷ This confusion of aim is also apparent from other evidence. It is clear that of all the leading personages in *War and Peace* Tolstoy had the most difficulty with Prince Andrey, both with his personality and with his role in the general plan of the work. It is arguable that the main cause of this was precisely what he had told Fet: the problems he faced in putting his characters in the right situations to explain his theory of history. Had he wanted simply to write some sort of family chronicle these problems would not have existed. And as can be seen from the early drafts the historical element was to have a central place from the very outset.⁸

Consequently Prince Andrey's role should be one that is crucial to an understanding of the work. Or at least, for various reasons, so it appeared to the critics.

With the exception of a short notice in *Russkiy invalid* by A. S. Suvorin the first review of *War and Peace* (then entitled *1805*) was printed in the middle of 1866.⁹ The anonymous writer had read the early chapters 'not without pleasure' but was confused by the multitude of characters on whom it was impossible to focus his attention amid all the descriptions of military actions and a kind of fictional representation of the period. With all those 'little Nikolenkas, Natashas, Mimis and Borises' only Prince Vasily Kuragin, Princess Drubetskaya and Captain Tushin were at all successful. As for Prince Andrey, he raised more questions than he answered. The writer suggested that the main fault was that Tolstoy had not decided who his heroes were, for none was any less insignificant than the rest. Such comment on the very first printing is of course justified, as Tolstoy himself admitted, but when the majority of the journals began to comment from the middle of the following year when the position had become somewhat more clarified, they remained equally bemused. Even the more perceptive of the critics failed to see what Tolstoy was attempting to do.

As examples of the wide misapprehension we may take two of the rather more thoughtful commentators, N. D. Akhsharumov and P. V. Annenkov. The former published two analyses within the space of some ten months.¹⁰ In the first, printed in the summer of 1867, it is apparent that in general he thinks well of the book. He sees the story as essentially concerned with Russian society some sixty years before, so his contemporaries could look on what they were reading as upon their childhoods. Akhsharumov thinks this view is confirmed by the apparent fact that all the characters are described by Tolstoy as children. They are all naive and ingenuous. They have made no compromises with life. They are all completely unacquainted with that besetting moral and mental torpor of the Russians of the 1860s which prevents them from making up their minds on anything. They all believe in something wholeheartedly, whatever it might be. The best of them believe that it will always be possible to live as they do then, on the income from their patrimonial estates amid endless feasts and carefree leisure in the lap of the boundless hospitality of the Russian land. Like children, they have no independent thoughts of their own. They imitate those they consider their betters and they are unformed both physically and mentally. In Moscow or St Petersburg they could be as easily French as Russians. To this generalisation, though, Akhsharumov finds one notable exception: the

inhabitants of the estates of old Prince Bolkonsky. Although they may appear equally childlike, the atmosphere there is unmistakably Russian. Within that atmosphere there is one remarkable character, Prince Andrey. At his first appearance Akhsharumov describes him as possessing a sharp, clear mind which is taken in by nothing, and an unsullied purity of soul. Both these facets, unusual amongst those Tolstoy is describing, give him the ability to see things as they really are and not as he would like them to be. Akhsharumov admits to a suspicion that Tolstoy has in some small way idealised his 'hero', but the point is that he is neither invented nor a standard fictional character. He is in fact a truly national Russian type.

This very positive approach to Prince Andrey did not, however, survive the episodes which appeared in 1868. In the second of his articles Akhsharumov has changed his opinion considerably. He is still prepared to see Prince Andrey as the hero, if only for the want of any more obvious claimant to the title, and he still accuses Tolstoy of some slight idealisation. Indeed, in his view, Prince Andrey is one of the very small number of personages against whom this charge can be laid. More serious though for Akhsharumov is what he sees as an incompleteness in his character. His life appears to be divided up into separate parts which remain disunited. He has no single practical objective, nor any lasting convictions. His heart is never fully in anything he does. He never knows what to do, where to go, what to avoid, what to desire, or what to believe in. A faith in Napoleon, Natasha, Speransky or in whatever activity he briefly devotes himself to vanishes as soon as some obstacle arises in his path. His strong appetite for life comes to the surface in fits and starts, but always deserts him and leaves him with perhaps an even stronger distaste for living. Akhsharumov sees Prince Andrey constantly veering from one extreme to another. At the start of the story he is a man cruelly disenchanted by the emptiness of upper-class society and tormented by a thirst for some practical activity in public life. At the time he sees opportunities for this in war. Thoughts about the remarkable successes of Napoleon keep him awake at night, and when he does sleep he dreams of plans of campaign and brilliant actions on the battlefield. But when he finds himself at the battle of Austerlitz something occurs to him and all his dreams vanish. Napoleon changes from a giant into a dwarf and war appears to him as senseless slaughter and nothing more.

His relationship with his wife Liza strikes Akhsharumov as displaying the same phenomenon. He leaves her with his father while he goes away to the front, convinced that she is an empty and stupid woman. It hardly seems to matter to him that she is pregnant. Yet when he returns to find her dying in childbirth he suffers another

shock. All his former contempt for her vanishes and he experiences the most tender feelings towards her. He cannot forgive himself for deserting her in such a condition. Later he devotes himself unsparingly to the care and attention of the son whose birth had caused her death. Yet in a year or so the flood of paternal affection and regret for his dead wife has subsided and he grows morose and bitter. His appetite for life then returns and we find him back in St Petersburg working with Speransky, always one of his strongest supporters and one of the most hard-working and conscientious of those attempting to reform Russian society. Yet just as all this is in full swing he goes to a ball and falls in love with Natasha. Another shock, and everything he believes in is turned upside down. He immediately understands what in Akhsharumov's opinion only very few in his day, that is some sixty years later, have understood: that changing the form of something without changing the content is an utter waste of time, and consequently everything that Speransky is trying to do is futile. Prince Andrey immediately stops translating foreign legal codes, and wonders, without finding an answer, why he had spent so long on such an unproductive exercise. He is enraptured by his latest passion and gives himself over to it in his customary way. But his passion is not strong enough to overcome the capricious nature of his father. Instead of striking while the iron is hot, or at least not permitting it go cold, he leaves the seventeen-year-old maiden to waste away while he goes out into the big wide world.

Although Akhsharumov does not make the explicit comparison, it is clear that he thinks Prince Andrey's attitude to women is always the same. He is too selfish to treat them in any way other than as his inferiors who can be dismissed or used as he thinks fit. He continues that when Prince Andrey returns he finds that Natasha has betrayed his love: a further shock. He immediately cuts himself off from her completely, gives up all hope of personal happiness and thinks only of revenge. His thirst for recompense drives him from St Petersburg to Moscow, from Moldavia to the army. He then suffers another series of blows. His father dies, his country is being destroyed, his estates are being overrun by the enemy, and his son and sister are in great danger. Another rush of feeling overtakes him and he forgets all his previous evil thoughts. Fury towards a new enemy leads him to ponder why all prisoners are not cut down mercilessly. But then at Borodino he is struck by a new thought and his heart softens yet again and all the animosity within him vanishes without trace, just as every previous emotion or idea has. On seeing Anatole Kuragin, whom he had wanted to kill, lying in despair with a broken leg, he forgets the past and is reduced to tears.

All of this for Akhsharumov is quite natural for, seeing Prince

Andrey as he does, he could not imagine him doing otherwise. Prince Andrey behaves consistently as a truly Russian type! He does, however, find some sympathy from Akhsharumov. He is proud and noble. There is nothing petty or despicable about him. He is prepared to give his life for what he loves. But ultimately that is the point. No-one, not even himself, has any idea at all what it is he loves. It is not that he never loves anything or anybody, but that he never loves for long. He is quite right to look back at his past and find in it much that is negative, but such thoughts never lead to any practical action. He merely awaits the next blast from fate. The essence of his character, despite all his virtues, is idleness. He only imagines he is doing anything or going anywhere. In reality he does nothing and stays exactly where he is. Like a man whose muscles have become flabby, he needs exercise. He needs to do something, anything, to stop him dying from boredom. But he cannot make up his mind on anything. So for Prince Andrey there is only one solution. As it does not matter one whit what he does, or whether he does nothing, all things become equally significant or trivial, equally good or bad. In the end the charm has passed, the light from the magic lantern has gone out. There remains nothing but death, and for Akhsharumov Prince Andrey's death appears to be as futile as his life.

The second critic to deal extensively at this time with Prince Andrey was P. V. Annenkov. His long essay on *War and Peace* certainly has its faults but is nonetheless one of the best of the contemporary criticisms.¹¹ Like Akhsharumov, Annenkov takes Prince Andrey as the hero, or at least conceives that he must represent the whole idea behind the book. Prince Andrey is a serious-minded and somewhat severe personality, like his father, and Tolstoy is to be congratulated on the creation of two such independent and original characters. The faults in his creation, however, are similar to those in the novel as a whole. His most striking shortcoming is the lack of any development in his character. As *War and Peace* seems to have no plot, Prince Andrey has no movement. He is static. Annenkov is prepared to admit to some slight development in all the characters, even in Prince Andrey, but such development takes place off stage and we never see it taking place. We have to take it on trust, and because of other considerations we find it extremely difficult. Annenkov reiterates the complaint of Fet that the idea of history in the novel bedevils and restricts the characters. If Tolstoy seems to be propounding some sort of historical determinism, some sort of fatalism or some sort of belief in the futility of human activity or endeavour on the grand scale, then this is certainly reflected in all the characters. All of them are dogged by an unhappy fate against which they are powerless to act. This is particularly true of Prince

Andrey. While Akhsharumov had seen all this as a fault in his make-up or in the way Tolstoy had created him, Annenkov tries to equate it with the historical epoch in which Prince Andrey lived. But he finds that Tolstoy is even more at fault in this than Akhsharumov suggested. Prince Andrey is presented as a man of aristocratic background and noble character, and there is a certain psychological depth to him. But like Pierre he is not completely in tune with the social class which gave him birth and upbringing. Annenkov sees him as similar to the 'young advisers' to whom tsar Alexander I looked for guidance in the early years of his reign. There is the same self-confidence, the same courage in the face of difficulties and the same vision in his ideas and plans for the future. In Prince Andrey, though, these qualities are largely misplaced, for everything is based not on his experience of life but wholly on his own untested suppositions. He has an admirable and humane attitude to the lower classes, but he knows he is their superior and must remain so. While he has a healthy contempt for the realities of Russian life, he does nothing to change them. In order to satisfy his political ideals he hankers after the highest position, but fails to achieve it. To satisfy his need for glory he hankers after military honour and similarly does not achieve what he believes himself capable of. Ambitious and arrogant, he finds it impossible to settle for the humbler role that fate has designed for him, that of a useful, stable citizen. Hence his melancholy.

Annenkov thinks Tolstoy was trying to make Prince Andrey the representative of that dissatisfaction, characteristic of the period, which was based on a proper understanding of the real political situation in Russia. While Akhsharumov had seen this as idealisation, Annenkov criticises it, as did Turgenev when he was discussing Tolstoy's description of Kutuzov, as anachronistic.¹² Prince Andrey does not think as his own contemporaries thought, but as Tolstoy's, and Annenkov's, do. He is not influenced, or not for long, by any of the great figures of the day, by Napoleon, Speransky or anyone else. The reason for this in Annenkov's eyes is that Prince Andrey knows as much about them as Tolstoy does. The clearest example of this can be found in his relations with Speransky's Commission. His colleagues begin to appreciate the problems only after long, bitter experience, while he realises at once that they are all but insoluble. Furthermore, he has a very sceptical view of society at large. In general people of his class only began to feel this way after 1815-16, when they had been to Western Europe and actually seen for themselves the state of affairs there, and had come to recognise that the administration in Russia not only possessed no great ability, but, more seriously, lacked any good will to respond to the major problems of

the mass of the population. In Annenkov's opinion Tolstoy had over-endowed his hero.

These views of Akhsharumov and Annenkov were reflected in many of the criticisms of *War and Peace* expressed during its publication. They fall into two main groups: those that deal with Prince Andrey as a participant in historical events and as an expression of Tolstoy's own views on history and society, and those that discuss him rather more as a purely fictional character in the role of a more or less traditional 'hero'.

As was seen earlier Tolstoy admitted that his views on history had tended to distract him from his fictional characters. The anonymous critic of *Delo* bemoaned this fact as sadly as Fet. While praising the extremely life-like descriptions of the actual battle scenes, he found the theories behind them all very vague. This vagueness had transferred itself to Tolstoy's hero inasmuch as there appeared to be certain contradictions in Prince Andrey's character. Because these are left unspecified it is very difficult for the reader to follow what Tolstoy is trying to say. If Tolstoy is stating his views on the historical process through the words and actions of Prince Andrey, then because he is difficult to understand as a person the philosophy (if that is what it is) behind the novel (if that is what it is) is equally incomprehensible.¹³

On the other hand M. I. Dragomirov, an ex-soldier and military historian, finds nothing incomprehensible at all. In two articles on *War and Peace* he attempts to discuss not only Tolstoy's understanding of how battles and wars are fought but also the conclusions he draws from them.¹⁴ Dragomirov sees two sides to the book, one the descriptions of the battles and the thoughts of the participants, which he finds marvellously well done, and the other, the general conclusions, which he finds do not stand up to a moment's examination. Many of these conclusions are expressed through Prince Andrey. In Dragomirov's eyes he is one of those not uncommon people who combine immense talent with enormous ambition but who lack the ability to achieve anything. Despite all his obvious sympathy for his hero, Tolstoy has depicted him attempting to solve all the problems he faces extremely hastily, as it were 'straight from the shoulder'. Prince Andrey time and time again shows himself to be a man capable in everything but excellent at nothing. Consequently his wide ambitions are bound to founder on the rocks of experience and, as Annenkov would have said, hence his melancholy. Dragomirov has praise for Tolstoy in that having created such a character he does not shirk from taking him to the logical conclusion. He is placed in a society setting where he narrows his eyes, scarcely responds when spoken to and treats everyone and everything in a very

superior manner. He is less concerned with *being* than with *appearance*. Because he realises the emptiness of society and its values and because he feels only distaste for the world he is forced to move in, he thinks his scornful, cynical attitude is the right one. In 1805, however, when war breaks out, he does not hesitate to take advantage of the privileges granted him by that society he so despises. He rapidly arranges to be adjutant to Kutuzov and dreams of being Napoleon. On account of his birth and upbringing he assumes that he has a right to high command, and without ever having thought about war for a moment he enters into it with a set of ready-made ideas about how it ought best to be conducted. Simply having the opportunity to be in the company of such generals as Kutuzov and Bagration, who had learnt their trade from the greatest of Russia's military commanders, Suvorov, should have been of immense use to a young officer. But Prince Andrey is worse than the most dyed-in-the-wool doctrinaire. When he finds out that his ideas do not accord with the situation, he does not deduce that his ideas must be wrong but that somehow the situation is at fault, or in other words that Russia's generals are to blame for everything that is happening. But the facts will not be gainsaid. True to himself at least, Prince Andrey realises how difficult it is to become a Napoleon, and therefore begins to attack Napoleon as the representative of all that is worst in military matters and considers him but a piece of historical nonsense. Consequently none of his many and impressive achievements means anything to Prince Andrey. Convinced of his own talents and the infallibility of his own ideas, he smartly concludes that because his opinions do not fit the facts there can be no valid theories about war at all.

To Dragomirov these are all clearly Tolstoy's ideas, and they are wrong. So obviously are they wrong, he states, that Tolstoy found it impossible to make Prince Andrey a sympathetic character. Tolstoy has painted him as a reasonably honourable man, capable, and possessing strength of character, but empty when it comes to decisive action. Tolstoy writes that Prince Andrey is a living reproach to Kutuzov at Bucharest,¹⁵ and that he brought in many practical improvements on his estates, but we never see him doing any of these things. Unlike other critics Dragomirov finds Tolstoy in this respect to be an author of the greatest talent for he shows remarkable literary tact by omitting such scenes, as they would clearly not fit in with the general character of the man he has created. Like his creator, in his experience of war Prince Andrey has two alternatives. He either has to admit that there is some valid theory concerning military matters about which he is ignorant or he has to remain faithful to his own view of himself as capable of greatness and therefore deny any

such possibility. Naturally he chooses the latter. He confuses theory with knowledge and concludes that in military matters there is neither theory, nor knowledge. This leads to what Dragomirov finds the most bizarre of all Prince Andrey's conclusions – that consequently there can be no such thing as a military genius. This, he adds, is yet another example of Prince Andrey's, and therefore Tolstoy's, refusal to follow an argument through to its proper conclusion if it looks at all like conflicting with his own prejudices. What both of them fail to recognise is that no military theory will reveal how to win any one particular battle. All it can be expected to do is to provide guidelines. No military theory will be able to help with that most terrible of military considerations, chance. Any military theory has to be adapted where necessary to events as they unfold, and it is the genius who can see the adaptations necessary and the means to put them into effect. Tolstoy has inflicted a series of untenable views upon his hero, and if they are wrong in reality, they are equally wrong in fictional terms. Dragomirov admits that Tolstoy was fortunate with certain of the events of the period which fit his theory about war but insists that these were the exception rather than the rule. Like his hero, Tolstoy failed to accept them as such, and like his hero he must in the final analysis be condemned.

Tolstoy's depiction of events, especially those of 1812, and of Russia's military leaders, together with his fatalistic views on history, raised a furore among many critics of conservative persuasion, but the loudest outcries were heard from the ranks of the contemporary military itself and from military historians of less perspicacity than for example Dragomirov. Typical of these is A. S. Norov.¹⁶ He bemoans Tolstoy's portrayal of the members of high society in St Petersburg as petty-minded and all but immoral, 'although these same people were influential in the Government'. He accuses Tolstoy of having no understanding of military affairs and more particularly of omitting any description of that prowess on the battlefield 'of which our army has always been justly proud'. How dare Tolstoy who is after all a *Russian* depict the events of 1812 as a mere soap bubble! How dare he show that 'whole phalanx of generals whose military glory is clearly seen in all the documents and whose names have passed from generation to generation' as being completely without talent and the blind instruments of fate! When Tolstoy makes Prince Andrey appear cleverer than Kutuzov and Bagration put together and attempts to convince his readers that 'the real hero of Borodino is Pierre', Norov finds he can take no more.

Slightly less prejudiced and rather more temperate but equally antipathetic was P. A. Vyazemsky.¹⁷ First and foremost he sees *War and Peace* as a reflection of the nihilism current among Russian

writers of the 1860s. It is typical because it is an attempt to review the glories of the Russian past and reject them as worthless. Such a mood in writers, he suggests, has passed from a healthy scepticism into pure moral and literary materialism, and along such a path lies, as doubtless Norov would have agreed, the complete decay of the fabric of the nation. Vyazemsky asserts that Walter Scott certainly poeticised and romanticised the events with which he dealt but he nonetheless remained true to their spirit. Similarly Pushkin in *Boris Godunov* invented certain scenes but nonetheless they could well have happened. By contrast Tolstoy treated events which were in the very recent past. Many of his readers would have been alive then and perhaps even participated in the events themselves. Consequently Tolstoy should have been more accurate and had more respect for the facts. Not only did some of the events not happen as Tolstoy described them, they did not happen at all. Nor could they have done. Vyazemsky sees no difference in this respect between the fictional characters and the historical ones, for in his opinion they are all invented with the sole purpose of decrying Russia's past.

On the other hand I. P. Liprandi, who participated in the battle of Borodino, pointed to the difficulty for any one man to attempt to describe the engagement, the more so if he had not been there. Tolstoy had indeed got a lot of his facts wrong and therefore some of his conclusions. Nonetheless he had made a marvellous attempt at it and if 'Tolstoy has erred against history then it is no bad thing'.¹⁸

This parting shot was not to the taste of A. P. Pyatkovsky. What Tolstoy had done with the historical facts was for him a serious shortcoming. Pyatkovsky attacks Tolstoy for numerous historical inaccuracies, for not reading enough of the contemporary memoirs and for changing facts or their sensible interpretation to suit his own, somewhat incomprehensible, purposes. In company with many of his outraged fellow-critics, Pyatkovsky finds that none of the three main male figures is at all typical of the period, even though Tolstoy clearly wished to raise them to that level.¹⁹ All of them, Pierre, Nikolay and Prince Andrey, are pitiful cardboard creations. He cites Prince Andrey's relations with Speransky as incontrovertible evidence for this. What do we have? he asks. Endless descriptions of what Prince Andrey felt, thought and did and absolutely nothing of Speransky who really was a man typical of his time. All Speransky's efforts to change his country for the better are dismissed by Prince Andrey in a few sentences, all uttered without thought by an upper-class dandy who had hardly ever spoken to Speransky.²⁰ Perhaps Pyatkovsky's jaundiced views on the whole work were

assisted by the fact that three years previously he had composed a valedictory notice on Tolstoy who he thought had vanished from the literary scene.²¹

If Tolstoy was criticised from all sides for his portrayal of Prince Andrey as the mouthpiece for his own idiosyncratic ideas, he received little comfort from those critics who, dismissing this aspect of *War and Peace*, concentrated on the fictional characters much as they might have done with any other 'novel'. If Prince Andrey had been seen by those with more of an interest in the ideas behind the work as ambitious, vacillating, arrogant, cynical, heartless and idle, then most of those who treated him as a straightforward fictional character were no less antipathetic towards him. For example, P. Shchebal'sky in a mainly favourable critique finds some faults with *War and Peace* in general and with Prince Andrey in particular.²² The minor faults as he sees them are a number of repetitions and some inaccuracies. As examples of the latter he cites Tolstoy's description in one place of tsar Alexander with his blue eyes, which in another turn out to be grey; and that we read that on New Year's Eve 1810 a meeting of the State Council will take place 'the following day' and on New Year's Day we discover that the meeting 'took place the previous day'. These though are of little account and are minor blemishes which Shchebal'sky was prepared to forgive Tolstoy. What he does not accept are what he sees as contradictions within some of the leading personages. He writes that in the past it was usually customary for writers to make their characters clearly good or bad and thus the reader was in no doubt about them. But then novelists began to be more realistic and realised that everyone is a mixture of various characteristics and depicted their fictional personages with this in mind. However, in the 1860s some writers had gone too far in this direction and Tolstoy further than most. For example, in insisting that a brave man has his doubts and that behind his courage there also lurk elements of cowardice, Tolstoy blurs the distinction between the various qualities and the reader is never sure whether the brave man is really a coward, the hero a villain, or the man of action a lazybones. Prince Andrey is a case in point. When we first meet him he is vain and ambitious. He believes firmly in his own remarkable qualities and is strenuously trying to carve out a career for himself. He can find only one man worthy of his respect, his father. Everything else either arouses his scorn or leads to no reaction at all. He is bored with life and only finds interest in activity which *he* thinks important. But he has no stamina. He is easily put off. He retires into himself and becomes depressed. External stimuli awaken him to life again and his old self returns, but not for long. His whole life is spent in such rapid reversals of mood.

For Shchebal'sky, as for Akhsharumov earlier, these changes occur too often and too quickly to be credible. Like many of his contemporaries he finds this aspect of Prince Andrey disconcerting, especially as Tolstoy describes his other leading personages so marvellously. Count Rostov, Princess Marya and old Prince Bolkonsky are all masterpieces. What Tolstoy was trying to do with Prince Andrey remained for Shchebal'sky a mystery. Similarly the critic in *Golos* was not sure what to make of him. He suggests that in some way this is Tolstoy's fault, for his attitude to his hero is too subjective.²³ Furthermore Tolstoy had lavished even more of his store of superfluous detail upon him than on any of the other characters. Indeed the psychological analysis of Prince Andrey occupies far too large a place. Prince Andrey is nothing but psychological analysis. He is hardly a character at all. He possesses none of the flesh and blood of a living person. He has only the most subtle of mental sensations, and some of them are so subtle that they are almost impossible to catch. Brilliant, intelligent, well-educated and serious-minded, he is presented as someone out of the ordinary, as some unrecognised genius. Ever introspective and ever bilious, he spends all his time on the analysis of his own sensations, despising everyone else, opening his heart to no-one and disclosing his convictions only to himself. Behind a mask of impeccable social politeness he greets any opinion but his own with sarcasm, irony and distaste. Only with Pierre is he rather more open, but even here his attitude is a little strange. Pierre looks up to him and is always deferential, while Prince Andrey treats Pierre only with mild contempt. Married to a playful and rather stupid society woman, Prince Andrey treats her with the same scorn as he treats everyone else. Glory-seeking and ambitious, he considers Napoleon a genius, but this does not prevent him from being the most admirable and capable of all the officers in the Russian army or from criticising everyone's battle plans and mentally deciding the outcome of any and every military engagement. Employing the same pitiless analysis and the same contempt for questions of faith as he does with respect to all other questions of life, the young Bolkonsky shares with his father a profound scepticism. But even so at the battle of Austerlitz he undergoes a deep mystical experience which arouses some sort of 'faith' within him, a faith which is superior to life, to himself, and even to all his previously unshakable ideas. Had Tolstoy been less interested in his hero as a person and less prejudiced towards him, the reader would have known better how to react.

If many critics antagonistic to Prince Andrey found him something of a puzzle, the few who were well-disposed seemed to understand him even less. For example S. I. Sychevsky thought that *War*

and Peace was beyond praise.²⁴ He wrote that the book might well have contained enough material 'for a dozen plays, two hundred or so poems and one huge epic' and he would be sorry when it was finished. The plot he found very simple and easy to follow, but what made *War and Peace* so wonderful was its descriptions of Russian life and history. The period, he thought, might be well known to all the novel's readers (and even if it were not, there were plenty of history books to peruse), but it was Tolstoy's deep knowledge and understanding of it that made the reader feel he was making its acquaintance for the first time. Tolstoy might have concentrated on the upper classes and drawn upon himself the taunts of the radicals, but it was the worst elements of that milieu that he described with all their manifest faults. *War and Peace*, Sychevsky continued, is nothing less than the history of four blue-blooded aristocratic families and their lives. The centre of attention, though, is the relationship of Natasha with Prince Andrey. Everything else, however interesting it might be in itself, serves only as a means to further the reader's knowledge of these two. Sychevsky thinks Natasha is without doubt the most attractive character of all and she is all but matched in this by Prince Andrey. Sychevsky sees her as typical of her time in submitting to the role of wife and mother and succumbing to Tolstoy's correct view that a woman's place is in the home.

Prince Andrey is equally typical as one of the period's thinking idealists, a man in whom the whole spirit of a certain section of Russian society is most clearly mirrored. It is possible to criticise all the male characters in *War and Peace* (although Sychevsky does not say in what way) with the exception of Andrey, and perhaps his father, although the latter is rather more a man of the previous century whose views have become petrified. Yet if old Bolkonsky is to be regarded as one of the best men of the period of Catherine, then Prince Andrey should be acknowledged as one of the best men of Alexander's reign. He is a man of unbending convictions and is extremely strong-willed. He sees everything clearly and acts on his interpretation of what he finds. His every word, step and action show him to be a man of high intelligence and character. He possesses all the traditional male virtues and it is in his relationships with women that the whole depth of his psychology is revealed. In this connection Sychevsky defends Tolstoy from criticisms of anachronism in dealing with the 1860s' obsession with the problem of the sexes. Tolstoy settles the question, thinks Sychevsky, by a philosophy that accords exactly with the mood of the first two decades of the nineteenth century. This is why all the 'female liberationists and like-minded liberals' have found so much to upset them in the book.

So enamoured of *War and Peace* is Sychevsky that even what he is prepared to admit are certain faults in Prince Andrey are somehow explained away as virtues. At the basis of his character lies a melancholy which appears to have no cause. This wealthy, high-born and handsome person, the ideal of a man and a citizen, is unhappy. He constantly seeks to lose himself in active occupation, digression or war. What is he seeking? What prevents him from enjoying to the full all the gifts with which life has so generously showered him? Sychevsky suggests that the solution to such questions lies in the fact that Prince Andrey will keep questioning everything, but all his various philosophies and convictions fail him in the end. He bases everything on cold logic while life burns within him. But life cannot be dealt with by logic alone. He therefore tries to discard it as the basis for his thought patterns and descends into scepticism and atheism. Yet these fail him almost as quickly. For Sychevsky, it is Natasha who shows him the way out of his impasse. Prince Andrey comes to realise that while he agonises over every little problem, she simply accepts them as they come, that while he is generally in low spirits, she is almost invariably cheerful, and that while he believes in nothing, she believes in everything. In other words while he *thinks*, she *lives*. However admirable Prince Andrey is in his search for answers to life's problems, it is Natasha's quiet acceptance of them that provides the real answer. Even though she marries Pierre, *War and Peace* is basically over with the death of Prince Andrey. For the 'key' to the whole novel, at least for Sychevsky, has been provided by the relationship between him and Natasha.²⁵

In defending Tolstoy, Sychevsky mentions that those who disliked *War and Peace* the most were the 'female-liberationists and the liberals'. However misguided he might have been in his interpretation of what Tolstoy had written, he was certainly quite correct in this.

In an extensive review, M. K. Tsebrikova under the pseudonym 'Nikolayeva' looked specifically at the leading female personages. She suggested that her own generation could look upon them as descriptions of the personalities and position in life of their grandmothers. She found both aspects accurately reflected by Tolstoy inasmuch as all his women are portrayed as almost totally limited intellectually and socially, emotionally and economically. Tsebrikova concentrates her very readable study on Princess Liza, Princess Marya and Natasha, respectively the wife, sister and fiancée of Prince Andrey. No-one can say that any of the three is intelligent or well-educated. Princess Liza, although we know very little of her, is even a bit stupid. Natasha 'does not deign to be intelligent', and Princess Marya suffers from a general incomprehension of life epitomised by

the problems of geometry with which her father plagues her existence. None of them has the opportunity to obtain the sort of education that is open to the male characters should they wish to take advantage of it. The social milieu in which they live forces them willy-nilly to accept the only role that is open to them, that of wife and mother, and to make the best of it. All three of them are condemned to the narrow horizons of such an existence and none of them finds any happiness or further justification for their lives outside them. Princess Liza, who seems quite content with the social round of dinners, balls and conversations on the most banal of subjects, is deserted by her husband and dies in childbirth. Natasha loses all the charm she had as a young girl once she is married and becomes as narrow-minded and penny-pinching as one would expect. And Princess Marya sinks into a submissive religious mood as the only solace from the male-dominated world it is her unhappy lot to accept.

All of this is highlighted by the attitude Prince Andrey adopts towards the women. He abandons his wife, Princess Liza, at the moment the poor girl needs him most and leaves her in the care of his father, who is even less capable of understanding her than he is. It is all but impossible to realise that Princess Marya is his sister; she is equally rapidly deserted to run the estates and face the French invader single-handed while Prince Andrey yet again goes off into the world to fulfil the more exciting and demanding role that society allows him as a man. Furthermore no-one seems to take any exception to it. For Tsebrikova, however, the crux of the matter lies in his relationship with Natasha. Prince Andrey cannot cope with her at all. He is frightened by her youth and vitality, things which Tolstoy grants his women but briefly. When he becomes engaged to her and wishes then to postpone marriage for a year, he is simply giving in to the wishes of his father. This is further proof for Tsebrikova of the fact that it is the men who dominate. Prince Andrey's attitude to Natasha's supposed affair with Anatole Kuragin is absolutely typical of him: he is cold and quite without emotion. When Pierre reminds him of the wonderful things he had said when Pierre was breaking with H  l  ne, Prince Andrey replies with pitiful evasion: 'Yes, I said that one should forgive, not that I could.' Prince Andrey, continues Tsebrikova, is portrayed as one of the most admirable men of his time and so we have the right to expect his words to accord with his actions. But do they? He can forgive a dissolute woman possessing not a spark of fellow human feeling, a woman who through her connections and lack of shame could always retain her position in society, and yet he cannot forgive a young inexperienced girl her one mistake. Furthermore it was he who left her prey to every

temptation. He also knows that one word from him would restore her not only in her own eyes but in those of society, and that she is less upset by her own behaviour than by the knowledge that she has betrayed him and caused him suffering. Prince Andrey refuses to understand any of this. He is simply suffering from hurt pride. Through him Tolstoy is expressing that eternal male egotism which insists that once a woman has given herself to a man (or in Natasha's case of course only pledged herself) then she remains his property for ever. And if Prince Andrey is presented as one of the best men of his time, what, wonders Tsebrikova, can the rest have been like? Tolstoy had done remarkable service to the contemporary reader by painting in such bright colours what it was like for 'our grandmothers' to live at the beginning of the century. But the bleakest aspect of it all is that two generations later he obviously thinks that it is still the best possible existence for women. Tolstoy even presents the home-loving wife and mother whose interests should not go beyond the kitchen and the dining-room (and, if her husband should so desire, the bedroom) as the ideal for women in the 1860s and for ever.²⁶ For Tsebrikova clearly the time for such novels is past.

A similar viewpoint was expressed by V. V. Bervi-Flerovsky but from a different angle. His review of *War and Peace* is centred on its upper-class nature and on Tolstoy's implicit suggestions that anything of worth in Russia is found only in such circles. Immensely influential in the 1870s at the height of the Populist movement, especially for his book *The Position of the Working-Class in Russia*, Bervi-Flerovsky puts forward the thesis that it is precisely the philosophy behind *War and Peace* that is the cause of Russia's current difficulties. If any of the other critics should find anything to praise in it then they are either blind or stupid or both, or from the upper classes themselves. He bases his arguments on what he calls the 'elegant' critics who have found the time to write in Tolstoy's favour, and especially N. N. Strakhov²⁷ and that most 'elegant' of journals the *Russkiy vestnik*. To Bervi-Flerovsky there is nothing elegant, well-educated, kind or humane in any of Tolstoy's main characters, and as evidence for this he pays particular attention to the Bolkonskys, father and son. On the one hand old Prince Bolkonsky is immensely rich and possesses all the advantages that wealth and social position can bring, but he treats his serfs and servants extremely badly, his attitude to his daughter Princess Marya can only be described as cruel, and he shows not one ounce of sympathy for his fellow human beings. Prince Andrey is no different. He is portrayed as a man who 'wrote a whole volume of laws' for Speransky, as the benefactor of his serfs and the hero of Austerlitz. But he gives up his law-making as soon as any difficulties arise. He helps his

serfs not for their benefit but for his. And his attitude to war is to kill as many of the enemy as possible. He says that he lives only for himself and while, Bervi-Flerovsky writes, we might well agree with him, he could have expressed things better if he had said that he lives only to make things worse for everyone else, and kill them if necessary. He is so obtuse and limited as a personality that he never thinks of the true relationships which should exist between human beings. Forgetting his awful attitude to women, look only at his relations with his serfs. With his low level of intellectual development and despicable view of life he fails to realise that peasants have the same feelings, emotions, needs and desires as he has, and that they are as prepared for self-sacrifice and death as anyone from Prince Andrey's class, if not more so. Like all mentally impoverished and short-sighted people, Prince Andrey is no better than a semi-savage who imagines that only he himself and a few friends have the correct view of life, while everyone else is little better than a soulless machine. Tolstoy clearly wished to present Prince Andrey as some sort of model, ahead of his time both in thought and action, but his thoughts are in no way similar to his actions. Nor are any of them worth anything anyway. It is clear that he is a grubby, crude, heartless robot who possesses not a single truly human emotion or aspiration. To people like him, his father, Count Tolstoy and all upper-class critics, the only values worth holding are those of their own class. To Bervi-Flerovsky this is a mirage, for he believes that such a view is simply a result of idle fancy, arising because those who hold it have nothing better to do. It is also a pernicious view for it is harmful to the interests of society at large.²⁸

If D. I. Pisarev, the most vitriolic of the contemporary critics, had shown his distaste for *War and Peace* by concentrating on two of the rather less than central characters, Nikolay Rostov and Boris Drubetskoy,²⁹ A. M. Skabichevsky certainly tried to look at all the personages, but he ended up with a similar point of view.³⁰ In the first place he sees Tolstoy as following the same sad path that had been trodden earlier by Gogol'. The great writer was becoming a mystic and a preacher and his fiction was suffering. In *War and Peace*, assumes Skabichevsky, the main thing Tolstoy was trying to do was to present a portrait gallery of paintings of upper-class life at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Skabichevsky was of course not alone in such an opinion, but he is far more favourably disposed towards Tolstoy in this respect than many of his fellows. He gives high praise to Tolstoy for describing all the various types in all their multitude of detail both in their private lives and in their psychological motivations. He sees four basic groups. Firstly, there are those whom he sees as showing the final stages of complete moral

degradation and who have no sympathy either for the lower classes or, what is more to the point, for their own class – people like the Kuragins, Anatole, Hélène and their father, and Dolokhov. Secondly, there are the careerists whose only concern is their own petty, selfish interests – people like Boris Drubetskoy, his mother, and Berg. Thirdly, there are the Rostovs, people who are full of humanity, love and unselfishness but who lack any objectives, any serious occupation or understanding of life and other people. And fourthly, there are those who have the highest aspirations and the greatest intellectual and moral development and who are continually questioning life, analysing and defining it – people like the Bolkonskys, father and son and to some extent even Princess Marya, and Pierre. But these people lead such abnormal lives that the objectives they set for themselves do not stem naturally from life or from their own individual natures but are invented in the attempt somehow to fill the emptiness of their lives. Consequently their ideals are never realised, for they lead to an impasse or some unexpected misfortune.

To illustrate this last grouping, Skabichevsky looks more closely at the Bolkonskys. He has most distaste for the old Prince, whom he dismisses as believing that the greatest vices are idleness and superstition and who consequently spends all his time in activity which is quite useless. The Prince is dominated by a bizarre form of rationalism which leads only to domestic despotism. Skabichevsky clearly has some sympathy for Princess Marya, but he cannot forgive Tolstoy for endowing her with such superhuman capacities for self-sacrifice and such a lack of understanding for other people. He then turns to Prince Andrey as the prime example of all that is typical of such people. At first glance Andrey appears to be a man of great intelligence with a stable and energetic personality and a strong and practical attitude to life. On looking more closely, however, Skabichevsky like many before him finds Prince Andrey unsatisfactory. He discovers the same indecision and muddled thinking which Tolstoy had portrayed in his hero Nekhlyudov in the early *A Landowner's Morning*. Prince Andrey marries (and Skabichevsky thinks, along with many later critics, that we ought to have been told why) an empty, flirtatious, society girl who rapidly and understandably bores him. So he enlists. It is here that Skabichevsky sees the striking dualism which he finds so typical of such people. Prince Andrey probably suspects that he is ignorant of military matters and is therefore rather useless as an officer in a position to influence affairs. Yet he fervently believes that he can and will do something that will save his country and make him as glorious as Napoleon. After the French have invaded, Skabichevsky notes what he describes as one of those confrontations which are a remarkable facet of Tolstoy's

style but which also show the utter bankruptcy of his heroes. While Prince Andrey is waiting impatiently on the eve of the battle of Schöngraben to seize the banner and lead his troops into a victory which will rescue Russia from almost certain disaster, he meets the thin, dirty and quite superbly insignificant Captain Tushin. There is absolutely nothing heroic about him and it has never occurred to him to be the saviour of his country. Imagine Prince Andrey's surprise, Skabichevsky suggests, when on the day of the engagement he is aimlessly mooching about the battlefield and catches sight of this unprepossessing little man showing himself to be truly heroic. What is more his heroism is quite unconscious. While Skabichevsky sees this as one of those flashes of genius which mark Tolstoy off from the general run of novelists, even great ones, he nonetheless thinks that through this episode Tolstoy has destroyed the credibility of Prince Andrey in the eyes of the reader. Having failed to become a military leader of undying fame, Prince Andrey retires to his estates and grows depressed. Yet in this mood he does the only positive thing he ever manages in his whole life. He frees some three hundred of his serfs and transfers the rest from corvée to quit-rent. Does he though, asks Skabichevsky, do this out of respect for his fellow human beings? Does he do it as something that might restrain his arrogance, soften his hard heart or alleviate his vain melancholy? Not at all. Prince Andrey's sole motivation is to avoid having a bad conscience. Tolstoy has presented his hero as a man possessed of a narrow and prejudiced egoism. In an age which demanded much from its literature, Skabichevsky enquires whether this is the sort of ideal for a writer of Tolstoy's undoubted talents to be presenting to his readers.

Skabichevsky's final question epitomises the general tenor of much of the reaction of Tolstoy's contemporaries to *War and Peace* and to Prince Andrey in particular. While they certainly threw some light on him, both as a fictional character in his own right and as the mouthpiece of his creator, they mistook *War and Peace* for something it was not and consequently approached Prince Andrey from the wrong direction. They described him and what he did and suggested what he ought to have been and ought to have done. They discussed him primarily on the grounds of typicality and from widely held convictions on the role in the novel of a conventional fictional hero. They condemned him on moral grounds. They used him as a stick with which to beat Tolstoy and as a peg on which to hang their own ideas on literature, society, politics and history. They were as guilty of a subjective approach to him as they accused Tolstoy of being in his fiction.³¹ The reasons behind such opinions are many

but include the following: *War and Peace* was published over a period of nearly five years and criticisms were printed on the appearance of each new instalment. It was markedly different both in conception and execution from what people had become accustomed to expecting a 'novel' to be. Tolstoy changed some of his ideas about it during its composition. His previous literary reputation had either been totally forgotten or only its negative side remembered.³² Perhaps another of the causes of the lack of a reasoned critical appraisal at the time had less to do with *War and Peace* itself than with the historical period of its appearance. The social and political atmosphere of the 1860s in Russia was of a particular kind. There was a feeling of release from the repressive reign of Nicholas I and it was a time of readjustment on a wide front following the revelations of the Crimean War. There was both hope for improvement in all walks of Russian life and despair at the growing realisation that nothing fundamental was actually happening. And it was a time of a widely felt desire for change but a hardening conviction that this would involve more than the form of 'edicts from above' and must include some tangible results for the mass of the population below. Such an atmosphere does not look conducive to the critical success or comprehension of a long and complicated work about Russian life and history some sixty years before. To many of its critics *War and Peace* had nothing to offer the society of the day except a largely unacceptable philosophy of conservatism and a mood of nostalgia. These might have been consoling to the upper classes with which the book was thought to be almost exclusively concerned, but writers should have something more to offer the country at large. Indeed most of the critics, typical for the period, tended to allow their comments to be guided entirely by their ideas on what role literature should play in society. Whatever their criteria, *War and Peace*, being what it is, was normally found wanting. It was not in fact until the 1880s that it began to receive some rather more positive critical appreciation. This was not before time because by then *Anna Karenina* had suffered a similar fate at the hands of its early critics. When we look at the generally affronted reaction of Russian criticism when it dealt with Tolstoy it is not difficult to sympathise with his opinion: Russian critics, he is reported as saying, are all so superficial. They are the stupid judging the clever. They are people who can find nothing else to do. It is better simply not to read them. Especially those, one might add, who tried to solve the many problems of *War and Peace* and one of its more complex heroes, as Dragomirov might have written, 'straight from the shoulder'. The book demands more time and thought than its Russian critics in the 1860s and early 1870s were able or prepared to give it.

NOTES

The title is borrowed from a review by N. de Pule, 'Voyna iz-za Voyny i mira', *Sankt-Peterburgskiye vedomosti*, 144 (1869).

1. At the beginning of February 1865 the first number of *Russkiy vestnik* for that year appeared, slightly late. It contained the first part of a new work entitled 1805. The second instalment was published the next month, and more followed in the February, March and April of 1866. In June all these sections were published separately as a book, still called 1805. Towards the end of 1867 it was reprinted with some additional material and given the title *War and Peace*. In 1868 a fourth volume appeared and in 1869 the final two volumes. It was the revision of the whole work completed in 1873 that established *War and Peace* in its customary form of four volumes. For a survey of the contemporary Russian response see N. N. Gusev, *Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy. Materialy k biografii s 1855 po 1869 god* (Moscow, 1957), pp. 813-76.
2. N. N. Strakhov, 'Voyna i mir. Sochineniye gr. L. N. Tolstogo. Tomy v i vi', *Zarya*, 1 (1870). Strakhov began his essay with a quotation from the last volume which he clearly saw as embodying Tolstoy's underlying philosophy: 'There can be no greatness where there is no simplicity, goodness and truth.'
3. L. N. Tolstoy, 'Neskol'ko slov po povodu knigi Voyna i mir', *Russkiy arkhiv*, 3 (1868).
4. L. N. Tolstoy, *Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy, Jubilee Edition* (90 vols., Moscow, 1928-58), vol. LXI, pp. 80-1.
5. *J.E.*, vol. xv, p. 138. V. B. Shklovsky in his *Lev Tolstoy* (Munich, 1963), pp. 394-7 throws some doubt on this, as he does on all Tolstoyan prototypes. It is an idiosyncratic opinion.
6. Quoted in B. M. Eykhenbaum, *Lev Tolstoy* (Munich, 1968), vol. II, pp. 278-9.
7. *J.E.*, vol. LXI, p. 149.
8. See for example E. E. Zaydenshnur, 'Istoriya pisaniya i pechataniya Voyny i mira', in *J.E.*, vol. xvi, pp. 19-141, and her 'Voyna i mir' L. N. Tolstogo. *Sozdaniye velikoy knigi* (Moscow, 1966), pp. 12-70, 158-213 *passim*; R. F. Christian, *Tolstoy's 'War and Peace': A Study* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 1-59 *passim*.
9. 'Tsyacha vosem'sot pyatyy god, soch. grafa L'va Tolstogo, chasti i i ii', *Knizhnyy vestnik*, 16-17 (1866).
10. N. D. Akhsharumov, 'Tsyacha vosem'sot pyatyy god, soch. grafa L'va Tolstogo', *Vsemirnyy trud*, 6 (1867); N. D. Akhsharumov, 'Voyna i mir, sochineniye gr. Tolstogo, 1-4 chasti', *Vsemirnyy trud*, 4 (1868).
11. P. V. Annenkov, 'Istoricheskiye i esteticheskiye voprosy v romane grafa L. N. Tolstogo Voyna i mir', *Vestnik Evropy*, 2 (1868).
12. I. S. Turgenev, *Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy i pisem. Pis'ma* (Moscow, 1963), vol. vi, p. 66. (Letter to A. A. Fet of 15 June 1866.)

13. 'Novyye knigi', *Delo*, 4 (1868).
14. M. I. Dragomirov, 'Voyna i mir grafa Tolstogo s voennoy tochki zreniya', *Oruzheynnyy sbornik*, 4 (1868) and 1 (1869).
15. In 1812 news of Napoleon's invasion reached Bucharest where Kutuzov had been living for two months with a local woman. Prince Andrey immediately asked to be transferred to the Western army. Kutuzov had grown weary of Prince Andrey's energy which 'he felt as a reproach to his own idleness' and so he let him go with a mission to Barclay de Tolly (*War and Peace*, III, i. 8).
16. A. S. Norov, 'Voyna i mir 1805-12 s istoricheskoy tochki zreniya i po vospominaniyam sovremennika', *Voennyi sbornik*, 11 (1868).
17. P. A. Vyazemsky, *Vospominaniya o 1812 gode* (Moscow, 1869), pp. 24-35.
18. I. P. Liprandi, 'Zametka po povodu Borodinskogo srazheniya', *Golos*, 129 (1868).
19. This question of typicality much concerned the critics. For example N. S-ov (N. Solov'ev) writing in '1812 god v Voynе i mire', *Severnaya pchela*, 3 (1869), states that however well characters like Pierre and Prince Andrey may be drawn, they are not at all typical of the period. Although Tolstoy was right to show that all classes were united in 1812, it was far too soon to depict members of the aristocracy behaving as if they were somehow sympathetic to the problems of the mass of the population. Furthermore he says that Prince Andrey helps his peasants only from selfish motives, which tends to destroy Tolstoy's argument anyway. On the other hand V. P. Burenin under the signature 'Z' wrote a number of essays in the 'Russkaya literatura' series in the *Sankt-Peterburgskiyе vedomosti*. In one in no. 24, 1868, he finds Prince Andrey absolutely typical. Like many people of his class and time, thinks Burenin, he is basically an unstable personality. He is jolted from one idea to the next and never fails to see himself as someone out of the ordinary. However he finds no soil in which his talents can grow, let alone blossom, and consequently he turns in on himself and becomes disillusioned with himself as well. As a result he turns to war or the reform movement in the vain attempt to forget. According to Burenin there were many such men around in the first decade or so of nineteenth-century Russia. Hardly anyone else agreed with him.
20. A. P. Pyatkovsky, 'Istoricheskaya epokha v romane gr. L. N. Tolstogo', *Nedelya*, 22, 23 and 26 (1868).
21. A. P. Pyatkovsky, 'Novyye knigi. Sochineniye gr. L. N. Tolstogo', *Sovremennik*, 4 (1865).
22. P. Shchebaľ'sky, 'Voyna i mir. Sochineniye gr. L. N. Tolstogo', *Russkiy vestnik*, 1 (1868).
23. 'Bibliografiya i zhurnalistika. Voyna i mir gr. Tolstogo', *Golos*, 11 (1868).
24. S. I. Sychevsky, 'Ocherki noveyshey russkoy literatury. Voyna i mir gr. L. N. Tolstogo', *Odesskiy vestnik*, 153 and 155 (1868).
25. If Sychevsky thought that *War and Peace* should have ended with

Prince Andrey's death, this episode was to cause the critics some confusion. The short story writer N. S. Leskov, who wrote a series of unsigned essays on *War and Peace* entitled 'Geroi otechestvennoy voyny po L. N. Tolstomu' for *Birzhevyye vedomosti* in 1869 and 1870, took the scene of Prince Andrey's death as one of the best examples of Tolstoy's great skill as a writer. It was a description that was beautiful in its simplicity and Leskov knew of nothing comparable. It was completely different from Shakespeare's 'a sleep and a forgetting' and had nothing of the sentimentality of the 'pink curtains' of *Dombey and Son*, nor was it anything like the materialists' 'change into non-existence'. All Tolstoy gives us is 'the awakening from the sleep of life'. Leskov might have wondered whether Tolstoy was actually correct in his interpretation but nonetheless thought the passage had 'the ring of truth about it'. Very few critics agreed with him. V. P. Burenin was left with a vague feeling of unease which he put down to an imposed mysticism; and he regretted that Tolstoy had apparently killed his hero prematurely (*Sankt-Peterburgskiy vedomosti*, 69 (1869)). The anonymous critic of *Golos*, 69 (1869), agreed that Tolstoy had lapsed into mysticism, something which was quite out of character for Prince Andrey despite all he had been through. *Syn otechestva*, 56 (1869), found it all part of the obtrusive fatalism that Tolstoy imposed on everything. Consequently Prince Andrey's death is inevitable. The writer believes this is proved by the fact that neither of the two women who meant most to him, Natasha and Princess Marya, could help him.

26. Nikolayeva (M. K. Tsebrikova), 'Nashi babushki. Po povodu zhenskikh kharakterov v romane *Voyna i mir*', *Otechestvennyye zapiski*, 6 (1868).
27. N. N. Strakhov, 'Nasha izyashchnaya slovesnost'', *Otechestvennyye zapiski*, 23 and 24 (1866).
28. S. Navalikhin (V. V. Bervi-Flerovsky), 'Izyashchnyy romanist i yego izyashchynnye kritiki', *Delo*, 6 (1868).
29. D. I. Pisarev, 'Staroye barstvo', *Otechestvennyye zapiski*, 2 (1868).
30. A. M. Skabichevsky, 'Graf Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy kak khudozhnik i myslitel', *Otechestvennyye zapiski*, 8 (1872).
31. Although only very rarely interested in and even less influenced by what the critics wrote about him, Tolstoy was always keen to know what his friends and fellow writers thought. With *War and Peace* he found only occasional comfort there. They were sympathetic to it and while praising its obvious virtues they were not reluctant to point out its manifest faults. Like many of the critics they complained that it was slow-moving, digressive and weighed down by excessive detail. Its view of history was at best eccentric and its 'message' old-fashioned. It contained elements of anachronism and had no plot. The style left a lot to be desired for it was muddled and sometimes ungrammatical.
32. See A. V. Knowles, 'Tolstoy's Literary Reputation before *War and Peace*', *Modern Language Review*, LXXII.3 (July 1977), 627-39.

A man speaking to men: the narratives of *War and Peace*

W. GARETH JONES

I

Entranced by a night spent outside a military camp in the Caucasus in 1851, the twenty-three-year-old Tolstoy wrote in his diary, 'I thought – I'll go and describe what I see. But how to write it? One needs to go and sit down at an ink-stained desk, take some grey paper and ink; get one's fingers dirty and trace letters on the paper. The letters make up words, the words – sentences; but is it possible to convey the feeling? Is it not possible somehow to pour into another man one's view at the sight of nature?' (*J.E.*, vol. XLVI, p. 65). The young soldier was discomfited by the artificiality of writing, by an awareness of the fallibility of words. But in this jotting he had already signalled that the aim of writing for him went beyond composing something of intrinsic worth, poetry so well wrought that it could pretend to an independent existence. Parable would later be exalted by Tolstoy over poetry; not merely because the former carried a moral message, but because the parable was an art of performance, 'pouring one's view into another man', demanding an attentive and responsive listener. Writing for him, as for Wordsworth, meant 'a man speaking to men', and Tolstoy would occasionally enhance this sense of public performance by equating writing with singing to his fellow men. In the sketches for his *Childhood*, for example, it was to music that he turned for an analogy to explain his new kind of writing that would avoid stale convention in its direct 'anti-poetic' appeal to his reader. Significantly, it was not the musician as creative composer that suggested himself to Tolstoy but the *performing* artist; the image that he held of himself was not that of the song writer, but of the singer, intent on affecting his audience.

What is remarkable about Tolstoy is that he never saw himself as a solitary singer set apart from a world of passive listeners. His world's stage was peopled by men and women with their own voices, speaking and singing parts they had fashioned for themselves, listening

as responsively as an audience for parables. So were his novels. For it was this Tolstoyan understanding that inspired his works: human society consisted of men, each pouring his feelings into another. His creatures live on the page because they too, like him, make sense of existence by narrating their experiences to each other. One must see *War and Peace* not as a single narrative issuing from one author, but as a dynamic pattern of many narratives, constantly varied and inter-reacting. To be Tolstoy's reader, so far as this novel is concerned, one's response must be not to the author's tale, but to the work's many narratives.

For Tolstoy was accustomed to imagine his fictional characters, like himself, as performers; often his creatures, in contrast to those of other novelists, do not engage in private conversation, cogitation or reflection but hold forth publicly, narrating, recounting or 'telling stories' – *rasskazyvat'* is the Russian verb for which it is difficult to find a single English equivalent. They speak to a company who respond as a distanced audience to a ritualised performance. So at the beginning of *War and Peace*, Prince Vasily talks 'like an actor speaking lines from an old play', Anna Scherer enthuses 'in order not to disappoint people's expectations' (1.1.1), the vicomte de Mortemart is introduced as 'un parfait conteur' (1.1.3). Much time and mental energy was spent by Tolstoy in the search for a beginning that would set his *War and Peace* in motion; over a dozen false starts are recorded. What is significant about the final choice – the description of a soirée at which the main protagonists are guests was hardly a fresh solution – is the way in which modes of narration, or communication between people, are presented and examined. It is as if Tolstoy, on the threshold of his own story-telling, wished to put his reader on his guard against its conventions and artifice by demonstrating to him different kinds of narration. First there is the polish and assurance of the vicomte de Mortemart's refined reciting of a scabrous anecdote about Napoleon and the duc d'Enghien, a piece of society gossip greeted with delight by his audience. Set against that, the earnest conversation of Pierre and the abbé Morio on the balance of power is shown, for all its sincerity, to be out of place and awkward. In Anna Scherer's salon, the *well told* anecdote, however superficial, always wins more attention than any attempt to bumble out the truth. Even a nonsensical buffoon's tale from Prince Hippolyte gains more respect than Pierre's honest theorising.

What is happening in these early scenes, as the reader commits himself to the long journey through Tolstoy's novel, is that the author is signalling to him some of the curious relationships between the man who tells the story and his listener. An attempt to tell the honest truth unconventionally, as by Pierre, is met with resistance;

there may be more real communing, not only in the retailing of superficial gossip related with polished art, but even in twaddle such as Hippolyte's nonsense tale which makes everyone stop to listen and applaud (I.i.4).

Without making any separate declaration on the nature of his art, Tolstoy had embedded within his own narrative the awareness that had come to him under the Caucasian night sky: experience cannot be conveyed directly to another; the paraphernalia of art is necessary for any human communication. The same realisation had been fused into the narrative of *The Raid* (1853), where Captain Khlopov, so rich in life's experiences, can only seek to convey those experiences to a young volunteer by suggesting that he read the historian Mikhaylovsky-Danilevsky and chat to a young poet in the regiment (chapter 1). Aware that experienced truth was invariably modified by the artifices needed for its transmission, Tolstoy felt impelled to alert his reader to the extent to which he was being manipulated by fiction's conventions. So, as *War and Peace* was set in motion, its reader was warned to distrust its apparent solidity and fascination.

This insinuation into his fiction of passages that encouraged the reader to determine consciously his own attitude to narrative (whether to listen avidly along with most of Anna Scherer's guests, or turn away in disgust as Prince Andrey did from the anecdote about Napoleon) was not new for Tolstoy. If the examination of the relationship between narrator and audience is there at the beginning of *War and Peace* as it was in *The Raid*, it lay too at the foundation of Tolstoy's first published work, *Childhood*. In the sketches for that work, it is apparent how much more important enthralling and moving his reader was for Tolstoy than weaving verbal patterns. By the final version, a perusal of the bond between author and audience had been incorporated into the fiction in the central chapter 'Verses' where the boy, Nikolenka, faced with the task of producing a present for his grandmother's name-day, recites a poem for her. It is not as an entertainer that Nikolenka is presented but as an embryonic Tolstoyan narrator, beset with disgust and self-doubt, and fearful of his reception. In the boy's composing, Tolstoy revealed to his reader the inspiration, doggedness, plagiarism and posing involved in producing an inherently false communication to the listener of an initially sincere impulse.

There are times in *War and Peace* when Tolstoy becomes almost Brechtian in the relentless warning to his readers against being swept along by his narrative, particularly of the historical and military events. Again, however, no separate artistic manifesto is apparent; rather we are allowed, as in *Childhood*, to see the relationship between narrator and audience developing between the fictive characters.

Inevitably, in such a work as *War and Peace*, with character and episodes embedded in a historical chronicle, the registering of event, time, place, conversation bears the novel along. Is Nikolay Rostov's arrival in Tilsit significant because he arrived there on 27 June 1807? Tolstoy's noting of that day is reminiscent of the conventional chronicler: 'That day, 27 June, the first conditions of peace were signed. The Emperors exchanged orders: Alexander received the Légion d'Honneur, and Napoleon the St Andrew 1st Class, and that day a dinner was arranged for the Preobrazhensky regiment given to it by a battalion of the French Guards' (II.i.19). Yet this sort of brisk narrative of Tolstoy's, making immediate the public, historical framework for private happenings, had just been put in question in the previous chapter where Boris Drubetskoy's habit of noting down particulars, even at the Tilsit meeting between the Emperors, had been mocked. It is Boris here who stands for the typical writer who stores up material with which he will later seek to affect an audience. Not only does he make a note of the persons present and their uniforms, but is meticulous about logging time: 'At the very moment when the emperors entered the pavilion, he looked at his watch and did not forget to look again at the moment when Alexander left the pavilion. The meeting had lasted 1 hour 53 minutes: that is what he noted that evening among other facts which he supposed had historical significance' (II.i.19). This ironic comment on memoir writing that concentrates on surface detail while telling nothing about the true condition of human relationship is again made through a narrating character, one of the 'performers' in the fiction, and not by Tolstoy himself. Ironically, it gives the reader an eloquent warning against narrative chronology used with effect by the author of *War and Peace*.

If Tolstoy wished to warn his reader against the conventional chronicling of diplomatic history, he was even more intent on setting him on guard against the narration of military exploits. And on guard against the reader's own craving for the conventional. It is through Nikolay Rostov – as much, surely, an emanation of Tolstoy's self as Prince Andrey and Pierre – and his recital of Schöngraben, that Tolstoy persuades his own reader to understand that however truthful a narrator would wish to be, he is swayed from the truth by his audience that is bound to rely on conventional signals. Transparent truth cannot be seen. Art's untruth springs not necessarily from the maliciousness of an embellishing narrator, but is demanded by an audience that relies on the conventional. So does Nikolay's audience: 'They expected an account of how he was all on fire, beside himself, how he rushed like a storm at the square; how he was hacked at, while striking to left and right; how a sabre cut into

his flesh and he fell into oblivion, and so on. And he recounted all that for them' (I.iii.7). It is interesting that Tolstoy had once shared Rostov's feelings. In his note to the fourth volume of the Tolstoy Centenary Edition *Tales of Army Life*, Aylmer Maude recalled that 'One day, when talking about Sevastopol, he [Tolstoy] told me that when writing these sketches he was aware that, contending with his desire to tell the truth as he saw it, there was another feeling prompting him to say what was expected of him.' The point is made clearly to the reader of *War and Peace* that there are conventional ways of recounting battles that are inherently false; paradoxically it is only these false strokes that can shape an experience for an audience. Tolstoy does not propose to spurn these conventions, but would like his reader to be aware of them, and see *through* them to the real experience.

The lesson is well placed: the probing of Nikolay's 'imperceptible, involuntary and inevitable' slide into untruth must modify the reader's acceptance of the description of Andrey's wounding which follows shortly. At Austerlitz, from the moment that Prince Andrey shouts 'Hurrah!' and raises the standard to rally his men, the charge is recounted in a conventional manner. It is with the panache of jingoistic literature that the scene is told initially: the banner is held aloft, bullets whistle, men fall to left and right of our hero – it is as if we are listening again to Nikolay entertaining his audience. Already prepared by the insight into the gap between the conventional style of Nikolay's story of Schöngraben and the true experience which it obscured, the reader, following Andrey's charge, is swept along by the vigorous conventional description, but simultaneously suspects the truthfulness of the account. He may remember that it was this same Prince Andrey who had stemmed Nikolay's increasingly impassioned narrative, borne beyond convention into cliché, silencing him with his unexpected appearance. The reader is, therefore, prepared for the sudden dissolution of the conventional here as the same Andrey asks 'What are they doing?' on seeing the wordless but mortal tug-of-war between a French and Russian soldier. From that point on, we are subject to a new narrative technique – but not at the expense of old conventions.

If the experience of warfare, as indeed all human experience, was beyond man's ability to comprehend and narrate, why should Tolstoy have persisted so long with his writing? Tolstoy mediates his answer through a Nikolay Rostov made fully conscious of the perils of communication between men. After his experience of Austerlitz and the 1807 campaigns, Nikolay had realised that 'in recounting military events, men always lie, as he himself had lied while recounting' (III.i.12). So it is with shame that he listens to an

overblown account of a patriotic exploit by General Rayevsky while providing his own debunking gloss to the narration in his mind. Yet he does not object to the narration. And the reason that Nikolay gives to himself might well be Tolstoy's apologia for continuing to write fiction, despite his rage for the truth. Such narration, he came to realise, even if it failed to communicate experience fully, had a particular justification: despite its falsity it exerted an independent moral force and enabled men to commune with each other in society. For Tolstoy this was no new revelation. The earlier Nikolenka of *Childhood* had also realised, as a consumer of literature, the way in which the lie of art enhanced the art of living. The vividness of the children's games was sharpened by their imitation of *Swiss Family Robinson*. Although Nikolenka knew as well as his supercilious elder brother Volodya that a stick was not a gun, his play was all the more intense if he pretended. The rhetorical question posed by the child to close the chapter 'Games' in *Childhood*, might still be the one for Nikolay Rostov to ponder over: 'If one is to judge by reality, then there would be no play. And without play, what would remain?' (chapter 8).

II

If the Nikolenka of *Childhood* was unsettled – and the reader in consequence – by his growing awareness of the fictive fluidity of verses, and story-based games, he was no more secure in the language, or it would be more correct to say languages, that shaped the expression of his experiences. *War and Peace*, which has been called a bilingual novel for its large use of French, was by no means the first work in which Tolstoy had troubled the reader with a foreign language. If *War and Peace* begins in French, then the first spoken dialogue in *Childhood* is in German between Karl Ivanich, the family tutor, and Nikolenka. While the use of German may be explained as historical colouring, as the work progresses we become aware that Tolstoy intended to present his child as one conscious of the lack of security afforded by human speech. Although the mother speaks Russian with the children, her own mother tongue, and the one she employs for her intimate thoughts, is German. The shift of language is noticed by the child as he perceives that French is used at the dinner table formally to exclude Grigory, the holy fool, from the community around the table. Foreign idiom was a means for Tolstoy to intimate to his reader his sense of the fragility of language as a means of communication.

The use of French, and to a lesser extent German, in *War and Peace* as well, is a means by which the reader is made aware of the linguistic texture of the fictional work. Too aware, perhaps, for many

early reviewers – not only the young radical nationalist critics, but also Tolstoy's aristocratic friends – protested against an apparent over-indulgence in French. Indeed the novel begins with a sentence whose single Russian word is used as a calculated disparagement, 'Eh bien, mon prince, Gênes et Lucques ne sont plus que des apanages, des *pomest'ya*, de la famille Buonaparte' (I.i.1). Since it is Anna Scherer who speaks these words, it would seem natural for her to speak French and so it seemed to the editors of the Jubilee Edition who maintained that *War and Peace* would make no sense without French since French was an 'integral accessory to the way of life of the upper class at the beginning of the nineteenth century'. Had they chosen to follow the 1873 edition in which the French had been translated, they argued, many of the characters, such as Anna Scherer, Hippolyte Kuragin, Bilibin, Napoleon, Kutuzov, Alexander I, would lose some of their individual quality. It was roughly these reasons – historical and dramatic – that Tolstoy himself gave as a rational justification for his apparently excessive use of French. Prompted by subsequent criticism from friends, however, Tolstoy allowed the 1873 edition to appear not only with the removal of his philosophical and historical discursions, but with all the French translated. This he did, however, with some regret. The use of French, despite what Tolstoy's editors and Tolstoy as editor of his own work suggested, goes far beyond the need for local colouring. Could he not have merely indicated the use of French, as contemporary critics suggested? There are times when Tolstoy does indeed state that his characters whose dialogue is given in Russian, are conversing in French; this is true even in the case of Andrey and Natasha. Furthermore the abundant gallicisms of the novel might have been sufficient to preserve the local historical colouring. However, French is not merely used for historical *vraisemblance*. Sometimes it would appear that French is used to stress artificiality of sentiment and attitude, as opposed to the genuineness of Russian: it is the language in which Pierre proposes to Héléne, the language in which Héléne addresses Natasha at the opera. For Andrey, it is not only Natasha's gaiety and shyness that are a mark of her naturalness, but her mistakes in French. However, some characters manage to be intensely Russian despite their French, such as Kutuzov with his fondness for Madame de Genlis' novels and French proverbs, or Bilibin who showed an 'exceptionally Russian fearlessness before self-judgement and self-mockery' in a long letter to Prince Andrey despite his writing it 'in French with French jokes and turns of phrase' (II.ii.8). Bilibin is one of the most conscious of Tolstoy's narrating characters, producing memorable phrases in his 'inner laboratory' that insignificant people could carry from drawing-room

to drawing-room. And one of the features that ensures that the reader grasps the mechanical precision of Bilibin's narrations is his skill at mixing French and Russian, 'saying in Russian only those words which he wished to emphasise disparagingly' (I.ii.10).

It is this mingling of French with Russian which is met in the novel's first sentence, rather than the use of French itself that makes the reader linguistically unsettled, as were the early critics who would have felt more comfortable in the presence of *War and Peace* had Tolstoy spiked his Russian with less French. It was an experience that the English reader of Jane Austen, or even Dickens with his idiosyncratic idiom, never endured: English, the common mother tongue of writer and reader, ensured some stability in their relationship. Even this bedrock of communication was deliberately undermined by Tolstoy. The insidious French in his narrative is subversive, alerting the reader to the transience of language and the words used by the writer to communicate with him. In excusing his use of French in *A Few Words about 'War and Peace'*, Tolstoy drew an analogy with the formal texture of a painting. The French, he explained, was akin to the dark patches used by a painter: they may be perceived as shadows, but the naive eye sees them as black blobs. 'I would only wish that those who find it amusing that Napoleon speaks Russian and French in turn, would realise that they find it so only because they, like a man looking at a portrait, see not a face with light and shade, but a black patch under a nose' (*J.E.*, vol. XVI, pp. 8-9). However, what is striking about the analogy is how Tolstoy reveals his awareness that his use of French actually encouraged his reader to see through the conventional deceptive shadows of the artist to the dark, crude blobs of paint at the base of his craft. Language, too, may be as inexpressive as a paint pot.

Differing languages disturb the reader; he shares the experience of Prince Andrey, conscious of confusion on the battlefield when he hears the Babel of a multi-lingual exchange. 'Pfuel. . .shouted angrily even at Wolzogen "Nun ja, was soll denn da noch expliziert werden?"' - Paulucci and Michaud in a duet attacked Wolzogen in French. Armfelt addressed Pfuel in German. Tol explained it in Russian to Prince Bolkonsky. Prince Andrey listened in silence, and observed' (III.i.11).

III

It is that coolly observant listener, like Andrey, that Tolstoy would have liked his reader to be. Our discussion to this point has attempted to bring out the way in which, through his 'narrating' characters, Tolstoy has warned his reader against the deceit of story-telling. In wishing to make the reader aware in this way of the ritual of nar-

ration, Tolstoy seeks to elicit a special response from him, engaging him in the particular conspiracy in which the true novelist would wish to embroil his reader.

Readers of *War and Peace*, will, of course, object that they are surely not always treated by Tolstoy as cool, aristocratic observers of the world's stage. Sometimes there is a direct appeal to us as one of a mutinous mob. The coarse demagogic address is particularly apparent in Tolstoy's excursions into historiography. By showing the absurdity of other versions of historical events, he suggests that it must follow that 'ours' – that is, the author and reader in collusion – our version must be true. Dealing with the battle of Borodino, Tolstoy gave his own precis of the view of 'all historians' and then declared with the most conventional of debating ploys: 'That is what the histories say, and all that is completely unjust, which can easily be vouched for by anybody who wishes to look into the essentials of the matter' (III.ii.19). In then giving a revised account of Borodino, Tolstoy flatters the reader; we feel that we are privileged to know more about the battle than any learned historian. Again at the beginning of part iii we have the same tub-thumper's appeal to his audience: historians are wrong is the message, the implication being – and it is never more than an implication – that Tolstoy is right. And the debater's claim is supported by crude, simplistic mechanistic images: any fool can realise that it is not the hands of a clock that cause church bells to ring, nor is it its whistle that sets a locomotive running.

Yet even when his demagoguery is at its most effective, we find Tolstoy recoiling from it and subjecting it to the same criticism as other forms of conventional communication. One of the most effective of the scenes debunking historiography is that in which Lavrushka, Nikolay Rostov's servant, falls into the hands of the French. This interlude was based on a passage from Thiers' history which recounted the capture of a Russian whom the French took to be a Cossack, 'un enfant du Don', who showed a child-like wonder at being in the presence of the great Napoleon; the Emperor responded by freeing the Cossack and sending him back to the Russian lines, an action which is described by Thiers in an overblown, romantic and, consequently for Tolstoy, false phrase to which the reader's attention is drawn: 'Napoléon. . . lui fit donner la liberté, comme à un oiseau qu'on rend aux champs qui l'ont vu naître' (III.ii.7). In reality Tolstoy would have us believe, it was not a noble savage of a Cossack that the French had captured, but Nikolay's wily lackey who, far from being impressed by Napoleon, realised that his role was to pretend astonishment and veneration. If the scene had ended there, then it would have been unconvincing, another example of

Tolstoy's crude haranguing. Even if we are led to distrust Thiers' narrative, common sense suggests to us as we read the passage that there was little likelihood of Thiers' historical 'Cossack' being the fictional Lavrushka.

But the scene did not end with the freeing of Lavrushka. And as Lavrushka returns to the Russian lines, Tolstoy submits his own previous narrative to a critical appraisal through the mind of his character. Even more striking than Lavrushka's hoodwinking of Napoleon are his thoughts as he rides back: 'he galloped towards the forward posts, thinking up beforehand everything that had not been and that he would recount to his own side. Everything which had really happened to him, he did not wish to recount just because that seemed to him unworthy of a narrative' (III.ii.7).

As Lavrushka returns to his lines, the point is forcibly made – strikingly soon after Tolstoy's attempt to 'tell the truth' by debunking Thiers and his 'enfant du Don' – that the substance of man's life is incommunicable. Lavrushka knows, as his master Nikolay did, that conventions which channel the flow of communication from narrator to listener will inevitably frustrate any stories he cares to tell based on perceived events. What he 'thinks up', or what comes to his mind, as he gallops back is a story to tell, not wholly unrelated to his experience, but 'worthy of being recounted'. Lavrushka and Nikolay like Nikolenka of *Childhood* and Captain Khlopov of *The Raid* before them are aware that what is recognised as 'worthy of recounting' is the only possible way for one person to communicate through speech with his fellows. Lavrushka is here, like his master previously, involuntarily and inevitably moved into untruth, despite his desire to tell things as they had happened.

For Tolstoy perhaps, Lavrushka could have only given voice to the truth through instinctive song – if he had been indeed Thiers' 'bird restored to its native fields'. Tolstoy had anticipated many writers who would feel how words are so much more haphazard and fugitive as a medium of expression compared with song. In the drafts for *Childhood* where he had sought an analogy for writing in music two types of singers were described – the 'head singer', bound by technique, and the 'chest singer', who sang more directly to his audience. The latter, the instinctive performer rather than the trained musician, reappears a number of times in *War and Peace*. So Natasha at the end of the second volume's first part is the typical, intuitively physical, 'chest singer':

Natasha took her first note, her throat widened, her chest straightened, her eyes took on a serious expression. She did not think of anyone or anything at that moment, and from the lips, set in a smile, poured sounds, those

sounds which anyone can produce at the same periods of time, the same intervals but which leave you a thousand times unmoved, and at the thousand and first make you shudder and weep. (II.i.15)

Again it is not the beauty of Natasha's art that Tolstoy wished his reader to appreciate, since Natasha with her 'untrained voice, with her incorrect breathing and strained phrasing' (II.i.15) is as 'anti-poetic' as Tolstoy wished to be. But techniques can never be a substitute for sincere human expression such as the singing voice. 'Her voice had that virginal inviolability, that unawareness of its strength and that unpolished velvet quality which so merged with the mistakes in the art of singing that it seemed impossible to change anything in that voice without spoiling it' (II.i.15). There is an assurance in Natasha's singing, stressed by the set of her stride – a firm heel to toe movement – as she takes up her position. This same stride is repeated when she finds so much delight in the sound of her own voice as she goes through her singing exercises while waiting for Andrey: the rhythm of the voice exercises here gives way to the more elemental rhythm, in which she finds equal pleasure, of her heel and toe striking the parquet, 'just as joyfully as to the sounds of her voice, she listened intently to the measured tap of her heel and the squeak of the toe' (II.iii.23). Tolstoy was clearly fascinated by the primitive naive instinctive art of singing which somehow was not aimed at communication, was not therefore circumscribed by technique, yet somehow communicated directly with listeners – the type of folk singing practised by the Rostovs' uncle: 'Uncle sang as the peasant folk sing, in the full and naive conviction that in song all the meaning is in the words alone, that the tune comes of itself and that there is never a separate tune and that the tune is only there to hold it together' (II.iv.7). So the tune was unconscious, 'Like the tune of a bird.' The idea of song bursting forth from man's lips as from a bird's throat, as an unconscious affirmation of self, is again suggested in the description of Platon Karatayev's singing: 'He sang songs not like singers knowing that they are heard but sang, as birds sing, evidently because it was as necessary to emit these sounds, as it is necessary to join in song or break off' (IV.i.13). For Karatayev, and the uncle, for the people, singing is a means of self-affirmation and there need be no thought of the audience. It is not a prerogative of the common folk, however. It is the same unconscious delight that Natasha experiences in her voice exercises in the resonant drawing-room. For her, a failure to sing becomes a signal of her collapse after the break with Andrey; her restoration to health is marked by the renewal of the ability to sing. What Tolstoy shows in these singing passages is the necessity for human voicing of a reality which may

be expressible but not wholly communicable. The listeners – one might even say the eavesdroppers on these naive, bird-like effusions – can only be stirred by the contagion with a deeper reality so distant from the surface manifestations of existence, such as those noted and registered by Boris Drubetskoy. Song is heard at climactic moments in *War and Peace*, and it would appear that Tolstoy was as taken by the idea of pure expression being possible through music as was Paul Valéry in his conviction that music was the ideal art.

Tolstoy's medium, however, was words, even if words did not spring so freshly from men's lips as song. Sometimes they may: they fell naturally from Platon Karatayev's lips so that he could not understand words taken in isolation, nor could he repeat what had been said. Language could, as in his case, flow along as an integral component of the life of the moment. Just as Natasha, unable to explain her experiences *in words* to Andrey when their love was at its most intense, made Andrey understand her despite the lack of articulation. As in love, so in war: Kutuzov at the height of battle does not rely on words alone but on the expression of the narrator and his tone. So the reader, following the words on the page, paradoxically is alerted to the dimness of words at climactic moments in man's life.

Thus, while using the full power of his rhetoric to sustain his fiction, Tolstoy intimates to his reader through Karatayev, Kutuzov and Bilibin, through the mingling of French with Russian, the insignificance and deception of words. In writing history with irony and persuasion, he alerts his reader, through Boris Drubetskoy, to distrust all historical narration. In reading Tolstoy's magnificent set pieces of adventure, heroism and love, the reader is reminded of Nikolay Rostov's and Lavrushka's realisation that it is only possible to mediate a modicum of true experience through narration. In the end, the reader puts his trust in Tolstoy, since he is being fashioned by an author who endeavours to let him take a critical stance. If Tolstoy as an omniscient narrator plays God with his creation, then he sets out not to predetermine his reader's responses but to endow him with critical free will.

IV

The passages where Tolstoy seems to reach out to his reader to alert and instruct him are remarkable for not being set apart from the main narrative. The problem of communication for Tolstoy was never reduced to a question of mere technique but was fully integrated into a particular Tolstoyan vision. So, although Tolstoy may use the chapter 'Verses' in *Childhood* to mediate his views on literary composition and its reception, that chapter is simultaneously a cen-

tral scene in the work, placed at the point where a farewell has been sung to childhood as the boy became conscious of self in relation to others. Time after time, the reader finds that the characters' narrative performances within Tolstoy's main narrative are fused with emotional points of crisis in the novel. It is indeed a feature of Tolstoy's fictional universe to find characters at a high emotional pitch reading or writing, being in an audience or telling a story. At life's turning points, the art of narration intrudes. Two examples from the second volume of the second part will suffice: Pierre, on his way to Petersburg after his duel and break with his wife, is beset with nihilistic thoughts which are reinforced by his reading of an epistolary novel by Madame Suza (a writer despised by Tolstoy) which prompts him to compare his own situation and that of Hélène with the story of 'some Amélie de Mansfeld'. By the time Pierre arrives in Petersburg, after his conversion to freemasonry, he spends whole days reading Thomas à Kempis. From Madame Suza to Thomas à Kempis! Their narratives are shown to have influenced Pierre's life, revealed his instability and moved him from nihilistic despair to certitude. When shortly, in chapter 10, we cut to Prince Andrey at Bald Hills, *War and Peace* appears briefly to become an epistolary novel as Andrey opens two letters, one from his father and the other from Bilibin. Off stage, Andrey's son is hovering between life and death in the nursery. Yet Bilibin's letter, written in French, bristling with sardonic irony, consciously a literary creation aiming for effect, manages to capture Andrey's whole attention so that it is only with an effort of will that he can shake off his bondage to Bilibin's artificial narrating, and return to the solid reality of the nursery. Throughout the ensuing scene, the reader is conscious that this father, despite his deep feelings for his son, has been infected and somehow modified by his recent reading, so that he preserves – even in the private solitude of the nursery – some of Bilibin's diplomatic restraint: 'Prince Andrey wanted to seize, squeeze, press to his breast this small helpless being; he did not dare do it' (II.ii.9).

What we should recognise is that the narrative mode itself is often employed to precipitate feelings. In both the above cases we have stock figures from fiction: the despairing cuckold of a cold wife, the distressed father of a dying son. The reader would expect the conventional novelist to limit himself to a description or dramatisation of that despair, of that distress. Tolstoy, however, does not attempt to describe these states directly; the ultimate reality of distress, pain or joy is indescribable. They are too complex. Mingled with Pierre's despair unto death is an irritating enjoyment of his emotional state; with Andrey's brimming paternal love, there is an admixture of cold aloofness and male exasperation at being shackled

to domesticity. These complexes of emotion may be vented in such acts as intuitive song, or mutely in a brisk walk, such as Natasha's heeling and toeing in her drawing-room. But if they are to be cast into words, then such states are best given shape through the medium of some formal address or narration which may well be tangential to the real experience. So the nature of Pierre's *pleasurable* despair is made evident in his reading of Madame Suza. It is Bilibin's letter, exquisite in its artificiality, that brings out the full complexity of Andrey's genuine emotional state.

The second volume from which the above examples are taken is a section of *War and Peace* where the love affairs of the novel are developed, if not resolved: Pierre is reunited with Hélène, Prince Andrey asks for Natasha's hand in marriage, Nikolay declares his love for Sonya, Boris Drubetskoy and Julie Karagina make their match, and Natasha is seduced by Anatole. It appears that Tolstoy had set out to examine the thousand faces of love in tracing these matches and mismatches. Again a framework of novelistic convention can be seen around each affair: faithful love being put to the test of absence, love triumphing over impediments of social station, a marriage of convenience, a conventional seduction. However, once more Tolstoy shows how rapport is made not in discussion or even conversation, but emerges through men's use of those many forms of narrative that have been elaborated in human culture. Before following these manifestations of love it is worth noting at the outset that the reader is reminded of the futility of trying to transfer one's vision directly to another. During Pierre's address to his brother freemasons on a way of regenerating the world, the reader is told that Pierre was driven by the need 'to convey his thought to another exactly as he understood it' (II.iii.7). That, for Tolstoy, is the impossibility. The lodge reacts as negatively to Pierre's honesty as Anna Scherer's salon had: not only those opposed to his views reject him, but even those in general agreement misunderstand him. The result of this confusion is that Pierre is awkwardly reunited with his wife. The awkwardness of that dutiful cohabitation is, of course, an unstable foundation for the love affairs that follow. If the cohabitation had been made possible by a rational address, then it is other forms of narrative – song, mumming, sentimental literature, music, opera and dramatic readings – that determine the relationships that ensue. Their common feature is that they are all addressed to an audience. They are all performances.

Without being informed by the narrator, the reader realises that Prince Andrey comes to full realisation of his love for Natasha when she sings at the clavichord. His falling in love is fixed in time and place as if it were a religious conversion. One is reminded of Paul

Claudél's memory of his own conversion, so rooted in the Christmas of 1886 in Notre Dame 'on the right, opposite the vestry by the second pillar before the choir'¹ as he responded to the singing.

Prince Andrey stood at the window, conversing with the ladies and listening to her. In the middle of a phrase Prince Andrey fell silent and had a sudden feeling that his throat was filling with tears whose possibility he had not known in himself. He looked at the singing Natasha, and something new and joyful happened in his soul. He was happy, and also he was sad. He had nothing to cry about, but he was ready to cry. For what? His earlier love? The little princess? His disappointments? His hopes for the future?... Yes and no. The main thing that he wished to cry for was his sudden vivid awareness of the terrible contrast between something infinitely great and indefinable within him and something narrow and corporeal which he was himself and even she was. This contrast brought him distress and joy during her singing. (II.iii.18)

Again the response to the song has allowed Tolstoy to transform a conventional love scene into a searching examination of a complex of emotions.

Some time later the apparent superior naturalness of a Russian national life, uncontaminated by Western ways, is conveyed to Natasha during her visit to her uncle after the hunt, mainly through the music of balalaika and guitar, and the Russian dance, the instinctive movements for which had not been stifled by the *pas de châte*. It is this music that first causes doubts and worries about her relationship with Andrey to come to Natasha. Would *he* appreciate this music-making that she so enjoys? The refrain of that music, now linked with worrying thoughts about Andrey, re-echoes in the Rostovs' drawing-room. It is the picking out on her uncle's folk guitar of a phrase she had heard in a St Petersburg opera with Prince Andrey that ushers back first memories of her distant betrothed, and then, when she plays for Sonya, the despair at her enforced parting from him.

The examination of the love relationship between Andrey and Natasha continues with music. Even the mother's complicated response to her daughter's match is brought out by music. The mood of that scene is set by Dimmler playing Countess Rostova's favourite Field nocturne on the harp by moonlight (there is no indication that 'European' music is any less potent than Russian folk music in its ability to promote the transference of thought and emotion). Then Natasha sings at the clavichord her mother's favourite song to the assembled gathering. Again it is the complexity of the listener's emotion, in this case, that of the old countess, that resonates to the formal song. Feelings are apprehended which could

not be expressed in any conversation with her daughter or in cogitation.

The old Countess sat with a happily melancholic smile and tears in her eyes, shaking her head from time to time. She thought of Natasha, and of her youth, and that there was something unnatural and frightful in Natasha's forthcoming marriage with Prince Andrey... Her mother's intuition told her that Natasha had too much of something and consequently would not be happy. (II.iv.10)

The ominous feelings called forth by the resonance of the singing voice are interrupted by the sudden arrival of the domestics as mummers who launch into their traditional songs, dances, choruses and games. Drawing-room music yields to the rude gaiety of folk traditions: yet the mumming provides the same type of artificial background fostering human intercourse as Field's nocturnes. The only difference is in a register of culture. Yet it is through these artificial conventions alone, however varied they may be, that Tolstoy informs his reader that men may communicate. Despite their living closely together, Nikolay had found it impossible to declare his love for Sonya. It is only when released by the grotesque artificiality of the mumming from their conventional selves that Nikolay, in an elderly lady's farthingale, and Sonya, as a moustachioed Circassian, seal their love with a kiss redolent of burnt cork from Sonya's mock moustache.

That their love was not expressed sufficiently in truth, but in the rigmarole of mumming, does of course suggest its instability. Yet the mumming is not treated by Tolstoy in as harsh a fashion as the rigmarole of sentimentalism through which Boris and Julie have to arrange their match. The sentimental verses with their melancholic descriptions of gloamings and graveyards, penned in Julie's album, the doleful nocturnes on the harp, the emotional reading of Karamzin's *Poor Liza* together, all necessary signals in Boris's plan to make a rich match – but the literature of sentimentalism had fooled neither Boris nor Julie. Whereas in the previous chapters artificialities had managed to crystallise human relationships which were dimly felt but had not found their expression, here there was an emotional emptiness between Boris and Julie that not even the heightened emotionality of a forced sentimentalism could fill. Despite the album verses and the harp's nocturnes, the marriage would remain one of cool convenience: 'The betrothed, without further mention of the trees plunging them in gloom and melancholy, made plans for the future setting up of a splendid home in Petersburg, went visiting and made full preparation for a splendid wedding' (II.v.5).

With the excesses of sentimental literature apparently mocked, it would not seem strange for Tolstoy to find operatic conventions more laughable. Towards the end of this volume, there is the passage describing Natasha's visit to the opera which has become a classical reference in Tolstoy criticism. Yet our response to that opera visit may be distorted if we peruse that performance in isolation from the preceding ones. The fresh young girl from the country is apparently made to see through artificial staginess.

They all sang something. When they finished their song, the girl in white went up to the prompter's box and was approached by a man in tight silk trousers over his plump legs, with a plume and dagger who began to sing and wave his arms.

The man in the tight trousers sang alone, then she sang. Then both fell silent, the music struck up and the man began to finger the arm of the girl in the white dress, evidently waiting for the beat again in order to begin a new duet with her. They sang together and everyone in the theatre clapped and shouted and the man and woman on the stage who represented lovers, took their bows, smiling and extending their arms. (II.v.8)

The visit to the opera has often been quoted in support of the view that central to Tolstoy's method was *ostraneniye* 'estrangement' or 'making strange', a term coined by Shklovsky to define Tolstoy's specific ironic detachment, a view as piercingly fresh as that of the boy who refused to see the Emperor's clothes. Yet here, it is not Tolstoy but Natasha who refuses to form the opera in her mind, from her perception of its conventions. There is no reason to suppose that Natasha was incapable of grasping the peculiarities of the opera: although fresh from the country, she had received voice training, had been credited by Dimmler with 'a real European talent', and had lovingly recalled a visit to the opera in St Petersburg with Prince Andrey. What causes her to reject the opera is not so much its absurdity – if ironic detachment had been rigorously applied, the folksy balalaika strumming at the uncle's could be made equally absurd. Tolstoy does not grade the ritual ways of communication into ones which are more or less artificial, or more or less genuine. It is the reaction of the audience to a performance that for him is crucial: a melancholy nocturne played at the Rostovs' can elicit real feelings, whereas the same nocturne played by Julie Karagina for Boris would echo in the emptiness of their relationship. The opera is another 'performance' in the series of performances which have illuminated the variety of sexual bonding in this part of the novel. The description of the opera in that context is not intended mainly to show the absurdity of artifice, or the superiority of Natasha's naive vision. Her failure to take in the opera results from the cruel rebuff she has just experienced from the Bolkonskys and

the impossibility of having any reassurance from the absent Andrey: her rejection by them is turned into her rejection of the opera. The highly-strung Natasha, put more on edge by the tension of the operatic event, becomes hysterical: 'She looked and thought, and the strangest thoughts suddenly, without cause, flashed through her head. Now the thought presented itself of jumping behind the foot-lights to sing the aria which the *artiste* was singing, now she wanted to flick the old man sitting near her with her fan, lean over towards Hélène and tickle her' (II.v.8). It is at this moment that Anatole Kuragin, her seducer, makes his appearance in the theatre: one might almost see it as a dramatic operatic entry. Motivating the seduction of Natasha by Anatole and making it plausible was undoubtedly difficult. Again though, as with all the other sexual bondings in this part of the novel, it is the ritual performance that acts as a catalyst: slowly Natasha begins to accommodate the conventions of the opera, and eventually as she begins to be fascinated by the male peacockery of Kuragin, she joins in the mass hysteria for the male dancer Dupport. That the final storm is an artificial creation of chromatic scales and diminished seventh chords is no longer a barrier: 'Natasha no longer found it strange. She looked around her with pleasure and a joyful smile' (II.v.9). By accepting the star performer, she had shown herself ready to accept Kuragin. And Natasha's new response to the final act is what informs us of the strength of the bond forged between her and Anatole Kuragin during the interval:

Again the curtain rose. Anatole left the box composed and happy. Natasha returned to her father's box completely subject to the world in which she found herself. Everything which took place before her already seemed completely natural; but on the other hand all her previous thoughts about her betrothed, Princess Marya, life in the country not once entered her head, as if all that was in the distant, distant past. (II.v.9)

On the next occasion when Natasha meets Anatole at a soirée at Hélène's, it is again a performance, this time a declamation by Mademoiselle Georges of some French verse 'about her criminal love for her son', presumably from *Phèdre*, that causes Natasha to return to the 'strange, senseless world, so far removed from her previous one' (II.v.12), where she is open to Anatole's advances. Finally the seduction is completed by Natasha's trusting acceptance of a letter from Anatole. From all the artful performances the reader has witnessed, the truthfulness of the written word, carefully weighed for the benefit of the audience – we may remember Natasha's own letters to Andrey written almost as school compositions with the spelling mistakes corrected by her mother – cannot be trusted.

Ironically, Marya's sincere letter of apology to Natasha does not find any response in its addressee, rather as Pierre's honesty is invariably misunderstood. What Natasha accepts as the truth is a letter, apparently from a passionate lover, but in fact composed for Anatole by Dolokhov: yet it is in that sham that she finds 'echoes of all that she thought she had felt herself'. It is the literary fake that turns Natasha: "“Yes, yes, I love him!” – thought Natasha rereading the letter for the twentieth time and searching for some special deep meaning in its every word' (II.v.14).

From the above, we see that 'performances' by their inherent fraudulence pervert human relationships and particularly sexual bondings. Honest, straightforward communication on the other hand – such as Pierre's address to his masonic lodge or Marya's letter to Natasha – do not find a receptive audience. For Tolstoy, communicability is possible only when narrator and listener both understand the futility of transferring thought and emotion through words alone. And of course, this is the accord that he would wish to make with his reader. Again such understandings, brought about by the recognition that full communication is not possible, occur at high points in the novel such as Andrey's recollection of a communion with Natasha on the eve of the Battle of Borodino. For Andrey to admit to such understanding is particularly remarkable since throughout the novel he is one who spurns vain attempts at relating experience from the moment when he shies away from the anecdotes in Anna Scherer's salon. He is the one who brings Nikolay's tale of Schöngraben to an end, and the most poignant example of his failure to relate to others through 'performance' is his breaking off the tale of Bluebeard to his son. Yet on the eve of Borodino, unable to sleep, he remembers Natasha recounting the story of being lost in the forest while mushrooming. Exasperated by her apparent failure to tell her story, Natasha keeps explaining this to Andrey: 'Natasha was not content with her words – she felt that the passionately poetic experience which she had felt that day and which she wished to bring to the surface was not coming out' (III.ii.25). Yet in her failure to tell it as it was, Natasha communicated with Andrey. He consequently understood and loved her. But the man of war only came to understand this as his final battle approached.

V

All these narratives and performances are, of course, enfolded within Tolstoy's own great narrative which holds forth to an audience in the same way. It is remarkable to find as the novel is brought to a resolution that the story of *War and Peace* is, as it were, retold within the novel. And it is retold through the mouth of

Pierre who eventually is able, through the reprise, to achieve real communicability while preserving his honesty. Central to the resolution of the novel is the fact that the Pierre who, throughout the course of the novel found his rage for honesty an impediment to communication, is at last able to transfer his thoughts to another in his love for Natasha.

In the treatment of Pierre's realisation of his love for Natasha Tolstoy demonstrated in a powerfully ironic way the force of an insincere tangential narrative in crystallising real emotions. Pierre's full understanding of his love comes when he acts as an audience to Captain Ramballe's risqué recital of his amorous adventures: nothing could be more absurd than that the tipsy captain's recital should bring Pierre to a realisation of love. Pierre reciprocates with a telling of his own story – which in a way is a retelling of the story that the readers of *War and Peace* know – and again Pierre fails to communicate (III.III.29). What Ramballe grasps as the main import is not the essence of Pierre's love for Natasha, but that he was rich with two palaces in Moscow. Ramballe is made to appear as a comically misunderstanding audience with which the reader of the novel can compare himself to his own advantage.

If his story told to Ramballe ends in a fiasco of non-comprehension, Pierre finally is able to achieve communication when in chapter 17 of the last volume he tells his story – again a reprise of what we have learnt from the novel itself – to Marya and Natasha. Pierre begins by giving expression to all those problems of evaluating experience and communicating it, which we have discussed: 'I am told about such miracles which I have not dreamt of. Marya Abramovna invited me to her house and kept on telling me what happened to me or what should have happened. Stepan Stepanych also taught me how I should tell my stories' (IV.IV.17). Repetition, as R. F. Christian has demonstrated, is one of Tolstoy's most powerful techniques,² and this chapter reverberates with the repetition of the verb *rasskazyvat'* (to narrate) and its cognate noun *rasskaz*. Pierre is being importuned to tell a conventional story (what should have happened) in conventional terms (Stepan Stepanych taught me how I should tell my stories). But at last Pierre is able to turn away from self-mockery and tell of *real experiences* naturally; what had made his narrations so awkward previously, from the first one in Anna Scherer's salon, was that he had been only able to speak honestly of abstractions or, at best, of half-digested experiences. Now he began to speak 'with the restrained enthusiasm of a man experiencing strong impressions in his recollections'. Pierre at last understands that true communication, 'man speaking to man', is akin to Wordsworth's celebrated understanding of poetry, originating in

'emotion recollected in tranquillity. . . till by a species of reaction, all tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced and does itself actually exist in the mind'. Again, of course, the act of narration, the 'performance', marks a climactic moment in the novel. Whereas previously the performances were flawed and the accompanying sexual bondings insecure, finally, in the closure of *War and Peace*, we find that the union of Pierre and Natasha is made manifest by a perfected narration fused with a most sympathetic reception. What effects the union is not eloquence (even at this moment Tolstoy launched into a scathing aside at *intelligent* women who listen to words to retell them or to use them as starting points for their little 'laboratorial' thoughts), but the whole narrating experience whose significance Pierre had grasped with Platon Karatayev whose stories were told with the naturalness of a singing bird.

And in this new-found way of telling, he finds his ideal listener in Natasha, who responds in the way that Tolstoy would probably have wished any reader of his to react. By look and gesture she indicates to him that 'she understood exactly what he wished to transmit'; and more than that, 'It was evident that she understood not only what he was telling but also what he would wish to tell but could not express in words' (iv.iv.17). It is in the telling itself that Pierre became fully aware of the significance of experience – as Tolstoy himself had become aware of the significance of his own experiences during the long writing of *War and Peace* – and Natasha in her reaction personified the ideal reader that Tolstoy would have wished to reach out for: 'Natasha, without knowing it, was all attention: she did not let slip a word, a tremor of the voice, a look, a shudder of a facial muscle, nor a gesture of Pierre's. She caught in flight the as yet unexpressed word and carried it straight into her open heart, guessing the secret significance of Pierre's whole spiritual world.'

At the novel's end, having pleaded with his reader and hectored him, having shown him the futility of seeking to transmit experience, and the fluidity of human language, and having also demonstrated to him that only in his narrations and performances to his fellows could man hope to give form to his existence, Tolstoy too, through Pierre, rests content in the knowledge that in making *War and Peace*, he had also made his reader.

NOTES

1. Paul Claudel, *Oeuvres en prose* (Paris, 1965), pp. 1009-10.
2. R. F. Christian, *Tolstoy's 'War and Peace': A Study* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 148-54.

Problems of communication in *Anna Karenina*

MALCOLM V. JONES

I

Dmitry Merezhkovsky's classic work on *Tolstoi as Man and Artist* became available to the English-speaking public in 1902. In it he described as well as any critic has ever done Tolstoy's amazing sensitivity to the physical aspects of human experience.¹ There is old Prince Bolkonsky in *War and Peace*, 'the short figure of the old man with the powdered wig, small dry hands and grey, overhanging brows that sometimes, when he was roused, dimmed the flash of the clever youthful eyes'. When he sits at the table and bends over his daughter Princess Mary, beginning the geometry lesson, she 'feels herself surrounded with the snuffy old-age, acrid savour of her father'. Or there is Anna Karenina:

We learn when she is standing in the crowd at the ball 'that she always held herself exceptionally erect'; when she leaves the railway carriage or walks through the room she has 'a quick, decisive gait, carrying with strange ease her full and perfectly proportioned body'. When she dances she has 'a distinguishing grace, sureness and lightness of movement'; when, having gone on a visit to Dolly, she takes off her hat, her black hair, that catches in everything 'ripples into waves all over', and on another occasion 'the unruly short waves of her curly hair keep fluttering at the nape and on the temples'.

Merezhkovsky goes on to another important observation. 'In these unruly curls, so easily becoming unkempt, there is the same tension, "the excess of something" ever ready for passion, as in the too bright flash of the eyes, or the smile breaking out involuntarily and "fluctuating between the eyes and the lips".' In Tolstoy, as in real life, physical detail often expresses psychological characteristics. Merezhkovsky remarks that it is when Tolstoy is nearest to the physical that his psychology is at its best. Sometimes too, and this is a slightly different thing, physical detail symbolises moral qualities: Napoleon's small, white hands, Hélène's white shoulders, Anna's habit of screwing up her eyes, Karenin's habit of cracking his

knuckles, express respectively a pampered life, sexual brazenness, a refusal to face reality and brittleness of personality.

But perhaps most important of all is Tolstoy's understanding of the way in which physical gesture is used for communication. In Tolstoy, Merezhovsky remarks,

The language of gesture, if less varied than words, is more direct, expressive and suggestive. It is easier to lie in words than by gesture or facial expression. One glance, one wrinkle, one quiver of a muscle in the face may express the unutterable. . . . Certain feelings impel us to corresponding movements, and, on the other hand, certain habitual movements impel to the corresponding internal states. . . . Tolstoy, with inimitable art, uses this convertible connection between the internal and the external. By the same law of mechanical sympathy which makes a stationary tense cord vibrate in answer to a neighbouring cord, the sight of another crying or laughing awakes in us the desire to cry or laugh; we experience when we read similar descriptions in the nerves and the muscles. And so by the motions of muscles and nerves we enter shortly and directly into the internal world of his characters, begin to live with them and in them.

It is indeed easier to lie in words than by facial expression, as Anna and Vronsky discover at the beginning of their relationship. Here Tolstoy, as he often does, concentrates on the eyes as a medium for communicating feelings:

'Yes, I have been wanting to tell you,' she said, *not looking at him*. 'You behaved badly, very badly indeed.'

'Do you think I don't know I behaved badly? But who was the cause of my misbehaviour?'

'Why do you say that to me?' she asked, *looking at him sternly*.

'You know why,' he answered boldly and joyously, *meeting her look and not lowering his eyes*.

It was not he but she who became confused.

'That only shows you have no heart,' she said. But *her eyes said* that she knew he had a heart, and for that reason she was afraid of him.² (II.7)

Later on Vronsky sees that she is saying what she is forcing herself to say, not what she wants to. Her facial expression gives her away. Finally, Anna gives in: 'She strained with all her strength of mind to say what ought to be said; but instead of that *she rested her gaze on him*, full of love, and made no answer.'

The way in which Tolstoy came to visualise and depict a scene in terms of facial expression and bodily gesture is well caught by a comparison of one of his historical sources for *War and Peace* with the parallel place in the text of the novel. The following comparison is adduced by R. F. Christian, where he takes a passage from the historian Mikhaylovsky-Danilevsky:

Riding up to Kutuzov and seeing that the rifles stood stacked, the Emperor Alexander asked him: 'Mikhail Larionovich, why aren't you advancing?' 'I'm waiting,' answered Kutuzov, 'for all the columns to be formed up.' The Emperor said 'you know, we are not on the Empress's Field where a parade does not begin until all the troops are assembled.' 'Sir,' answered Kutuzov, 'that is just why I'm not starting because we are not on the Empress's Field. However, if you order it. . .'

Compare this with Tolstoy's version:

'Why aren't you starting, Mikhail Larionovich?' said the Emperor hurriedly to Kutuzov, glancing courteously at the same time at the Emperor Francis. 'I'm waiting, Your Majesty,' answered Kutuzov, bowing respectfully. The Emperor, frowning slightly, bent his ear forward to show that he had not quite heard.

'Waiting, Your Majesty' repeated Kutuzov (Prince Andrei noticed that Kutuzov's upper lip twitched unnaturally as he said the word 'waiting'). 'Not all the columns have formed up yet, Your Majesty.' The tsar heard but obviously did not like the reply; he shrugged his rather round shoulders and glanced at Novosiltsev who stood by him, as if complaining of Kutuzov. 'You know, Mikhail Larionovich, we are not on the Empress's Field where a parade does not begin until all the troops are assembled,' said the tsar with another glance at the Emperor Francis, as if inviting him, if not to join in, at least to listen to what he was saying. But the Emperor Francis continued to look about him and did not listen. 'That is just why I'm not starting, Sir, because we are not on parade on the Empress's Field' he said clearly and distinctly.

'However, if you order it. . .'³

Christian comments: 'Tolstoy in fact reproduces Mikhailovsky-Danilevsky's dialogue exactly, but at the same time fills in the reactions of the speakers to what is being said, describes what they did with their eyes, their lips, their bodies, and indicates what poses they adopted.' What Christian does not add, and what is perhaps the most important thing, is that the effect of all this is not just to fill in the physical details of the picture, but to convey the way in which the participants in the scene communicate or attempt to communicate with each other by a glance, a bow, a frown, a bending of the ear or twitching of the lip, a shrugging of the shoulders, a turning away or raising of the voice. It is by these means that characters establish and attempt to modify their relations with others, as well as by the dialogue itself, and it is by these means that Tolstoy conveys to the reader the complex and fluctuating web of emotions linking the characters.

There is one more point we may turn to in Merezhkovsky's essay. He introduces the scene in *War and Peace* where Prince Vasily is impatiently waiting for Pierre to make up his mind about proposing

to his daughter Hélène. Pierre hesitates and relations are strained. One day he finds himself alone with father and daughter and announces that he is about to take his leave. Merezhkovsky quotes:

Prince Vasili looked at him with stern enquiry, as if the remark was so strange that it was impossible to believe his ears. But presently the look of sternness changed. He took Pierre by the arm, put him in a chair and smiled caressingly. 'Well, what of Lelia?' he said, turning at once to his daughter and then again to Pierre, reminding him, not at all to the point, of a stupid anecdote of a certain Sergey Kuzmich. Pierre smiled, *but it was plain from his smile* that he knew that it was not the story of Sergey Kuzmich that interested Prince Vasili at the moment: and Prince Vasili was aware that Pierre saw this. The former suddenly muttered something and left the room. It seemed to Pierre that Prince Vasili, too, felt confused. He looked at Hélène, and she too seemed embarrassed, and her eyes said, 'Well you yourself are to blame.'

'What complex and many-sided significance evoked by a single smile!' exclaims Merezhkovsky. 'It is repeated and mirrored in the minds of those around, in a series of scarcely perceptible half-conscious thoughts and feelings, like a ray or a sound.' What is more, it is quintessential Tolstoy. The reader recognises his trademark at once, and is infected, as Merezhkovsky has intimated, by the slightly embarrassed atmosphere of the scene. If one were philistine enough to want to reduce this complex interaction to a formula, then one might propose something like this: A (Prince Vasily) was aware that B (Pierre) saw that A was not interested in what he (A) was talking about. Moreover, the embarrassment common to them both communicates itself to C (Hélène). Tolstoy is capable of even more complicated interactions. In a scene between Oblonsky and his daughter, he presents a situation in which A perceives that B perceives that A perceives that B is pretending to A, which interaction causes both to blush (1.3). Or, in a scene between Levin and Oblonsky, A felt that B imagined that A would not like. . . (1.5) (B incidentally is wrong but A is right in thinking that B imagines it). This, no doubt, is sufficient to indicate the complexities which such interactions can assume in Tolstoy's world. It is also sufficient to indicate that these are the kind of interactions which most moderately sensitive people experience all the time in their relations with others. That is largely why the reader of Tolstoy experiences a sense of intimacy with the characters which he does not experience, for instance, in reading Dostoyevsky. It is not that we all know the type of an Anna Karenina any better than we know the type of a Raskolnikov. It is that the former is presented in such a way as to draw on our normal everyday experience, and the latter in such a way as to appeal to our

actual or potential neuroses. Because we are drawn into this kind of intimacy we tend to make the same sort of judgements about characters as we would in real life and even base our judgements on the personal warmth we feel towards characters. We respond to their smiles, the pressure of their hands, just as characters in the book do. Consequently it is a rare reader who actually attempts to make a fair assessment of poor Karenin, to ask seriously how far he is a victim of circumstance, whether his attitudes and decisions are justifiable and as deserving of sympathy as Anna's, whether he could, or should, have done otherwise, whether he has redeeming features, whether his tragedy is not as pitiful as that of his wife – though there are grounds in the novel for making all these judgements. Most readers intuitively dislike him and can find evidence enough in the text to support that dislike. Karenin has no close friends apart from Lidiya Ivanovna, and probably makes few among the novel's readers. Our everyday reactions provide the basis for our attitude to Anna. She has a warm, gracious personality and, even when she is at her worst, she is capable of reverting momentarily to it and of reminding the reader of what she once was. Consequently we warm to her, as Tolstoy intended, and as he undoubtedly did himself. It is a fine practical example of the theory of art which Tolstoy later expressed in *What is Art?*: 'art is a human activity consisting in this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that others are infected by these feelings and also experience them'.⁴

There are numerous ways of understanding the essence of Anna Karenina's tragedy. As R. F. Christian has pointed out, some see it as the inevitable result of her character and her act of adultery; others see it primarily in terms of the oppression of outmoded social conventions and antiquated divorce laws; others see it as the result of Anna's leaving one inadequate man for another; still others see it primarily as the tragedy of unhappy family life. 'None of these approaches', writes Christian, 'is wholly satisfactory, nor yet completely wide of the mark.'⁵ Yet, however we conceive of the fundamental nature of Anna's tragedy, we shall miss a great deal if we do not also see it at least in part as a tragedy of communication, and that is why Merezhkovsky's remarks are of interest here. Tolstoy was master of the subtleties of human communication, both through words and through bodily gesture and facial expression. No novelist of his time, perhaps of any time, has had such a comprehensive appreciation of its possibilities and limitations. And the failure to communicate an adequate range of feeling lies at the heart of what many consider his greatest novel. Most commentaries dwell on the feelings and passions themselves. Few undertake an analysis of the ways in

which these feelings are transmitted, or alternatively, are not transmitted, between characters. Yet this is important not only in its own right, but also because it is by these same means that the author influences the attitudes of his readers. Moreover, as, it is to be hoped, this essay will implicitly show, an understanding of these processes may subtly affect the judgements we make on the problems of human relationships which the novel poses.

II

It is not only in the smiles and looks that people give each other that they communicate without words. Tolstoy was well aware that people often express themselves and their deepest feelings involuntarily. He knew that sometimes they are aware of it, and sometimes not. He knew that sometimes the tell-tale signs are understood correctly by those who observe them and sometimes not. The mottle on Karenin's face, the twitching muscle on Dolly's face or Levin's jaw, the voice which breaks with emotion, the quiver of the lips, the blush or sudden pallor, the cough that Kitty learns with time to be a sign of Levin's dissatisfaction with himself – all these express emotions and communicate themselves to a companion, colouring and perhaps overriding the literal significance of any words which may accompany them. When Karenin is reduced to paying heed only to the literal meaning of Anna's words he is cutting himself off (or has been cut off) from a wide and important range of communication. He does this, incidentally, because he knows she is deceiving him not only verbally but also with all the non-verbal means at her disposal. Lying may be contrary to Anna's nature; lying with bodily gesture and facial expression may be more difficult than lying with words, but Anna discovers an unexpected facility for both.

Slight muscular contractions may, indeed, speak much louder than words. The reader may recall how the unwarrantably jealous Levin finally persuades Veslovsky to be on his way: 'probably the sight of those tense hands, of those same muscles which he had felt that morning at gymnastics, the gleam in Levin's eye, his quiet voice and trembling jaw, convinced Vasenka better than any words' (VI.17).

It may be said here in parentheses that Tolstoy's characters sometimes also communicate by means of their clothes. Vasenka Veslovsky's eccentric dress provides a particularly striking example. Even more explicit is that of the old gentleman Levin meets at Svyazhsky's:

The landowner with the grey whiskers was clearly an inveterate believer in serfdom and a passionate farmer with deep roots in the countryside. Levin discerned signs of this in his dress, in his old-fashioned threadbare coat, obviously not his customary attire, in his intelligent knitted brows, in his elegant Russian, in the tone of authority which he had acquired from

many years of use, and in the confident and decisive gestures of his large, red, sunburnt hands, one of which had an old betrothal ring on the little finger. (III.26)

And Levin certainly discerns a message in Svyazhsky's sister-in-law's outfit:

Although her bosom was so white, or possibly because it was so white, the square-cut décolletage prevented Levin from thinking properly. He imagined, probably mistakenly, that the bodice had been cut low on his account, and felt that he had no right to look at it. But he felt guilty for the very fact that it had been cut in this way. (III.26)

But while Tolstoy is sensitive to such factors in human intercourse, it is not these which we particularly remember. Rather is it those almost imperceptible little movements, Anna catching up her curls or playing with her parasol with quick movements of her hand, which catch the reader's attention. They serve the multiple function of involving the reader in the scene, of characterising in general terms and in terms of a particular mood or attitude, of increasing the reader's visual awareness and, not least important, of indicating subtly the character's response to the situation, whilst at the same time providing a signal which other characters may react to. Thus it was with Pierre's smile.

Tolstoy understood and depicted with no less sensitivity the deliberate and conscious non-verbal signs which people use. Some of these are conventional substitutes for speech: a frown, a pout, a wink, a barely perceptible nod, a look or a smile. Such gestures may in a commonly understood context speak more eloquently than a thousand words. Of course, the 'commonly understood context' is of the essence, and an expression that may speak volumes between two brothers or sisters (Levin and Nikolay or Kitty and Dolly) may pass totally unnoticed among strangers. In any well-knit social group such contexts arise. We are shown, for instance, how among the young officers of Vronsky's set 'Petritsky, still singing, winked an eye and pouted his lips, as if to say, "We know all about Bryansky!"' (II.20).

Kitty's mother remarks that it was by means of looks and smiles that her own marriage was arranged. Actually such devices do not serve her very well in trying to arrange her daughter Kitty's. She quite misreads the signs of Vronsky's intentions, and misinterprets Levin's shyness, largely because she has allowed wishful thinking and her social ambitions for Kitty to blind her to the signs of real feeling which are self-evident to her more sensitive and experienced husband.

Tolstoy's characters, particularly the more demonstrative ones

like Oblonsky, often convey their feelings by movements of the hands, and especially by touch. One may press another's hand, take his arm to release it when danger is past, embrace him, fling an arm around his neck, slip an arm through someone else's, lay a hand on someone's shoulder and any number of similar gestures of friendship and reassurance. Sometimes Tolstoy expands on the simple gesture with an adverb or adjective or by an explicit explanation, *davaya etim chuvstvovat'*, 'thereby communicating the fact'. Just as frequently he lets the gesture speak for itself, where a less experienced writer might supply the superfluous detail.

The eyes, not surprisingly, often seem to operate in subtle harmony with the mouth, particularly the smile.⁶ Every reader will recall Tolstoy's marvellous descriptions of Anna:

Her sparkling grey eyes, which seemed darker than they really were behind her thick lashes, gave him a friendly, attentive look, as though she were recognising him. . . In that brief glance Vronsky had time to notice the suppressed animation which played over her face and flitted between her sparkling eyes and the barely perceptible smile curving her red lips. It was as if an excess of something filled her whole being, something that against her will expressed itself now in a radiant look, now in a smile. She deliberately shrouded the light in her eyes but in spite of herself it gleamed in the barely perceptible smile. (1.18)

The counterpoint of eyes and smile is repeated in other descriptions of Anna, sometimes with the addition of other physical features. When Dolly visits her much later on the Vronsky estate, she

was struck by that fleeting beauty which comes to women only when they are in love, and which she now saw on Anna's face. Everything about her, the dimples in her cheeks and chin, the curve of her lips, the smile that seemed to hover about her face, the gleam in her eyes, the grace and swiftness of her movements, the full sound of her voice, even the manner in which she replied, half-crossly, half-affectionately to Veslovsky. . . was all particularly attractive and it seemed as if she herself were aware of it and took pleasure in it. (VII.17)

Though eyes may communicate love or happiness, they may also express other emotions. They may have a mocking, spiteful look. They may glower or flash menacingly. Karenin's eyes are large and tired. Eyes may show determination or a lack of it, they may be timid and truthful or tender and affectionate. People, as we have seen, look into each other's eyes for an insight into their real feelings and often see there more than words can tell them. Similarly, the smile may be affectionate and reassuring, or it may be sarcastic, or artificial. Even the dog Laska seems to smile in its own way.

Other gestures are no less expressive. A character may jump up

from a chair, fling an article on the floor, hands gesticulating; another may droop her head and sink it on to a companion's breast. One person may shrink from another. Sometimes, indeed, no mention is made of facial expression and yet complete understanding is achieved without relevant speech. After Kitty and Dolly have quarrelled, the ice is broken by tears, by Kitty's throwing her arms around Dolly's neck and, kneeling before her, burying her head in Dolly's skirt:

As if tears were the essential lubricant without which the machinery of mutual confidence between the two sisters could not work successfully, after a cry, the sisters started talking not of what preoccupied them but of casual matters, and in so doing understood each other. Kitty understood that what she had said in a fit of anger about Dolly's humiliation and her husband's unfaithfulness had deeply wounded her, but that she was forgiven. Dolly for her part understood all that she wanted to know: she felt certain that her conjectures were correct and that Kitty's misery – her inconsolable misery – was really because Levin had made her an offer and she had refused him, but Vronsky had deceived her and she was ready now to love Levin and hate Vronsky. Kitty did not say a word of all this: she spoke only of her inner feelings. (II.3)

Here, though words are exchanged, they by-pass the main subject, yet the subject is successfully communicated through gesture and tone. The passage indicates very graphically how much Karenin loses by attending only to the literal meaning of Anna's words, and how much their relationship must suffer from such a state of affairs. The tone of a character's voice at a crucial moment may in fact create a decisive impression and even leave an indelible mark. And if tone of voice is important so may speed of delivery be. Tolstoy remarks on Karenin's loquacity, which hides his distress; or Anna's consciousness that in her efforts to appear natural she is saying too much and saying it too quickly.

How important these little signs are and how they may or may not be perceptible, depending upon the vantage point of the observer, is well illustrated in an important passage involving Anna and her husband:

She looked at him so simply and gaily that anyone who did not know her as well as her husband knew her could have detected nothing unnatural either in the sound or the meaning of her words. But for him. . . the fact that she did not wish to notice his state of mind or say a word about herself signified a great deal. He saw that the depths of her soul, always before open to him, were now closed against him. More than that he knew by the tone of her voice that she was not even troubled but seemed to be saying 'Yes, they are closed to you, and this is how it should be and will be in future'.

(II.9)

John Bayley has remarked that Tolstoy does not let us forget that most human beings are incapable of feeling one thing for long.⁷ It is symptomatic of this fact that Tolstoy often draws attention precisely to the moment when a mood changes. We observe Anna explaining a change in her plans in a tone that suggests she has suddenly remembered so many things demanding instant attention that there is no enumerating them (I.28), or Oblonsky smiling slightly as he catches the instantaneous change he knows so well in Levin's face, as gloomy now as it had been bright a moment before (II.16). In Anna's case abrupt and radical changes of mood become characteristic of her emotional disorder: a spiteful light gleams in the eyes which a moment before had been so tender (II.23); Vronsky notices that one moment she seems to be in love with him, the next she becomes cold, irritable and distant (V.28). In another place we are told that her face, so lovely and tranquil a moment ago, suddenly took on a look of strange curiosity, anger and pride. But this lasted only an instant (VII.10). It is not only Anna and Levin whose moods suddenly change. At the mention of Anna's name, Karenin's face completely alters: all the animation drains out of it, to be replaced by a weary, lifeless look (VII.18).

Some characters develop what seems to be almost a sixth sense about others with whom they have a particular relationship. They sense not only their feelings, but even their presence. Levin knows of Kitty's presence not by actually observing her or being told that she is there, but by 'the joy and terror which seized his heart' (I.9). Much later on we are told that, without looking at Kitty, Levin was aware of her movements, her looks, and where she was sitting in the drawing-room (IV.13). If this is not sixth sense, it is perception very finely tuned. Such fine tuning is, of course, enhanced by strong emotions, especially if they are shared. It is to be observed in the relations between Anna and Vronsky in the early period of their relationship. They do not have to ask each other questions. They understand each other's motives and thoughts intuitively. Similarly, we are told that through her love Kitty knows Levin's whole soul and in his soul saw what she wanted. The most memorable occasion on which such intuitive understanding is achieved is that of Levin's second and successful attempt to propose to Kitty (IV.13). This time she is in a receptive mood and, rather than trust to the spoken word, which has failed him once before, Levin has recourse to the unusual method of spelling out messages by the initial letters of each word, in chalk, on a table top. Kitty reciprocates, and it works, though it would scarcely have done so had they not both been keyed up for a mutual declaration of love.

Such intuitions merge imperceptibly into normal sensitivity to the

emotions of others and sympathy for their feelings. Of these attitudes there are many examples. In such circumstances the barest hint may be enough to convey a message. Karenin, though he scorns imaginative sympathy, has finely tuned social antennae. He instantly notices changes in Anna's routine and though he sees nothing improper in her *tête-à-tête* with Vronsky, he notices that other people do. A frankness and openness to others which facilitates mutual understanding is associated with children. Children take to Anna (until she betrays Kitty) and they take to Levin too. Such an attitude is, of course, foreign to Karenin, except for a brief period during Anna's illness. However, most characters most of the time are capable of being infected by the feelings of others. One thinks not only of the effect of physical exhilaration which Anna has on Vronsky or the almost physical pleasure which his proximity has on her (which may or may not be classified as the communication of feelings), but also of the way that agitation or embarrassment or horror or dismay is passed on from one character to another. Sometimes it comes at a very significant juncture: "Happiness!" she said with disgust and horror [after she and Vronsky have made love], and her horror was involuntarily communicated to him' (II.II). What an important emotion at such a moment, and equally important is the fact that, though the feeling is communicated, Vronsky does not understand. Such infection is unreflective. Its character is well conveyed by Tolstoy when he describes how Yegor catches Levin's excitement, 'just as people catch yawning' (IV.I4). One of the most striking instances of such infection is Oblonsky's gift for making people feel at ease. He has almost magical powers of transforming a scene in which awkwardness and tenseness have set in into one of bonhomie and gaiety:

Stepan Arkadich saw immediately that without him things were not going well in the drawing-room. Darya Aleksandrovna in her best grey silk gown, obviously worried about the children who would have to eat by themselves in the nursery, and because her husband had still not arrived, had not managed in his absence to bring the company together. They all sat like priests' daughters out visiting (as the old prince expressed it), evidently wondering how they came to be there, and making remarks to avoid being silent. . . Entering the drawing-room Stepan Arkadich apologised, explaining that he had been detained by a certain prince, who was his usual scapegoat when he was late or absent, and in a moment he had introduced everyone all round, and, bringing Aleksey Aleksandrovich and Sergey Kuznyshev together, started them on a discussion of the Russification of Poland, into which they immediately plunged with Pestsov. Clapping Turovtsyn on the shoulder, he whispered something funny to him, and sat him near his wife and the prince. Then he told Kitty how nice she was looking that day and presented Shcherbatsky to Karenin. In a moment he

had so kneaded together that society dough that the room was soon filled with animated conversation. (iv.9)

One has only to imagine how Dostoyevsky would have exploited such a scene to bring about one of his great scandals, in order to appreciate the basic difference in the atmosphere of his and Tolstoy's fictional worlds.

The emphasis which Tolstoy gives to facial expression and gesture throws into relief the role of words themselves as means of communication. Words may have a purely social function which is distinct from any inherent meaning they may appear to convey: the function of preserving seemliness or good humour or protecting from embarrassment. Sometimes, however, words are simply inadequate to convey the required meaning. Anna cannot find words to express her feelings after her affair with Vronsky has begun in earnest; moreover she feels that to express her feelings in words would profane them, since the words would of necessity be inappropriate. Levin is frequently at a loss to put his thoughts and feelings into words. He is acutely suspicious of those who have a facility for doing so, especially when their conclusions or the directions their arguments take fail to accord with his own intuitions. When he himself manages to put his thoughts into words, the result is often clumsy and imprecise. Even Kitty is sometimes able to put simply and clearly what he has unsuccessfully been fumbling for. Exactness of verbal expression eludes Levin, though boldness of utterance sometimes takes its place. This is why, to quote T. G. S. Cain's recent book 'so much of Levin's spiritual struggle seem like a heroic milling in the void':⁸ he torments himself with a search for a philosophical basis for morality, which he mistrusts as soon as it receives verbal form, while at the same time falling back on intuitive convictions which require little or no verbal expression.

For Karenin, on the other hand, words, for which he has an unusual facility, help to afford protection from the unpleasant side of life, and, to a limited extent, to control it. If he can find a principle under which to subsume a problem, such as Anna's infidelity, he is at once easier in his mind. Part of his personal tragedy consists in the discovery that after his emotional difficulties with his wife and her final departure, his gift for words also deserts him. He finds himself writing endless memoranda which nobody wants to read.

III

It is evident that satisfactory administrative relationships may be established – for example at Karenin's office – by scrupulous attention to the literal meaning of language. In close personal relationships,

however, sensitivity and openness to the feelings of others is essential. This much is clear in Tolstoy's world. It is also clear that whereas the ways that people have of communicating with each other are legion, there is wide scope for misunderstanding and other failures to communicate effectively. The source of failure may lie with the sender, who may convey indistinct, confused, contradictory, ambiguous, partial, misleading or even false messages. It may lie with the receiver who is emotionally or intellectually predisposed to a particular set of interpretations, and excludes others from his range of vision. Or the context in which the message must be read in order to be correctly understood may be conceived differently by receiver and sender.

We have already noticed how Anna says contradictory things with her speech and her eyes. Vronsky has no difficulty in tracing her 'real' meaning to what her eyes tell him. This is partly because, as Merezhkovsky intimates, it is more difficult to lie with facial expression than with words. It is partly because Vronsky is predisposed to the interpretation which Anna's eyes suggest. It is partly because in her heart of hearts Anna wants him to understand not what her lips say but what her eyes express. Here, as it happens, predisposition and truth coincide. This is not always so. Leaving aside for a moment Anna's exaggerated suspicions of Vronsky, we may recall Levin's jealousy of Veslovsky. Levin exaggerates the signs of something improper between Veslovsky and his wife until he can bear it no more. Kitty herself is capable of jealousy which is equally exaggerated, as her reaction when her husband returns from his visit to Anna shows: 'You have fallen in love with that horrible woman, she has bewitched you. I could see from your eyes' (VII.11). Such predispositions may become obsessive, as in Anna's case; they may be the product of upbringing and social convention; they may be the result of a passing mood. Most characters return to sanity after brief emotional excursions, and realise that their fears and suspicions have been exaggerated; similarly, those who have unintentionally caused them draw lessons for the future. In the case of Levin and Kitty this is all part of the sometimes painful process of learning to live with each other once the glow of romance has faded. In the case of Dolly and Oblonsky it is part of the process of reaching a new accommodation after Oblonsky's unfaithfulness. Such *idées fixes* are usually not permanent and they are strongest in situations where the subject feels a sense of insecurity. It is not surprising therefore that Levin is particularly prone.

The danger of misunderstandings is well discussed by E. B. Greenwood in his book *Tolstoy: The Comprehensive Vision*, where he speaks of Tolstoy's 'acute awareness of the phenomenon which the

twentieth century Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky has called "inner speech". . . If two people are *en rapport* as we say, the situation or context leads to a coincidence of thought, so that such "external speech" as they use – however telegraphic and opaque it might appear to a third party – is entirely transparent to them. . . It is when our fellow-speaker cannot guess the subtext that misunderstandings arise.⁹ Or, one might add, when he guesses it wrongly. This, of course, is no more than the reverse of that intuitive sympathy which Tolstoy's characters sometimes display for each other.

But among the most important types of breakdown in the story of Anna and her menfolk are the conscious withholding of information, the conscious narrowing of the range in which communication is possible, and conscious deception. It is to be observed that thought is in essence communication with the self, and it is possible for all these types of breakdown to occur in relation to the self as well as in relation to others.

IV

Anna is presented as a person to whom lying and deception are repulsive, who is living a lie in her marriage and seeks to escape from it in the honesty and openness of an extra-marital relationship with Vronsky. Yet she is soon drawn into a situation where she not only lives a lie, but even discovers an unsuspected gift for it. Most important of all, she comes to live in her relationship with Vronsky a greater and more fateful lie than ever she had had to live in the eight untroubled years of her marriage to Karenin.¹⁰ How does this come about, and where do things go wrong? How does her natural passion become the tormented, poisonous thing which eventually kills her and ruins Karenin and Vronsky? Barbara Hardy in her sensitive essay on *Anna Karenina* has stressed that though there is the implication of moral choice in the novel, it is given no emphasis:

Anna could choose to renounce Vronsky, and, later, after Karenin's forgiveness, she could choose to stay with her husband, but we do not see her in conflict. We see her choosing unconsciously, with little debate. Her agony over leaving her son, for instance, does not come to the fore until after she has left him. Tolstoy is a marvellous recorder of this kind of drifting, where the uneventful moment, not the spotlight crisis of choice, determines the future. We see a slow accumulation of events, not a succession of moral crises.¹¹

But, then, how does this drifting unfold? It has been observed that Anna's marriage was in all probability not nearly as unsatisfactory as she later persuades herself, and the evidence of the novel seems to confirm this. She certainly does not give the impression of

being unhappy or under emotional strain when we, and Vronsky, first meet her. Yet Dolly observes that there is something 'artificial' about the Karenin household, and Anna herself is conscious of a certain 'pretence' in her relations with her husband. When she meets him on her return to Moscow:

An unpleasant feeling stirred in her heart, when she caught his fixed and tired gaze, as though she had expected him to be different. She was particularly struck by the feeling of dissatisfaction with herself, which she experienced as she met him. It was an old, familiar feeling, which she always experienced in her relations with her husband, as though she were engaged in a pretence. But previously she had not really noticed the feeling. Now she was clearly and painfully aware of it. (1.30)

Her brother Stiva similarly finds that family life gives him little pleasure, forcing him to dissemble and tell lies, yet, with her help, he manages to preserve the family bond. But if Anna is sensible of pretence in her relations with her husband, it is possible to exaggerate the discomfort which this affords her. Of its kind, the marriage seems to have been a moderately successful one. The emotional satisfaction which she has been unable to find with her husband she has found in her son. With Karenin she has always been open about her deepest joys and anxieties and he has always listened sympathetically, even if he does decline to identify with her imaginatively, believing as he does that to put oneself in thought and feeling into another being is a harmful and dangerous exercise. Moreover, we are shown Anna smiling at her husband 'as one does at the weaknesses of people one loves'. (1.33). It is not, of course, an equal relationship. In Barbara Hardy's words 'he is not an impotent husband but has no sensuous delight or appreciative power'.¹² He is unable to return her confidences. Yet he has given her all the affection of which he is capable. The relationship has about it something of that of father to daughter, a relationship of affection, superiority and slight emotional distance on his side, and of trust and confidence and security on hers – a relationship not so unusual among married couples in Victorian times. Moreover, no-one could fault Karenin on his sense of responsibility as a husband and father. Whatever others may do, he does not take mistresses and he attends conscientiously to the upbringing of his son. On her side, Anna clearly enjoys the social status and approval which her position as a beautiful, virtuous and well-married woman gives her. Her suppressed animation, far from tormenting her, lends her a particular charm, which she exploits and which Vronsky is not slow to notice. Evidently he is not the first. That this suppressed animation may occasionally threaten to get out of hand is perhaps suggested by Anna's reference

to skeletons in her own cupboard, as also by her selfish behaviour at the ball when she steals Kitty's beau. Tolstoy describes how she confronts her disconsolate rival: 'Screwing up her eyes, Anna looked at her, smiled, and pressed her hand. But, seeing that Kitty responded to her smile only with an expression of despair and surprise, she turned away and started to talk gaily to the other lady' (1.23). Here Tolstoy lightly sketches Anna's later reaction to the unwelcome claims of life upon her; the screwing up of the eyes; the gay chatter which she uses to cover up emotional embarrassment.

She soon discovers that she has been deceiving herself in thinking that she is indifferent to Vronsky's attentions and that in fact he is the whole interest of her life. But the more she becomes conscious of her feelings for Vronsky, the more she shuts herself off from her husband. She does not merely turn away: she erects a barrier between them. He realises, as we have seen, that the depths of her soul are now closed to him and there seems to be nothing he can do about it. As a substitute for the openness and honesty which are so natural to her, she adopts a gay, bantering tone accompanied by a refusal to discuss serious matters. This is an important stage in their relationship. It may not have the drama of the 'spotlit crisis of choice', but it is a turning point nonetheless. Anna opposes an impenetrable wall of light-hearted perplexity to all Karenin's efforts to draw her into discussion. There is no outward change in their relationship, but their intimate relations with one another, Tolstoy affirms, are completely changed. The delicate balance in the situation is marvellously rendered by Tolstoy, whose sense of the flux of human emotions has often been noticed. Karenin, in a tone of sincerity which cannot be questioned, at first tries to draw her out:

'Anna, for God's sake, don't talk like that,' he said gently. 'Perhaps I am mistaken, but believe me, I am speaking as much for myself as for you. I am your husband and I love you.'

For a moment her face fell, and the mocking light in her eyes went out. But the word 'love' aroused her again. 'He loves me?' she thought. 'Is he capable of love? If he hadn't heard there was such a thing as love, he would never have used the word. He doesn't know what love is.' (11.9)

There can be no doubt that at this juncture Anna knowingly and wilfully breaks off relations with her husband on all matters of profound mutual interest, well before the relationship with Vronsky has reached a point of no return. This is the other side of the picture which T. G. S. Cain has described in his recent book as 'the intensification in Anna of the process of living'.¹³ It is the beginning of the end of an imperfect but viable relationship. Karenin begins to give up the attempt to win her round: 'Every time he began to speak

with her, he felt that spirit of evil and deceit which possessed her taking possession of him too, and he used quite different words and a quite different tone from those he had intended' (II.10).

Tolstoy has often been criticised for passing straight on to the aftermath of Anna's and Vronsky's first love-making without sufficiently motivating the event itself. But more important than the gap in motivation, if such there is felt to be, is the fact that between the last scene and this Anna has passed over from a situation in which she remains basically in control of her emotions to one in which the overall control is lost. Eventually her anxieties run so far ahead of reality that she is unable to face it even when it wears an objectively promising aspect. At all events, from this point on, emotions which she cannot harness have a negative effect not only on her relationship with her husband, but also on her relationship with her lover. At the moment of fulfilment the seeds of later tragedy are already present. The very nature of their passion already puts obstacles in the way of mutual understanding. Anna becomes terrifyingly aware that in opting for Vronsky she is sacrificing not only her social position but, what is more fundamental and more important in its consequences, her emotional security. In addition, the emotions which she now feels are so strong and so complex that she can neither communicate them adequately to Vronsky nor express them adequately to herself. Above all, Anna is overcome by feelings of guilt and degradation; she is conscious too that she now has no-one but Vronsky to fall back on. She refuses to speak of happiness and communicates to him only her feeling of horror. Her look of cold despair is incomprehensible to him. She feels that her shame and rapture and horror cannot be put into words and she does not want to talk about it. The next day she still has found no words to express the complexity of her feelings and, even more important, she cannot find the thoughts to reflect all that is in her soul. She never gets to the point of facing these feelings. When she approaches it she is overcome with terror and drives the thoughts away.

To put the matter abstractly, there is a two-fold failure to communicate at the very heart of the Anna-Vronsky relationship, and the problem is never resolved. Anna cannot share her deepest and most imperious feelings with her lover, and she suppresses them and banishes them from her own consciousness. Of course, there is always the possibility that Anna may overcome these emotional difficulties, and that possibility carries the fiction on for six more books, but it can be seen in retrospect that she never regains her emotional security, except superficially by closing her eyes to some crucial aspect of her situation, an attitude which she cannot forever sustain and which becomes a source of frustration and despair to Vronsky.

It is this breakdown in communication that erodes their relationship bit by bit and which Tolstoy records with so sure a touch. If a deep understanding had never been achieved in her marriage, due to Karenin's reluctance to probe into the soul, it is never achieved in her relationship with Vronsky, due to her unwillingness and inability to entertain openly her own emotional problems. Superficially, the way she now treats Vronsky has much in common with the way she had formerly treated Karenin, but whereas she had closed her soul to Karenin wilfully, she is now too frightened to open it to Vronsky:

Vronsky had already tried several times, though with less determination, to bring her to consider her position, and each time came up against the same superficiality and lightness of judgement, with which she now answered his appeal. It was as though there were something there that she could not or would not face, as though as soon as she began to speak of it she, the real Anna, withdrew somewhere inside herself and there emerged another, strange woman whom he did not know, whom he did not love, whom he feared and who resisted him. (II.23)

There is another subject on which Anna cannot communicate with Vronsky, and this comes close to the heart of their tragedy. It is her son, Seriozha. Even before the question of deserting him arises, Seriozha has become a standing reproach to them both:

The child's presence aroused in Vronsky and Anna a feeling akin to that of a sailor, who sees from the compass that the direction in which he is quickly sailing is a long way off the proper course, but that it is beyond his powers to stop. . . This child, with his naive outlook on life, was the compass which revealed to them the degree to which they had departed from what they knew but did not want to know. (II.22)

There are times when Anna closes her eyes to Seriozha too. But he represents her last emotional prop as well as having been the beneficiary of her love during her marriage. Her reaction here is therefore more subtle and complicated, though its direction is just as clear:

She was again going to say 'son', but could not bring herself to utter the word.

Vronsky could not understand how she, with her strong, honest nature, could stand the state of deceit and not want to escape from it; but he did not guess that the chief cause of it was the word 'son' which she could not bring herself to speak. When she thought of her son and his future attitude to his mother, who had deserted his father, she was so terrified by what she had done that she did not reason, but, as women do, she only tried to calm herself with false arguments and words, in order that everything should remain as before and that she might forget the terrible question of her son's future. (II.23)

Karenin too resolves to cut off communication with his wife on

intimate matters and, like Anna, he also stops thinking about his marital problems. He does not want to think about them and actually succeeds in not doing so. Neither husband nor wife will permit themselves to think of the other's real emotional state, and the physical revulsion which Anna has experienced in her reactions to Karenin is now extended to the spiritual realm as well. She sees him now not as a remarkable man, but as a hypocrite who cares only about pretence and propriety and has no feelings. It is, after all, but a short step from a refusal to discern another's feelings to a denial that he has any.

When Anna finally confesses to him, their relations enter a new stage. In his heart Karenin now wants Anna to suffer for her offence: exasperation has progressed to resignation and thence to hostility. It is ironic that the same progression is to take place later between Anna and Vronsky. Anna too enters a new emotional phase. After a brief feeling of freedom, she is overwhelmed by despair, by a sense that her situation is quite hopeless, by a dread of social disgrace, and a fear that Vronsky is already finding her a burden. As a consequence she begins to feel resentment not only against Karenin but also against Vronsky. It is this chronic insecurity that finally destroys her. She temporarily takes refuge in the illusion that she will always have Seriozha and in an exaggeration of Karenin's faults, but all the components of her fatal paranoia are already there.

It is not long before Vronsky sees those eyes looking at him with what seems to be a strange malevolence: no decision he can make will solve their problems, and consequently he is bound to be at fault. In a masterly scene Tolstoy shows Anna perform an increasingly typical emotional *volte face*, which both leaves open the possibility of a happy solution and confirms the downward trend. At one moment she is thinking that if only he would say 'give up everything' she would leave Seriozha and go with him; the next moment she is objecting that she cannot possibly go away and leave her son (III.22).

The reconciliation which takes place as a result of Anna's illness is but an interlude. It is perhaps more significant for understanding Karenin than it is for understanding her. She is, after all, ill, and her tender feelings are bound up with another illusion, that she can have both Alekseys at the same time. For Karenin the experience is of great importance: for the first time in his life he gives way to a feeling of sympathetic compassion. It is again Anna who withdraws first from the relationship, a deeper and fuller relationship than she had ever previously enjoyed with her husband, but this time she does so instinctively. Karenin begins to notice that she is afraid of him and cannot look him straight in the face; at the sight of him her animation vanishes. She begins to find him physically repulsive

again; little things begin to irritate her, especially his reasonableness and generosity. Again physical dislike progresses to spiritual dislike. As it happens, Karenin's new-found generosity proves a greater obstacle to her happiness with Vronsky than had his attitude before the crisis, for his piety forbids him divorce, and it also aggravates Anna's feelings of guilt: 'The thought of the evil she had brought upon her husband awakened in her a feeling akin to revulsion, and like that which a drowning man might have who has shaken off another man clinging to him' (v.8).

In fact, in Italy, she is for a time happy and composed and feels no remorse or disgrace. She rarely thinks of her son and she glories in the love she feels for Vronsky and in his love for her. But her sense of well-being is extremely fragile and when Vronsky seeks other distractions she becomes disproportionately depressed. When her exaggerated expectations of their passion are not completely fulfilled she has nothing to fall back on but her equally exaggerated fears. It is indicative of her worsening relations with Vronsky that she feels impelled to make her forbidden visit to Seriozha. Equally disastrous is her ill-advised visit to the theatre. For the first time Vronsky experiences a feeling of anger, almost hatred, towards Anna for her refusal to realise her position. It is the more acute in that its cause is a subject Anna refuses to discuss and banishes as far as possible from her own mind. Yet she blames Vronsky for not warning her. Dolly notices when visiting her that habit of screwing up her eyes as if to shut out something unpleasant, which the reader first noticed much earlier, at the ball. Dolly also notices how Anna and Vronsky withdraw emotionally from each other in conversation, the note of irritation in Anna's voice and the set expression on Vronsky's face.

Anna's most desperate, because two-edged, weapon in her attempts to hold on to the man she is, in spite of herself, driving away, is emotional blackmail. Vronsky now braces himself for the emotional scene which he expects whenever he is away from home. At such moments both withdraw into themselves. Vronsky becomes familiar with this habit in Anna and knows that it happens only when she has decided on some plan which she will not communicate to him.

Looks and glances, tones of voice, become the currency of interchange and an inadequate substitute for mutual confidence. They do not now lead in to the heart: they forbid entry, and, as Karenin had once reacted by murmuring to himself 'so much the worse for her', so now Vronsky has recourse to the same reaction. What is more, as Anna's fevered imagination runs ahead of reality she takes Vronsky's cool looks to heart, seeing in them evidence of a cooling

passion and perhaps something much worse. It is this something worse, for which she has not a shred of evidence, which makes her panic. The more she is convinced that he is tiring of her, the more counter-productive her attempts to hang on to him become.

It is hardly surprising if Vronsky's reactions sound similar to Karenin's. Both Anna and Vronsky find in each other's facial expressions and tone of voice evidence of hostility. More important still, such signs leave an indelible mark on the imagination:

'You make it sound like a threat, but I wish for nothing more than never to be parted from you,' said Vronsky, smiling.

But as he spoke these tender words the look that flashed in his eyes was not just cold. It was the vindictive look of a man who is persecuted and reduced to fury.

She saw his look and correctly guessed its meaning.

'If that is your attitude, then it will only lead to disaster!' said his look. It was a momentary impression, but she never forgot it. (v1.32)

Anna protests that what she needs is love. But here too she is indulging in self-deception, since she has long denied Vronsky access to those areas of her feelings where she is most in need of understanding and compassion. What she needs above all is the emotional security which Vronsky cannot give her, any more than he can restore *Seriozha* to her or remove her sense of guilt. As Cain says, 'for all his honesty and loyalty he is unable to provide her with any substitute for that stable family life which she has forgone'.¹⁴ It is not long before the relationship is spoiled beyond repair. Indeed it has never been a satisfactory one and its failure resides as much in Anna's emotional difficulties over adultery itself as in any outer circumstances. It is surely not so much that Vronsky cannot measure up to Anna's passionate nature, as some have argued, as that her inordinate demand for passion has become a neurotic substitute for the security she lacks, a demand whose function is to save her from those other aspects of her emotional life which she cannot face and bring under control, let alone share. When we first meet her, Anna is a person of superb emotional balance, in which natural grace and control are in subtle equilibrium. Her degeneration is no doubt influenced by all those factors so much discussed in criticism, but on the immediate level of her relationship with Vronsky it is problems of communication itself which loom largest and which prove ultimately intractable. Even as the end approaches, Anna is capable of reverting to common sense and warm emotions, but eventually her soul is taken prisoner by the desire to punish Vronsky which takes her to the grave. Punish she certainly does. 'Vengeance is mine. I will repay' runs the much discussed epigraph. Whatever Tolstoy may have said

about it, it seems to be addressed as much to Anna herself as to anyone else.¹⁵

Of course, Anna's tragedy does not unfold in a straight line of development and in tracing her downfall step by step it is easy to lose sight of the reality of Tolstoy's text, of 'the slow accumulation of events', the flux of emotions, the ups and downs of her moods. There is an exquisitely drawn scene near the end of the novel which illustrates perfectly the pass to which Anna's and Vronsky's relationship has come. The reader can sense and share in the tenseness of the atmosphere, the knife-edge between estrangement and reconciliation; he attends to every sound and slight movement; he responds to the emotions of the characters, and the abrupt changes of tone:

She stood in silence in the middle of the room, gazing intently at him. He glanced at her, frowned for an instant and continued reading the letter. She turned and slowly left the room. He could still call her back but she had reached the door and he was still silent. The only sound was the rustle of the sheet of paper as he turned it over.

'Oh, by the way,' he said as she reached the doorway, 'we're definitely going tomorrow aren't we?'

'You are, but I'm not,' she said, turning to him.

'Anna, we can't go on living like this. . .'

'You are, but I'm not,' she repeated.

'This is becoming intolerable!'

'You. . . you will be sorry for this,' she said and went out.

Alarmed by the despairing look with which these words were spoken, he jumped up and was about to run after her, but, recollecting himself, sat down again and, firmly setting his teeth, frowned. Her vague threat, which he found vulgar, exasperated him. 'I have tried everything,' he thought. 'There's only one way left and that's to take no notice,' and he started getting ready to drive into town, and then on to his mother's, from whom he had to obtain a signature for the power of attorney. (VII.26)

Without Tolstoy's telling us we can sense the subtle change of emotion and tone between Anna's first 'You are but I'm not' and her repetition of it, and between Vronsky's 'Anna, we can't go on living like this. . . ' and his 'This is becoming intolerable!' Without any commentary we understand perfectly Vronsky's shift from alarm to exasperation and resignation.

V

It requires a writer with the superb understanding of human communication vouchsafed to Tolstoy to render successfully the almost imperceptible stages by which Anna's tragedy advances. His grasp of the subject might be sufficient to furnish a present-day ethologist with a provisional check-list of human behaviour. But it is, of course,

what Tolstoy does with this understanding in his fiction which is of importance. It is not possible nor indeed necessary to go into detail here, but the fact should not be overlooked that Kitty and Levin provide a parallel story of a couple who do manage to preserve an emotional equilibrium in spite of their many ups and downs. Levin, like Anna, has moments of deep despair, and moods in which exaggerated and unfounded fears and suspicions take possession of him and blur his vision, affecting his relations with other people, including his wife. He has more than his fair share of neurotic symptoms. Marriage brings its disillusionments and disappointments as well as its joys. But in the end Levin has a number of great advantages over Anna: he looks life full in the face and shuts out nothing of consequence from his range of vision; and he has the emotional security and social acceptability of a respectable married life to sustain him. It does not matter that Kitty is not his equal in intellect. She understands intuitively what it is that is disturbing him, and Levin is confident that she understands his feeling of happiness when he finds a solution to his spiritual unrest. The details may remain his secret, but the underlying emotions are shared. This is the crux of the matter: Levin wants to share his deepest emotions with his wife; he is bitterly unhappy when he fails, and in the end he succeeds, not least because he trusts in the promptings of his conscience. If all this seems too neat, it must be remembered that Levin's problems are immense and his path is far from easy. The reader may doubt, moreover, whether at the close of the novel they are truly at an end. Insofar as there is a moral to this story, it does, of course, have its controversial aspects, but it is difficult to fault Tolstoy's psychology.

On a different plane the subject of communication was to preoccupy Tolstoy again in his writing on art and literature: in one form or another, in real life and in his fiction, it was to preoccupy him for a life-time. But if in his own life he may be said to have fallen short of the goal, in his art he supremely succeeded. Merezhkovsky was right, moreover, when he commented: 'We feel Tolstoi afterwards, when we return to real life. We may say that the nervous susceptibility of people who have read books of Tolstoi becomes different from what it was before reading them.'¹⁶

That is surely no mean achievement.

NOTES

NOTES

1. Dmitri Merejkowski, *Tolstoi as Man and Artist* (London, 1902). The quotations and references here are all to chapter 9 (pp. 165-88).
2. The italics here are mine.

3. See R. F. Christian, *Tolstoy's 'War and Peace': A Study* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 68-9.
4. *What is Art?*, section v.
5. R. F. Christian, *Tolstoy, a Critical Introduction* (Cambridge, 1969), p. 176.
6. See Michael Pursglove, 'The Smiles of *Anna Karenina*', *Slavic and East European Journal*, 17 (Spring 1973), 42-8.
7. John Bayley, *Tolstoy and the Novel* (London, 1966), p. 227.
8. T. G. S. Cain, *Tolstoy* (London, 1977), p. 118.
9. E. B. Greenwood, *Tolstoy: The Comprehensive Vision* (London, 1975), pp. 19-20.
10. R. F. Christian, 'The Passage of Time in *Anna Karenina*', *Slavonic and East European Review*, XLV.104 (1967), 207-10.
11. Barbara Hardy, 'Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*' in *The Appropriate Form, an Essay on the Novel* (London, 1964), p. 189.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 177.
13. Cain, *Tolstoy*, p. 109.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
15. For discussions of the epigraph see Christian, *Tolstoy, a Critical Introduction*, pp. 170ff.
16. Merejkowski, *Tolstoi as Man and Artist*, p. 182.

Hadji Murat: the power of understatement

A. D. P. BRIGGS

I

Most of Tolstoy's better known works have by now settled down to enjoy an acknowledged reputation. Their merits and demerits have been established so that new studies tend to add detail to what has gone before, or make slight changes in emphasis, rather than produce bold revelations. Any casual assessment of Tolstoyan scholarship would conclude that the pioneering work was out of the way, at least as far as the major works are concerned. The historical tale *Hadji Murat* is an interesting exception; it is probably the only work of this eminent writer which deserves a position in the front rank of his achievement, which has not yet established its full reputation and which might properly be described (particularly in English) as 'under-researched'. This is not to say that we must start at the very beginning by establishing the *bona fides* of *Hadji Murat* as an excellent work of literature. When critics have mentioned the work they have usually done so in terms of high praise. Prince Mirsky records it as 'Tolstoy...at his best...a masterpiece of the highest order',¹ John Bayley as 'a marvellous aesthetic object',² E. J. Simmons as 'a work of superb art'³ and Philip Rahv as 'one of the finest *nouvelles* in the Russian language and a model of narrative skill and objective artistry'.⁴ More idiosyncratically it was called 'delightful' by Marc Slonim⁵ and 'charming' by Romain Rolland.⁶ On the other hand the meagreness of English criticism devoted to the story is equally recognised. R. F. Christian describes it as 'unjustly neglected by foreign readers' (and suggests that poor translations are to blame),⁷ Simmons marks it as 'strangely neglected nowadays'⁸ and D. Fanger describes it as 'that anomalous and relatively neglected masterpiece of Tolstoy's last years'.⁹ *Hadji Murat* has also engendered sufficient indecision and controversy to indicate that minds have yet to be made up. Christian, elsewhere a decisive critic of Tolstoy, seems uncertain on this subject. Devoting six pages of his work to the story, he uses up two of them in quotation and then

vacillates between praise and blame, willing to concede some of the qualities of *Hadji Murat* but conscious at the same time of its lapses, the heavy-handed symbolism, the striving for effect, the unmistakable presence of the author, the lack of polish and even the grammatical mistakes.¹⁰ When the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein told a colleague to read *Hadshi Murat* [*sic*] he said 'I hope you'll get a lot out of it, because there is a lot *in* it';¹¹ elsewhere he stated, 'when Tolstoy just tells a story he impresses me much more than when he addresses the reader. When he turns his back on the reader then he seems to me *most* impressive. . . His philosophy is most true when it's latent in the story.'¹² However, a recent commentator, E. B. Greenwood, seems to suggest that Wittgenstein may have exaggerated the content when he asks, 'Yet what philosophy is latent in this story other than the philosophy of defiance?'¹³

If it is true that *Hadji Murat* is an outstanding work by a major author, true also that not enough critical attention has been paid to it and not less true that uncertainty and disagreement have attended its evaluation so far, then a new assessment of the work seems more than ordinarily worth while.

II

The story of the writing of *Hadji Murat* is too well known to need recapitulation in detail. It was begun in August 1896 and went through ten redactions in eight years. The final one was published in 1911 in Berlin, a few months after Tolstoy's death and without the benefit of final revision by the author. Posthumous publication rather than the inadequacy of translations may, incidentally, account for the slowness of its acceptance as a major work. The idea that the work is somehow inchoate because Tolstoy never finished revising the story is manifestly wrong: most critics have praised its construction and we shall shortly see why. The anomalous nature of the work is, on the other hand, difficult to pronounce upon. It is amusing to recall the famous old man working at his manuscript on the sly for days on end, troubled by his own conscience which told him it was wrong to waste his time on historical adventure stories when he ought really to be using his talent for the improvement of the moral condition of his fellow men. For long periods he became totally absorbed in the subject, and he compiled a collection of eighty-odd publications in order to furnish himself with every last detail of history, geography, ethnography and anything else pertinent to the life and times of his hero. This was to result in an exactness of specification which is the hallmark of the finished story: the minutiae of historical events, dress, uniform, weaponry, language, flora and fauna are laid down with the kind of scientific precision which guaran-

tees total verisimilitude. Tolstoy changed direction several times. On the one hand he planned a long excursion into the biography of Hadji Murat building up into a fastidious psychological portrait; on the other he became distracted by the character and the age of Nicholas I and contemplated a major historical work on this subject. Time after time he caught himself going into too much detail, labouring a point or making his moral too obvious. His artistic self-control is truly surprising, and the rewards of it have proved very considerable. *Hadji Murat* emerged as a near perfect blend of narrative skill and moral argument, the latter amounting to a summation of many well-known Tolstoyan preoccupations presented with an altogether new sense of restraint, balance and apparent objectivity. In this work Tolstoy fascinates his reader by his excellent story-telling and propels him only with the gentlest of nudges, which pass unnoticed in the wealth of interest or excitement, in the required directions of moral judgement. One exceptional chapter (15), devoted to the hated Nicholas I, overbrims with sarcastic venom and is spoiled because of it; this section – which was itself drastically pruned – has the useful function of emphasising how subtly entertainment and dialectic are intermingled elsewhere. Tolstoy seems to have used *Hadji Murat* as a repository for excellent, disciplined writing on the side during a period when his conscious mind was busy denying the value of anything that was not simply and overtly instructional. There is little value in wondering why this came about, whether the urge to write well simply reasserted itself or whether Tolstoy experienced the rare, subconscious awareness of an obvious truth, namely that nagging instruction is a less powerful method of persuasion than gentle guidance masked by entertainment. The extent and the manner of the achievement, however, remain open to analysis.

The signal accomplishment of *Hadji Murat* is not only that it triumphs in characterisation, content and form but that each of these aspects of the serious narrator's art, and every other temptation towards an extreme to which Tolstoy often succumbs on other occasions, is thwarted in its attempt to predominate. First, characterisation. There is no doubt that the starting point of the whole story was the character of Hadji Murat himself of whom Tolstoy had been aware in real life several decades before writing about him. Hadji Murat had become well known as a clever and daring guerrilla leader in the campaign to resist Russian subjugation of the Caucasus in 1850. He was also adept at changing sides when it was expedient to do so and was frequently described as a traitor, which was how the young Tolstoy first regarded him. In the 1890s, however, Tolstoy was able to disregard his treachery, which was in any case compounded of admirable resourcefulness and a necessary urge to survive,

and became so fascinated by the Caucasian hillsman that he was to refer to him eventually as 'that private obsession of mine'.¹⁴ This attraction, upon which all the anomalous characteristics of the story are founded, remains a source of surprise to us. Why should the ageing pacifist nurture such admiration for a man of violence? Why should the strict moralist overlook disloyalty, hypocrisy and mendacity? How could an interest in a minor historical figure develop through indulgence and affection into an obsession? There is no simple answer but an explanation is probably to be found in the energy with which Hadji Murat lived and the indifference with which, on more than one occasion, he faced death. These qualities appealed to Tolstoy at the outset and he was later to overlay them with other interests, particularly in the ultimate complexity of an apparently simple personality and the effects of politico-religious fanaticism upon the life style, attitude and conduct of adherents. Even so, Tolstoy's fascination with Hadji Murat seems like that of a civilised man with a splendid wild animal. Instead of attempting to give us an insight into the workings of his mind and the movements of his spirit (as he does, for instance, in the case of Ivan Il'ich), Tolstoy provides a strong sense of Hadji Murat's physicality. He is glimpsed in action and negotiation, not in reflection. At the end of it all we are left with a powerful impression of how this strong man has moved, ridden, fought, paced up and down in impatience, washed, dressed and undressed, prayed, buckled on his weapons and performed other bodily functions, including that of dying a cruel death. It was a wise decision by the author to eschew his normal method of characterisation, that of amassing much detail and assisting the reader with the interpretation of it. Instead he opted consciously for an impressionistic manner to which he referred as the 'peep-show' technique (using the English word).¹⁵ Many subsequent critics have made much of this statement of intent as well as of Tolstoy's avowed plan to depict his hero in the round rather than in the single dimension of military hero or religious fanatic. They have been right to do so because this is what gives the story its pace and its style; moreover it is wholly appropriate that a man of exceptional vitality should be portrayed in a dynamic manner.

The other important decision taken by Tolstoy was to widen the scope of his story beyond its main hero, yet to restrain and organise his amplification so that it added both depth of meaning and greater suspense without at the same time dragging the reader off into irrelevant action or tedious theorising. The effect of this upon the characterisation alone is remarkable. The tale extends to no more than 35,000 words and yet it swarms with vitally interesting characters. There are more than seventy named personages in *Hadji Murat*,

another dozen are interpolated in the hero's reminiscences of his youth (chapters 11 and 13), and they are supported by a broad range of minor, unnamed participants, soldiers of many ranks, servants, guests, petitioners, drivers, ambassadors, hospital patients, relatives, wives, mistresses and others. These people differ widely in age, rank, race, sex and significance. A very large proportion (eighty or ninety per cent) are actual historical figures discovered by Tolstoy during his meticulous researches, and many of them are women and children. They suffer in no degree from the inevitable brevity accorded to them. Rather the reverse, they gain vitality and interest because of Tolstoy's lightness of touch; somehow the rather ponderous old practitioner of the literary art has found a poet's touch late in life and sustained it throughout a whole work (again with the notorious exception of chapter 15). They come to life one by one in their brief context and an unusual number of minor characters make an impact out of all proportion to their slender significance in the story and the space occupied in the text. No reader of *Hadji Murat* is likely to forget quickly either the black-eyed, fifteen-year-old son of Sado who makes a short, animated appearance in the first chapter and reappears in chapter 17 only to be buried by his father after being bayoneted by the Russians, or even Hadji Murat's mother, Patimat, who keeps flitting unremarkably in and out of the story at different stages of her life (chapters 11, 12, 23). Even some of the 'walk-on' characters, here and gone in a line or two, are established with surprising individuality and poignant effect. Some of the best examples of this are in the weakest chapter (15) – the radiant aide-de-camp, the terrified officer discovered making love in Nicholas's own box and released by the monarch's whim as easily as he might have been tortured and executed for the crime, the pitiable student Bzhezovsky, who, by contrast, will die a cruel death for having attacked his professor – but there are many more in virtually every chapter. Thus the characterisation of *Hadji Murat* imparts an amplitude to the work which, taken together with other qualities yet to be discussed, sets it on a level not with *The Death of Ivan Il'ich*, *The Kreutzer Sonata* or *Master and Man*, significant as these stories are each in its own way, but with *Anna Karenina*, *War and Peace* and *Resurrection*.

III

Such a large claim needs further substantiation in terms of the ideas and themes explored by the author. Is it true that *Hadji Murat* propounds a philosophy of defiance and little more? Must we accept that this story is 'like a parable without a point... for it does not illustrate anything, but is about Hadji Murat *tout court*'?¹⁶ In fact, it is not

difficult to illustrate that the story is as saturated with stimulating ideas (most of them common preoccupations of the author) as it is replete with vital characters. It certainly resembles a parable, both in its ability to seize and hold the imagination and in its satisfying construction (which we shall come to shortly) and it lacks a point in so far as it lacks *any single point*. John Bayley does the story more justice, however, when he says elsewhere, 'Its apparent simplicity is heavy with many kinds of meaning and with conflicting insights. . .'¹⁷ and 'it quietly turns into what seems like objectivity all [Tolstoy's] most ultimate convictions'.¹⁸ These are perceptive comments which suggest that *Hadji Murat* possesses a high degree of seriousness matched by extraordinary artistic ability. Another similarly useful one comes from a more recent critical work: T. G. S. Cain explains that

What happens in *Hadji Murat* is not that the didactic or tendentious is abandoned in favour of purely formal considerations, but that the moral view is larger than that of the other late works and that its finer balance is reflected in . . . the formal poise of the novel in such a way as to make us far less conscious of the intervention of the didactic Tolstoy.¹⁹

Where, then, are the hidden meanings, conflicting insights and larger moral view? It is true that they do not clamour for attention, nor do they present themselves in the simplified, pre-digested or exaggerated forms to which the accustomed reader of Tolstoy becomes resigned. They are certainly not to be found packaged in epigrams as silly as the opening sentence of *Anna Karenina*. Nevertheless it is scarcely possible to read *Hadji Murat* without searching one's mind over a number of profound matters, some of them amounting to age-old questions of philosophy and religion: the relationship between civilised man and nature, the wonderful phenomenon of the force of life which animates all of us, the ordering of attitudes to inevitable death, the effect of religion upon mentality and behaviour, the proper arrangement of moral standards, the universality of falsehood, the need for altruism, the all too easily suppressed instinct for brotherly love, the pleasant usefulness of family life, the propensity of those in government to misuse their power and become corrupt, the awful arbitrariness of the workings of nature and history, and, perhaps most obviously in this story, the ease with which men have recourse to violence, allowing it to become an enjoyable and honourable way of life and disregarding its many horrific consequences. On all of these issues, and on others, we are invited by tacit suggestion to form a judgement. For once, Tolstoy has not told us what conclusions must be drawn, he has not even asked straight questions, he has apparently set out his hidden argu-

ments dispassionately, and yet *Hadji Murat* contains an inbuilt guarantee that a large majority of its readers, if they reflect at all, will not only arrive at certain important convictions but that those convictions will be similar to the ones which this same author insists upon elsewhere with greater stridency and commensurately less chance of persuading his audience.

The question of violence and warfare, the major theme of *Hadji Murat*, is an outstanding example. At other times and in other places Tolstoy makes no secret of his dislike of these recurrent bug-bears of human behaviour. He preaches on the subject, writes pamphlets and open letters, supports illegal pacifist organisations and risks both the wrath of government and the possibility of losing his audience through boredom brought on by the repetitions and extreme nature of his argument. When he addresses the subject in literature exactly contemporaneous with *Hadji Murat* he uses the same direct approach. Chapter 13 of *Resurrection* contains a paragraph which begins with the unsubtle assertion: 'Military life has a generally corrupting effect upon men...' and goes on to say how and why this is so.²⁰ In *Hadji Murat* itself, however, things are very different. Tolstoy allows himself to see that violence and military life have their own wild and beautiful fascination; they can also bring out qualities of energy, discipline, bravery, honour and dignity which might otherwise be lacking. Entranced by the personality of Hadji Murat he becomes drawn into a devil's advocacy of militarism which leaves him open to the charge that he is celebrating violence. As Theodore Redpath puts it: 'The full weight of Tolstoy's sympathy seems to be with the resistant mountaineer. Not a trace of the long-cherished philosophy of non-resistance or Christian forbearance, or even of self-perfection, is present.'²¹ But it is not only in the person of the mountaineer that militarism is seen to be at least in some ways admirable. Poltoratsky, in chapter 5, finds elation in riding into action with his comrades: 'Although he had not had enough sleep Poltoratsky was in that mood of spiritual elation and cordial, carefree gaiety which he always experienced when he was among his men and his comrades in a situation of potential danger.'

Butler, in chapter 16, knows the same feeling when the action is about to start:

At the head of the 5th Company...marched Butler, filled with a breezy sense of the joy of living and yet the danger of dying, eager for action and conscious of belonging to a huge entity directed by a single will. Butler was seeing action now for the second time and he was delighted by the idea that they would soon be under fire and that not only would he refuse to duck down when the shells passed over and ignore the whining bullets but that, as he had done before, he would raise his head higher and would

look round at his comrades and his men with smiling eyes and would start talking in a nonchalant voice about something quite incidental. . .

'This is it,' said Butler with a merry smile to a comrade walking along with him.

These people are enjoying warfare and Tolstoy, now over seventy and world-famous for his extreme pacifist convictions, is ready to show them doing so. Does this mean that his views have changed, or that he now stands accused of hypocrisy? Neither is true. What has happened is that in *Hadji Murat* a long and complicated consideration of violence has been undertaken; it involves presenting arguments from all sides even including those in favour of militarism. This gives the discussion an air of objectivity which is maintained by Tolstoy's affection and admiration for his warlike hero. In fact the objectivity is false. Despite its acknowledgement of the positive arguments this story, far from celebrating or even condoning militarism, amounts to a powerful indictment of violence and is thus consistent with the old philosopher's stated attitude. It shows how violence can become a way of life, self-justifying, self-propagating and impervious to critical comment from unwarlike members of the community involved, the women, children and church leaders who, in fact, soon become themselves tarnished with aggressive feelings which would otherwise have remained latent. Hadji Murat describes such a way of life in chapters 11 and 13: in his childhood he became accustomed to seeing arguments settled with a sword or gun, to witnessing vicious executions, bloody deaths and the swearing of oaths of vengeance. The general attitude was to regard as enemies all other people: members of one's own family with whom a disagreement had arisen, rival families in the locality, rival tribes in the Caucasus and, naturally enough, the invading Russian forces who were attempting to subjugate the whole region. Now as an adult Hadji Murat arranges all of his life in a military manner. He walks about weighed down with weapons of all kinds. When he arrives in Makheta at the beginning of the story he is first seen sporting a rifle and a whip. He gives up the rifle, adds to it a sword, but retains a pistol on his back. He has plenty of bullets in his cartridge pouches. When he wants to eat he produces his own knife from underneath a dagger. In chapter 6 he makes a present of one of his daggers to a small child, Vorontsov's step-son, a frightening example of innocence under threat of corruption, and in chapter 20 he presents Major Petrov with his sword. His henchmen are all similarly armed and there are repeated references to their weaponry. These come to a climax in chapter 23 as they all prepare for flight the following day. Tolstoy spares no detail in describing their activities: 'All four of them spent the whole night checking their rifles, pistols, touch-holes and flints, replacing anything

that was out of order, sprinkling fresh powder on the pans, sticking bullets wrapped in oily rags into measures of powder, sharpening their swords and daggers and greasing the blades with tallow.'

This is followed by two references to the sounds produced in the still night by the rasp and whizz of iron on stone. The auditory effect is hair-raising, particularly since the only other sound at the time is the song of nightingales outside. These nightingales have been heard earlier on and they will be in attendance again before and after the death of Hadji Murat, Tolstoy's rather heavy-handed use of symbolism being what it is. Here, however, there is no doubting the poignancy of the juxtaposition: the birds sing in sweet innocence while men make fastidious preparation to hack each other to pieces.

Hadji Murat and his men die their gory deaths next day, never having known a life free from the tyranny of violence. But they are not the only people conditioned in this way. Their fellow Caucasians suffer similarly and, worse still, their supposedly more civilised Russian opponents, while having greater opportunity to avoid conflict, nevertheless allow themselves to become involved in it and before long come to regard violence as natural and even enjoyable. Certainly they have to admit that it leads to occasional unpleasantness but that has to be seen as a price which must inevitably be paid. Following the grisly scene in which Hadji Murat's head is brought back in a sack and shown to Marya Dmitriyevna and Butler (chapter 23), the lady expresses her revulsion not in tears but in anger, accusing the men of being nothing but cut-throats. Butler can produce no reasoned justification for the atrocity but explains that it could happen to anyone, it is war. On an earlier occasion (chapter 9) when guests assemble for dinner with the senior Vorontsovs the conversation turns to Hadji Murat. 'They all fell over each other to praise his courage, cleverness and magnanimity. Someone did mention that he had had twenty-six prisoners killed but this met with the usual rejoinder, "Can't do much about that! À la guerre comme à la guerre!"'

The heavy irony in such a comment by the author scarcely suggests an objective stance on his part. Tolstoy's ultimate conclusion on this subject is unmistakable. Despite its superficial appeal to most of us and profound attraction for some, violence is morally wrong and should be avoided at all costs in the conduct of human affairs. It settles nothing and produces nothing but further violence. It reaches out to affect innocent people; it demeans and corrupts everyone it touches. The case of the young soldier Avdeyev is illustrative. A more worthy and likeable young lad you could not wish to meet. We come across him first in chapter 2 and it is immediately clear that he has no liking and no talent for army life. He should be at

home working hard and raising a family. Instead he has agreed to take his brother's place as a conscript and in chapter 5 a stray bullet in a meaningless exchange happens to wound him. He dies in hospital a couple of chapters later. No enjoyment or ambition coloured his military service, no glory attends his death, no sense of tragedy follows it; the simple, squalid story of Avdeyev is understated by the author but it bears a poignant message. It is wrong for ordinary young men to be uprooted from their family backgrounds, impelled into military careers to which they are in all ways unsuited and killed off prematurely.

This is part of the larger argument, dear to the author's heart, that military life is in any case a corrupting influence upon everyone involved, including those who have chosen it as a career. Soldiers in action lose all sense of morality. This is illustrated on several occasions, none with more telling effect than the raid described in chapter 16 and its aftermath (17). Even when they are off duty, professional fighting men are subject to the various temptations imposed by artificial circumstances and living conditions with the result that moral standards collapse. Everyone intoxicates himself as often as possible, gambling is rife, embezzlement of company funds is widely practised by those in charge of them and the few women present are subject to sexual advances of all kinds. Tiny examples of these moral lapses are introduced at regular intervals, as, for instance, at the beginning of chapter 10 when passing mention is made of a regimental commander in danger of being court-martialled for misappropriating funds. Sometimes, however, they are blown up into more important issues of some relevance to the story, as when Butler, having lost a large sum of money at cards, permits this to become only the beginning of a moral decline (chapter 24):

He settled his debt by borrowing the money from a Jew at an enormous rate of interest – in other words he simply removed and postponed the unresolved issue. He tried not to think of his position and when he was not distracted by the poetry of warfare he sought oblivion in wine. He drank more and more and day by day he grew morally weaker. He stopped being the excellent Joseph towards Marya Dmitriyevna and, on the contrary, began to make crude approaches to her, though he was surprised to meet with a decisive rebuff which filled him with a deep sense of shame.

Here the old familiar Tolstoy has intruded for a moment to describe the atrophy of moral fibre: such intrusions are fortunately rare in *Hadji Murat*, though judiciously placed hints at moral considerations are not. Another indication of the demoralising effect of warfare is the disregard for truth which it inevitably engenders. This is best illustrated in the enormous difference between actual events and the

way in which they are reported. Vorontsov's disastrous Dargo campaign which cost several lives and almost resulted in a massacre was presented to the tsar as a brilliant achievement (chapter 9). Shamil's campaign against the Russians was described by the latter as a success for themselves; Shamil and his officers, however, insisted that the victory had been theirs and the Russians had been repulsed (chapter 19). The most outrageous example of distorting the truth occurs in chapter 7 immediately following Avdeyev's death. Avdeyev was wounded in the most trivial of skirmishes, a few shots exchanged more from excitement than genuine antagonism. The official report of the encounter, however, reads as follows:

November 23rd

Two companies of the Kurin regiment proceeded from the fort on a wood-felling expedition. At mid-day a considerable force of hillsmen mounted a surprise attack upon the wood-felling contingent. The line began to fall back, whereupon the 2nd Company made a bayonet charge and overthrew the hillsmen. Two privates were slightly wounded and one was killed in the incident. However, the hillsmen lost approximately a hundred men killed or wounded.

These are some of the ways in which Tolstoy treats the theme of violence and warfare in *Hadji Murat*. He discusses both sides of the issue, refrains from open comment, poses no direct questions and draws no conclusions. On the other hand, he puts pressure on his reader by means of both regular hints and an accruing weight of evidence so that the desired conclusions become almost inescapable. The degree of self-discipline known to have been exerted by the author is impressive. The earlier drafts show clearly his struggle to achieve the correct atmosphere and the manuscript pages are black with corrections most frequently taking the form of excision. Two examples will prove the point. Anxious to explain the adult Hadji Murat's warlike nature, and that of his people, Tolstoy decided at one stage to incorporate in the story a gruesome event which had actually taken place. After a defeat by the Russians the hillsmen were compelled to produce seventeen volunteers for execution. These men were cruelly disposed of in a manner not described by the historian who witnessed the scene, A. L. Zisserman,²² but Tolstoy thought it best to go into detail and he described the beatings administered and the suicide of one young man who managed to cheat his would-be executioner by leaping on to his bayonet. Another idea which occurred to him was to portray the cruel execution of a hillsmen by General A. P. Yermolov, who had him hanged not by the neck but by a hook through his side. After a whole day of agony his body tore apart and fell down whereupon Yermolov ordered him to

be hooked through the other side and hanged again until he died.²³ If the intention was to castigate warfare and condemn violence as a solution to human problems what better than to denounce the perpetrators of it and shock readers into a new awareness? However, Tolstoy sensibly rejected these drafts along with many other ideas which held a strong temporary appeal. He spent years determining the tone and style of his story and may never have realised how excellent a work he had produced through his determination for once not to overstate his arguments.

IV

A device used frequently by Tolstoy in his later years is the presentation of the end of his story at the beginning. We are told, for instance, in chapter 1 of *The Kreutzer Sonata* that Pozdnyshev murdered his wife and with that knowledge in mind we proceed through the story to the penultimate chapter (28) when we observe the murder itself. *The Death of Ivan Il'ich* is a title which tells part of the story itself and in any case Ivan's death is announced in public at the end of the first paragraph. In this way Tolstoy removes much of the strain on his plot; by taking the risk of abandoning uncertainty and therefore suspense he avoids the meretricious and the melodramatic. He can therefore permit himself a close association with sensational subject matter such as sexuality, murder and lingering death without having to defend himself against the charges of prurience or reliance upon cheap effects. This in turn gives him the opportunity to explore character and incorporate his own reflections on a broader scale. Such is the case with *Hadji Murat*. The actual plot is not of overriding importance and the author makes sure that we know of his hero's death before it occurs. The famous defiant thistle in the preface, mutilated by a cart wheel and personified by being given human characteristics – 'as if a part of its body had been torn off, its innards drawn out, an arm wrenched off and an eye put out' – predicts the sanguinary encounter which occurs at the end, though not the actual death itself. This is taken care of in the penultimate chapter when Kamenev reports the death of Hadji Murat and produces his head, the one true *coup de théâtre* in the story, a moment of genuine surprise and impact. The death scene which follows is, however, no anti-climax. We now know that Hadji Murat will not survive, just as we know that Ivan Il'ich and Pozdnyshev's wife are certain to die. On each occasion the mind is freed from the burden of suspense and able to concentrate on other things, in this case on the terrible beauty of the final chapter, the pursuit by Nazarov and Petrakov with its murderous outcome, the morning and then the

evening scene, and the magnificent end of the hero himself. The intellectual and aesthetic content of the last chapter is enhanced at the expense of the emotional. Furthermore, with reactions to the death of Hadji Murat already disposed of, it is possible for the story to end on this high note, with the powder-smoke still rising over the scene, the ringing sounds of battle fresh in the memory and now being supplanted by the song of the nightingales. This, after all, was what inspired the writing of the story and what Tolstoy had kept in mind throughout, despite the many distractions. What a way to die! The perpetual Tolstoyan worrying over dying and death is reflected, incidentally, in a revealing unspoken thought entertained by Hadji Murat when face to face with Prince Vorontsov in chapter 10. 'His eyes were saying that this old man ought to be thinking about his death and not about war. . .' At the time of the interview Vorontsov was seventy years old; so was Tolstoy at the time of writing and he seems to suggest that at that age one has an obligation to think about death. Tolstoy's otherwise inexplicable fascination with his military hero is clearly based upon the vicarious pleasure derivable from watching someone else perform an important action in an admirable way.

The skilled handling of the death scene in *Hadji Murat* is a pointer to perhaps the strongest quality of the story, its elegant and satisfying design. R. F. Christian summarises it in this way:

There is a striking symmetry about the order and arrangement of the twenty-five chapters, which start with a description of nature, progress through the ranks of the Russian army to the provincial society life in miniature of the Caucasus, to the court aristocracy and finally to the Emperor himself, then back in the reverse direction through the officer class to the ordinary soldier who tells the story of Hadji Murat's heroic death; while a final coda recalls the crushed thistle in the ploughed field and the inanimate world of nature of the preface.²⁴

Such indeed is the broad, careful curve along which the story is constructed. It possesses also several other formal characteristics which account for its acceptance as a masterpiece: a controlled alternation of interest between Hadji Murat and many other people, neatly wrought individual chapters most of which stand out as independent creations and yet which interlock with others for mutual enhancement, and a series of arresting contrasts, parallels, juxtapositions and symbols which catch the eye as shining principles of artistic form and also underscore Tolstoy's deepest meanings.

The way in which Tolstoy alternates the action between Hadji Murat and everyone else is planned and executed with almost military precision. Throughout the story the space allotted to the main

hero is invariably followed by a similar amount allotted elsewhere. The first chapter presents Hadji Murat; it is followed by two chapters, each half as long as the first, in which we encounter other characters. From then on the chapters fall into a neat arrangement, three with Hadji Murat (4, 5, 6), three without him (7, 8, 9), four with (10, 11, 12, 13) and four without (14, 15, 16, 17), one with and one without (18 and 19), the same again (20 and 21) and then the final run of four chapters (22-5) devoted to him almost entirely. By means of this careful sequence Tolstoy maintains a balance of interest between his hero's affairs and those of his minor characters, some of whom gain thereby a spurious relevance which would otherwise not be theirs. The chapter units themselves are as immaculately turned out as those of *Anna Karenina*. A number of them emphasise their newness by an arrival and their completion by a departure. Hadji Murat arrives at the beginning of the first chapter and Sado departs at its end. Avdeyev arrives in hospital and departs this life at the start and finish of chapter 7. Butler's company rides out at the beginning of chapter 16 and rides back at its end. Other chapters, such as 5 and 19, use this device or a variation of it, perhaps the neatest occurring in chapter 15 which begins with the words, 'This report was dispatched from Tiflis on December 24 1851 and on New Year's Eve a courier, after overdriving a dozen horses and beating a dozen drivers until they bled, delivered it to Prince Chernyshov. . . ' and ends as follows: 'Chernyshov wrote along these lines to Vorontsov and another courier, overdriving his horses and lashing his coachmen's faces, galloped off to Tiflis.'

Chapter 2 has the same kind of agreeable cyclic appearance which is enjoyed by *Hadji Murat* as a whole. It begins with soldiers in silence, turns our attention to the stars in the night sky, reports a conversation between the four of them, introduces some mildly exciting action which involves Avdeyev and Bondarenko in escorting a Chechen deputation back to the fort, sees them return to duty, reports more conversation, directs our gaze once again up to the stars and then leaves the four soldiers in silence. Chapter 14 takes the self-enclosed form of a complete letter. Chapters 11, 12 and 13 form a special sequence. In the first Hadji Murat reminisces, the second begins with his suspension of the narrative in order to say his prayers and ends with his resumption of it, the third begins with the resumption and ends with its conclusion. These carefully constructed entities are the result of Tolstoy's scrupulous grouping and regrouping of ideas over a long period. The methodical arrangement reminds us of the schematism of *A Confession*, except that here the evidence of effort and cerebration is camouflaged by the narrative interest. Furthermore, the perfect little chapters are not allowed to revel in their

own glyptic splendour but are, in many cases, dependent on each other for full effect. The first three, for instance, are linked together by messengers. The emissary selected by Sado in chapter 1 arrives with the soldiers in the middle of chapter 2, and the group formed by him, Avdeyev and Bondarenko arrives at the fort in the middle of chapter 3. In chapter 5 it turns out that the wounded soldier is none other than the Avdeyev of chapter 2. After his death in chapter 7 we are transported immediately to his home in order to see what his relatives are doing at exactly that time. One of the most moving effects of these cross-references occurs about half way through the story. In chapter 15 Nicholas is manoeuvred into giving an order for the Chechens to be harassed even more actively. Accordingly, the following chapter describes a raid prompted by the order and the one after that shows us the aftermath of that excursion. Not only are the three chapters themselves catenated despite containing quite disparate characters, but the effect is greatly sharpened by a back reference in chapter 16 to chapter 1. To our horror we learn that the raid executed so cold-bloodedly has affected people we know, the warm, friendly, courageous people who entertained Hadji Murat at the outset. First the lofty command, then its execution in real life, then its real meaning in human terms: this is not only good storytelling, it is as effective a condemnation of cruel government and militarism as a trunkful of anarchist and pacifist pamphlets.

Parallelism is another device which serves Tolstoy well. There is a striking similarity between chapters 15 and 19 which present respectively two tyrants, one European, one Asiatic – Nicholas and Shamil. Their petitioners, their physical description, their cruel punishments, their concern for reputation and appearance, their susceptibility to sexual passion, and several other qualities cry out for comparison and suggest one of Tolstoy's favourite theses, that great political power has a grossly corrupting effect upon those who wield it and that one tyranny is much like another. This is a favourite subject also for commentators and has been adequately treated elsewhere, notably by Henri Troyat²⁵ and T. G. S. Cain.²⁶ Another most effective parallel exists between Tolstoy's treatment of the Avdeyev and Vorontsov families. In both cases, the younger generation is presented first, in two preparatory chapters, 2 and 7 for Pyotr Avdeyev and 3 and 5 for Semyon Vorontsov; there is some reason to compare the life styles of the unhappy conscript and the privileged careerist. Tolstoy invites this when he says early in chapter 3: 'To Vorontsov, and especially to his wife, it seemed that out here they were living not merely a modest life but one full of privations: whereas to the local people this life was amazing and extraordinary in its luxury.'

The older generations of the two families are then presented in successive chapters, 8 and 9, the Avdeyevs first. Here juxtaposition is everything. The Avdeyevs get up early and work hard in bad weather (except for the idle Akim whose place in the army was taken by the ill-fated Pyotr), they are illiterate and enjoy no luxuries. The Vorontsovs, on the other hand, are busy entertaining no less than thirty guests, from princes, counts and generals down to aides and officials, all accompanied by their ladies and attended by an army of footmen and servants. Neither of these pictures is subject to distortion or exaggeration. The Avdeyevs are quite ordinary country people and in some ways are managing fairly well. Tolstoy has refrained from showing us a family in abject indigence and has also resisted the temptation to idealise these members of a rural community in order to show how corrupt are the city-dwellers by comparison. Even his depiction of the Vorontsovs is relatively restrained, the author confining himself to a number of sharp ironies rather than indulging in the overt sarcasm reserved for Nicholas in chapter 15. He certainly makes no actual suggestion that a society with such disparities in wealth as exist between the Avdeyevs and the Vorontsovs is an unjust one, but his arrangement of these two chapters amounts to an implicit suggestion that this is so. Contrasts like this one, occurring from time to time in *Hadji Murat*, have the double effect of sounding a pleasing aesthetic note and implanting a Tolstoyan idea in the mind. The sharpest of them occur when the beauty and serenity of nature suffer the ugly intervention of man's activity, a theme prefigured in the preface by Tolstoy's misanthropic outburst, 'What a cruel and destructive creature is man! How many different living creatures and plants he has eliminated in order to support his own life!' Mention has been made of the nightingales and the sound of weapons being sharpened, also of the little boy and Hadji Murat's dagger: another such juxtaposition of innocent beauty and senseless violence occurs in chapter 16 which sets the raid of Butler's company against a background of lovely mountain scenery, with a clear winter sky, a running stream and mountain goats springing out before the startled soldiers.

The feeling for contrast is responsible for the undertones of irony which resonate throughout *Hadji Murat*, contrasts between the world as it should be and as it is, between the way things are planned and the way they turn out, between what people say and what they do. There are mild ironies such as the fact that the Russian aristocrats do not even speak their native language well. All the Vorontsovs' conversations are conducted in French and we are told that the Prince speaks Russian with an English accent (chapter 3). His report to Chernyshov (the whole of chapter 14) was written in French,

though Tolstoy gives us a Russian translation, and in the Winter Palace practically everyone speaks that language. There are outrageous ironies such as Nicholas's stated belief that he is the only honest man left in Russia (chapter 15). There are amusing ironies (the nearest approach to humour in this most serious work) like the behaviour of Shamil at the end of chapter 19. This powerful man, accustomed to asserting his will at all times and backing it with unrestricted force and cruelty, has no control over Amina, an eighteen-year-old slip of a girl who has recently become his favourite wife. Annoyed because Shamil has given some silk stuff to another wife, she evades him all evening, laughing at his frustration, and there is nothing the despot can do about it. There is a pleasing irony in the fact that men who are supposed to be enemies keep getting on well together: this happens when the good-natured Avdeyev, having escorted Sado's emissaries to Vorontsov, returns and tells Nikitin what pleasant chaps they turned out to be; also when Butler and Hadji Murat form a deep relationship through spending some time together; also in Marya Dmitriyevna's affection for Hadji Murat and the admiration nurtured by Yusuf (Hadji Murat's eldest son) for Shamil. There is a deep-running sense of irony in the relationship between Hadji Murat and Sado's family. Sado took a great risk in sheltering the fugitive, as Tolstoy spells out for us unnecessarily at the end of the first chapter; Shamil would wreak a terrible vengeance if he knew. Later in the story the village is indeed destroyed but, ironically, by the Russians in an arbitrary manner rather than deliberately by Shamil. Observing the wretchedness of Sado's community after the raid, in chapter 17, we recall the formal greetings exchanged between some of its members and Hadji Murat in the first chapter. 'Joy and life be thine!', Hadji Murat had said to Sado and, then, on leaving his house in chapter 4, 'May God reward you'. More painfully still, the withered mother now watching her son's burial, had said to the visitor, 'May thy coming bring happiness', and his reply had been 'May thy sons live'. Convolutions of irony are wrapped around the death of Avdeyev, in the father's realisation that he has sent his better son away into the army and kept a wastrel at home, in the death of Pyotr at the very time when they were discussing him and preparing to send him a letter and a rouble, in the disparity between the actuality of his death and the reports of it, and also in the behaviour of his wife who, although she pretends to be distressed, could not be more relieved because she has been living with the steward and is carrying his child. Finally, and perhaps most importantly of all, Tolstoy points the finger of irony many times at the ugly disparity between the observance of religious ritual and the immoral conduct of those involved. All three of the main protagonists

are guilty in this respect. Hadji Murat and Shamil stop to say their prayers as regularly as clockwork but have no compunction in continuing their lives of violence. Nicholas says his prayers in the morning, the prayer to the Virgin, the Apostle's Creed and the Lord's prayer 'without', Tolstoy assures us, 'attaching any meaning to them'. Following his immoral sexual escapades and his brutal decisions in relation to his subjects he proceeds straight to church on New Year's Day, though he finds the whole ceremony wearisome and is more interested in comparing his new young mistress, Koperveyn, not with his wife, but with his old mistress, Nelidova. Shamil, in the corresponding chapter (19) goes through exactly the same process: religious ceremonies in which, as leader of the community, he must affect committed participation, then a few matters of state involving an execution and a couple of hands to be chopped off, and then, later in the day, more prayers. No-one sees any inconsistency in Jemal-Eddin's proclamation which begins with the words 'I wish you eternal peace in God Almighty' and later on includes the sentence 'Endure a while, and I will come with the Koran and the sword and will lead you against the enemy'. Similarly, Hadji Murat is simply unaware of any inconsistency when preceding or following his prayers with thoughts or actions of violence. Many a drop of Tolstoyan irony is deposited in an apparently simple statement such as this one from chapter 6: 'Hadji Murat shook his head in some doubt, undressed and began his prayers. When they were said he ordered his silver dagger to be brought to him. . .' From small devices like this to the carefully contrived structures already described, Tolstoy employs the whole range of his mature literary abilities in order to advance his moral arguments without detriment to the aesthetic quality of his story, and they gain enormously from their understatement. It is not unusual for Tolstoy to take care over the form of his work; he was a man greatly given to revision and the improvement of what had been written down many times before. However, to have maintained and even raised his own high standards in this respect, to have employed them in the depiction of an extraordinarily wide range of characters and to have managed somehow to persuade us to consider again a large number of his cherished ideas – this time without our being consciously aware of it – these are achievements of real significance which have yet to be fully acknowledged.

Such are the main characteristics of *Hadji Murat*, the last really important work of Tolstoy's life and one of the finest that he ever wrote in view of its triumphant reconciliation of the competing claims of history, literature and moral instruction.

NOTES

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4. P. Rahv, 'Tolstoy: the Green Twig and the Black Trunk', in *Image and Idea: Fourteen Essays on Literary Themes* (Norfolk, Connecticut, 1949), p. 75.
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15. *J.E.*, vol. LIII, p. 188.
16. Bayley, *Tolstoy and the Novel*, p. 192.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 280.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 276.
19. T. G. S. Cain, *Tolstoy* (London, 1977), p. 186.
20. *J.E.*, vol. XXII, p. 49.
21. T. Redpath, *Tolstoy* (London, 1960), pp. 85-6.
22. A. L. Zisserman, *25 let na Kavkaze* (St Petersburg, 1879), vol. 1, pp. 341-2, quoted by Zhdanov, *Posledniye knigi Tolstogo*, p. 184.
23. Zhdanov, *Posledniye knigi Tolstogo*, p. 192.
24. Christian, *Tolstoy*, p. 245.
25. H. Troyat, *Tolstoy*, translated from the French by N. Amphoux (London, 1968), pp. 579-80.
26. Cain, *Tolstoy*, pp. 189-91.

PART TWO



The body and pressure of time

E. LAMPERT

'You must find it very difficult', Tolstoy wrote to Strakhov (29 February 1880), 'to avoid the whirlwind of political life which blows around you. Even I, sitting in the country, do not hold out and have to make the greatest efforts not to be blown off by it and be led astray.' Tolstoy was unable to avoid the whirlwind. As this brief study is designed to show, he responded to the world's peculiar strains and challenges and was himself very much of his age, and for this reason perhaps truly human and prophetic. And yet he was full of the aristocrat's scorn and distaste for the world of politics. He may not have looked like a nobleman and on the whole did not behave like one: he rather swaggered through life with an almost uncouth splendour. But Gor'ky, who in a few short sketches gave a superb picture of both the massiveness and the infinite convolutions of Tolstoy's character, was right when he said that 'from behind the *muzhik's* beard, from behind the crumpled democratic frock there shows through the old Russian *barin*, the magnificent aristocrat. . . , the creature of blue blood',¹ or when Lenin spoke of 'the aristocratic landlord acting a fool in Christ' (*yurodstvuyushchiy vo Khriste*). Whether one goes back to what Tolstoy himself chose to call his 'twenty years of vanity and lust' or beyond to the days of agonized self-abasement, he could not subdue his aristocratic temper. His pride was enormous. 'I at any rate', he wrote in 1873, 'whatever I do, am always convinced that *du haut de ces pyramides 40 siècles me contemplent* and that the whole world will perish if I come to a halt' (*J.E.*, vol. LX, p. 130).²

Tolstoy lavishly distributed his mixture of political disdain and apparent unconcern now to this imaginary character, now to that. In *Anna Karenina* a few caustic remarks dismiss alike 'Bertenev's [i.e. Katkov's] party against the Russian communists' and 'the Muscovite *honest* men, capable on occasion of having a dig at the government', as well as the liberals in the manner of Golenishchev and the Slavophiles in the manner of Koznyshev. At times his attitude echoed

the mood prevalent in the old Bolkonsky's household. The prince 'was convinced that there were no political complications of any kind in Europe, no war, but some kind of puppet comedy acted by people to-day pretending to play their part' (*J.E.*, vol. ix, p. 122). The same tone of faint derision recurs throughout the 1870s and even later.

In the vast conception of *War and Peace* Tolstoy was able to 'avoid the whirlwind' by concluding the novel with an epilogue which marked the beginning of a new, an unfinished novel – *The Decembrists*. We do not know what came of Pierre Bezukhov's visit to St Petersburg, or whether Nikolay Rostov ended by liquidating his 'best friend' on Arakcheyev's orders. Tolstoy drew back from *The Decembrists* in favour of *War and Peace* (although he kept returning to it in the late 1870s). What else could the novel have been but an eminently political statement, where sides would have had to be taken?

In 1829 the liberal Pierre tries to impress on the conservative Nikolay that 'everything is strained to such a degree that it will certainly break' – 'as people have always said since governments began' (*J.E.*, vol. xii, p. 283). In 1856 the same 'twaddle' fills the journals which expound 'European principles on a European basis, but with a Russian leaning, and the journals on an exclusively Russian basis, expounding Russian principles' (*J.E.*, vol. xvii, p. 8). The arguments, in their pallid, synthetic idiom, go on in 1905 by 'the famous liberal political figure, who joins in all the committees, commissions, tributes and cleverly drawn up loyal but most liberal communications' and by Nikolay Semenovitch, owner of thousands of acres of land, 'a purely Russian Orthodox, with Slavophil leanings', who believes in 'the decisions of the *mir*' and in 'the singular qualities of the Russian people' (*J.E.*, vol. xli, p. 461). The notion of 'society' in the political sense seemed to jar on Tolstoy as much as the notion of 'high society', which he asks us – almost in vain, seeing the delight with which he sometimes described it – to regard as a hollow haunt of vanity and fraud. The disdainful irony revealed the haughty humility of the alarming if eventually mortified *grand seigneur*.

But there was more to it than overbearance, however remorseful. Tolstoy was obsessed with the idea that every human action, every word, had a core of hypocrisy. He needles away at human nature, almost taking pleasure in showing how even the most generous impulses can be traced to the basic animal need of defending one's own interest, of thinking well of oneself. Men live for years, as Tolstoy thought he had lived himself, in a certain way, and with certain ideas of themselves and others and they think they are drawing strength

from this. Then suddenly they realise they are living in a fool's paradise. Exploding the paradise of fools, 'tearing away all and every mask' (Lenin), became Tolstoy's main psychological and literary device, whatever mistrust of the strictly formal side of literature and of literary devices he may have harboured. It is to this 'device' that he owes his reputation of knowing human beings as no-one else knows them, of discovering exactly what they were up to, and in doing so often reaching such extremes of mockery as no professional misanthrope has ever attempted. The emperor is naked. Even God is suspected of dissimulation.³

We must abandon our notions of what is great. What are men's 'truths' but their irrefutable errors? What are 'values' but abstractions which delude, distort, divert and spread a bemusing mist, concealing realities? Tolstoy questions the infinite cosiness of rounded-up thoughts, feelings and actions parading as absolutes, of hermetically bottled art and science, of culture for its own sake, of self-sufficient decencies and indecencies, of artful 'problems' and 'questions' answered with learned self-assurance (both words almost invariably appear in inverted commas: Tolstoy suspected that those who use them must have some mumbo-jumbo up their sleeve or in their bonnet). No-one has exposed with more devastating power than Tolstoy the fascinating quirks, the resourcefulness, the acrobatic standing on of heads and subtle confusion of issues to which men have resorted in pursuit of white-washing their iniquities (*moshen-nichestvo uma*, in Levin's words). Who could beat off Tolstoy's attack on what he regarded as the supreme falsehood – the Christian faith, which readily lent itself to being twisted to justify anything, and the believers who claimed to love their enemies when they had none and tore their entrails when they faced them?⁴

As for politics, they must, Tolstoy thought, fill anyone who is not a sadist with horror at the quantity and quality of misery which they, in competition with religion, had caused mankind to suffer. In any case, they were a realm of consummate cant and deception – a huge projection of men's insanities, their greed, their lust for power, their obsession with meaningless words and lunatic ideas, which sustain an order based on the obscene trinity of Mars, Mammon and the Pharisee. After all, even *War and Peace* is a deeply anti-militarist, as well as an anti-political, novel, whatever poetic splendour may at times have overshadowed for Tolstoy Mars's gory horrors.

Madness consists in not recognising the facts, in conceiving things other than they are, in trying to realise desired ends by means which are known to be inappropriate. Politics was a mad exercise in falsifying abstraction. They were instilled, as Tolstoy stated in his tract *The Slavery of Our Time*, with the ideology which ensures a clear

conscience to the ruling class at the same time that it discredits its adversaries. Political notions were an artificial generalisation of reality and therefore a falsification of it. Tolstoy admitted of only one 'generalisation' – that which 'sums up the particulars', without distorting them to please the accepted notions of society. Such generalisation, epitomising the infinite variety of life, reflecting and embracing its bewildering facets, existed in art. This is an added, if related, source of Tolstoy's resistance to politics. 'Politics exclude the artistic', he noted in his diary (21 March 1858), just as they exclude the authentic. 'Art alone. . . always hostile to symmetry, gives the essence of things and shows their truth' (*J.E.*, vol. XLVIII, p. 118).⁵

Statesmen and politicians were essentially vainglorious humbugs, differing only in that some knew it and others did not. They were at the mercy of false abstractions. Their distinctive feature was the possession of the most 'symmetrical', commonplace minds and the greatest absence of imagination. They were cliché-ridden nonentities. They also needed 'masses of money which they receive from the state, while everything that is being said and written about the necessity and usefulness of politics, about the welfare of the people, about patriotism, and so on, is said and written in order to conceal from the deceived and, in part, from the deceivers the real motives of their activity' (*J.E.*, vol. xxxi, p. 414).

In his presumed aim to cleave through falsehoods and face truths, Tolstoy remembered death. Tormenting, unendurable, undignified and repellent though it is, man's confrontation with death snatches away all masks and presents him with the ultimate possibility to be himself, to shed all illusions, to pass from 'inauthentic' to 'authentic' existence. This is largely the message of *The Death of Ivan Il'ich*, and of much else in Tolstoy's work (his fictional writings contain some twenty-five central episodes of death or dying). In the face of death man is alone, unaided by public props and public bondage. 'It is necessary for me to live alone and to die alone', Tolstoy entered in his diary (23 August 1906). He lived alone, although for nearly half a century he was at the centre of public life in Russia. He died alone, although even his last loneliness was invaded by a meddlesome family, by a crowd of doctors and an array of ghoulish journalists and Pathé News reporters. 'Millions of people suffer in the world besides Lev Tolstoy. Why have you gathered around one Lev?' Tolstoy asked when dying on the wayside.

Paradoxically, Tolstoy was indeed one of the most gigantic literary figures of Russian social and political history. Separated from his environment in which truth was aborted and dehumanised, he lived and wrote in the extremities of Russian society. In his effort to pene-

trate to the truth behind the falsehoods, to distinguish between the social appearance and the social reality, he gathered into his life and work the 'body and pressure of time'. Artistically, this meant that he practised and judged literature in terms of, as it were, the co-inherence of things in truth perceived by faith. What is truth for Tolstoy? Truth is God, pantheistically or panmoralistically conceived as a universal influence for good and as represented by the highest attributes of human life. What is faith? Its 'basis', Tolstoy states, 'is the meaning of life from which flows the evaluation of what is important and good in life, and what is unimportant and false. The evaluation of all that happens in life is faith' (*J.E.*, vol. xxiv, p. 406). This may seem rather vague, but then, despite all his rationalisations, it is almost impossible to isolate what Tolstoy was aiming at except in terms of intractable 'truth': the 'truth' which made Andrey Bolkonsky think and feel what he thought and felt when he heard Natasha sing or, later, with increased and traumatic power, which made the madman go mad in *Notes of a Madman*. What is certain is that truth is experienced by Tolstoy as, strictly, the opposite of untruthfulness, whether in art or in life, and in the setting of life's unchartered necessities and social pressures. 'However banal it may be to say so', Tolstoy writes, 'everything in life, and especially in art needs only one quality – not to lie. In life a lie is foul, but it does not destroy life, . . . underneath there still is the truth of life, because someone will always be seeking, something will bring pain or joy, but in art a lie *destroys the entire link between things*, and they crumble to dust' (*J.E.*, vol. LXII, p. 308, italics added).

Later, in the infuriating, irresistible, aesthetically unaesthetic *What is Art?*, Tolstoy expounded the view that art should be an 'infectant', an irritant and catalyst, moving people to change the world by changing themselves. There was a brief period in his life, in the late 1850s, when he professed a kind of aestheticism. But even this was ambiguous. Art, for Tolstoy – unfortunately, or thank heaven – had matter as well as form, for before anything else, it was a commentary on or a presentation of what can still be called human life, human situation – 'entire situations (*polozheniya*), not characters', as Tolstoy wrote at the time, speaking of the novel (*J.E.*, vol. xxxviii, p. 34).⁶ In the end, he came to consider every work of art a pre-eminently moral and social fact, existing not privately, as an object in itself, but in its public action and effects – indeed, nothing more or less than 'propaganda', although this term has come to mean any insistent interpretation of life made according to criteria with which one happens to disagree. Tolstoy's attitude to aestheticism, for instance to the artistic trends in Russia at the end of the last and the beginning of this century, is well known. He condemned

them because they were impenetrable, except to an élite, because their ingenuity fended off real human needs and made one see as little as possible of the surrounding world, and because their strong scents soured and sickened as they faded – all this being symptoms of bad taste, even if good bad taste. He spoke of ‘art as a lie’.

But it was not, for Tolstoy, primarily a matter of aesthetic or even of simple social interest. There is in art, in literature, a certain morality of scale, as well as of depth. When the whole notion of art is in crisis the notion of scale is one of the first things to suffer. There ensues a dissociation of sensibility. The artist begins to work in miniature, in hermetic imagery, remote from human concern and human communication, in brief pleasures and foetal agonies. The force which enables the writing of *War and Peace* presupposes a sense of scale which no devotion to self-sufficient art can contain. It demands eyes, ears, voice and all other organs of sense and perception that are responsive to a total human world, and not merely receptive of a spiritual world traditionally supposed to be the domain of art. For Tolstoy, as a man and a writer, nothing less than the fate of humanity was at stake. ‘Fate of humanity’ may seem large and inflated, but the seeming itself suggests a scaling down of generous impulse to the level of privacy, or self-interest, or aloof and ironic inspection of life, with proportions in all other respects duly amended to some bourgeois scale.

Scale in Tolstoy implies not just broad perspectives and large canvases. It is a matter of the celebrated ‘endless labyrinth of links’, in which everything is connected with everything else, whether in harmony or discord: ‘the discovery [*izyskaniye*] of links which exist between events and people’ (*J.E.*, vol. xv, p. 233).

In everything, in almost everything I have written, I was guided by the need to collect thoughts linked to one another..., but every thought, expressed by itself through words loses its meaning, is terribly diminished when taken out of the interconnection in which it lies. As for the interconnection, it is (I think) made up not by thought, but by something else. The source of these links cannot be expressed directly in words. It can be done only indirectly – by describing images, actions, situations.

(*J.E.*, vol. LXII, p. 269)

The attitude elicits the life of even one individual which yet tells us something about individuals, about life as a whole, about the history and culture of the larger society in which they live, while history itself appears from the inside out, through individual lives.

Tolstoy is a supremely visual writer, with an almost extravagantly absorbent eye. He stares things and people in the face to see what is there and describes them in a way which, at times, makes them fairly

sing with life. But he does not describe them from outside, as disparate entities. He shows their interior movements, even the interior movement of human bodies. The characters are vitally involved in their surroundings, but the significance of the surroundings is felt through the inner experience of the characters themselves. They are inward looking and outward looking at one and the same time. Thus the whole burden of *A Landowner's Morning* derives from the imaginative link – a virtual identity – between Nekhlyudov's 'subjective' moral search and moral anguish and the 'objective' state of affairs, the insuperable contradictions of social life which he encounters and which direct his condition. On a different level, in *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy shows the close interaction between Anna's interior state and the external circumstances after her first meeting with Vronsky. All her as yet submerged feelings (during the train journey from Moscow to St Petersburg), are fused with the environment, the stifling heat, the rumbling noise in the laden semi-darkness of the train carriage, speeding through the snowy night, to bring her near and yet to separate her from her husband and child.

Chukovsky wrote, in an early essay when Tolstoy was still alive, that 'in order to portray man, Tolstoy portrays the world in which man lives. . . , and this world is made so real and true to life that the reader involuntarily looks at it through the eyes of the character from whose point of view it is depicted'.⁷ Indeed Tolstoy projects the most astonishingly relevant, psychologically right individual equivalents to social and historical events and situations. His imaginative works – whether the epic *War and Peace* or many of the less capacious novels and stories – do not merely provide a historical and social background with which fiction is often supplied, relating the work to its context as a building is related to its scaffolding, or a piece of furniture to its setting, and requiring some trailing edges of social analysis. This applies in some degree to Turgenev and perhaps accounts for the fact that he is a lesser writer: social facts and attitudes tend to be presented in an externally attached, conversational form, and their development is the obtrusive service of fiction, rather than its bone-structure, as in Tolstoy. Tolstoy's novels are total multi-dimensional structures or, as B. Eykhenbaum calls them, 'systems of moving concentric circles' in which 'essentially the difference between the historical and non-historical subjects disappears'.⁸ One can chronicle history, fictionally or otherwise, or one can personalise and interiorise history, biographically or otherwise. Tolstoy does both, or neither, for, according to his well-known statement about *War and Peace*, it 'does not fit into the form of either a novel, or epic, or story'. What – imaginatively speaking, that is, not just as a narrative – would *War and Peace* have been without Austerlitz and

Borodino, without the fire of Moscow, without Kutuzov's headquarters and Denisov's partisans, without the retreat of the *Grande Armée*, chronicled by Tolstoy with epic genius? But also, what significance would they and the personal destiny of a Pierre Bezukhov or an Andrey Bolkonsky have had, even in their necessary isolation as individuals, alone with their intention and its consequences, without the deep involvement of the characters in, and indeed their subsumption by, the events?

This conception has important implications for Tolstoy's view of history and society. In the drafts for the epilogue to *War and Peace* he insists that 'psychology can no longer be an examination of... human attributes, but must be an examination of attributes in which man's psychic activity coincides with eternal laws' (*J.E.*, vol. xv, p. 232). From the context it is apparent that by 'eternal laws' is meant 'laws of historical movement' (Pierre Bezukhov says: 'everything changes and moves and that movement is God'). 'People are like rivers', Tolstoy continues in the quoted draft, '— the water is the same in all of them'; its flow is that 'eternal law' whereby man's inner activity 'corresponds with the flow of life', embracing nature, history and society. This differs clearly from the whole tenor of Dostoyevsky, who is all tumult and disruption, is without nature, is uninterested in landscape, is ignorant of peasant life (which makes nonsense of his mystical exaltation of the Russian people). Tolstoy's flow of life is the 'natural, 'general (*obshchaya*) life', 'the history of all, without exception *all* people...linked together, who participate in the event' (*J.E.*, vol. xv, pp. 237, 279).

The language is typically Tolstoy's: 'flow', 'general life', 'link', 'swarm', 'correspondence', etc., all of which heighten the sense of wholeness. Although, with his fictional characters, he often achieves an extraordinarily real, individual psychosomatic presence, to say nothing of his own stunning egotism and pride, there is, strictly, no place for an 'I' or 'self' in his universe of discourse. Even to be free is presumptuous: we are free at the expense of others, while the notion of free will is the illusion we have of the way our minds work, because we are not conscious of the forces causing us to work that way. The will is hateful, whether it succeeds or fails. It seems a lie or a distortion to say 'I think', 'I live'. It should be 'it thinks', 'it lives' — impersonal utterances, bodies that speak with more than tongues. The force that shapes every limb, movement and gesture as well as more creative acts is the 'river of life' which absorbs everything and makes all individual differences, conscious and unconscious, appear irrelevant.⁹

This presupposes a kind of ahistorical or pre-historical idea of history — a history in which time and events, let alone the godly

deeds or ungodly misdeeds of prestigious persons, cannot or should not be exceptional, decisive, epoch-making. Indeed, they are if anything disruptive of human lives and reveal the coming of a grinding, self-aggrandising and violently combative age. The idea induces a special insight into the happy yet aching timelessness of childhood which Tolstoy possessed to a remarkable degree, and to the significance of which Chernyshevsky was the first to draw attention – a universe compounded of innocence and grief, of familiarity with the unknown, of unspoiled animal curiosity and the sense that the world has begun again every morning. Tolstoy did not lose this even in his later writings. But it turns history into a seamless web, with no real discontinuities, into a changeless passing of life, chaotic, liable to uncontrollable causality, whose events lose their boundaries in the flow of interlocking happenings (unlike Dostoyevsky's sense of time, which is a sense of bursting, disrupted instants and which made Tolstoy say that there was 'something Jewish about him'). It spells a world of undifferentiated, pre-civilised, apolitical existence in conspiracy with the infinite. It reflects, and stands for, a society essentially one, whatever its mutations, preserving, or designed to preserve, a natural connection with continuing life, in a community still accepted and enjoyed. Hence the atavistic philosophy, the retreat into the collective mind of the peasant. Hence the message in *War and Peace*, partial but insistent, that the Russian family was the saviour of Europe in 1812 and saw off Napoleon and his French system by being so magnificently unlike them. Hence the invocation of the instinctive, uncorrupted wisdom of natural man, of the holy fools and the 100 million Karatayevs supposedly inhabiting Russia. Hence the hostility to the state – not only the modern state, but the state as it has been understood by urban man from the beginning of civilisation. *Remota justitia, quid sunt regna nisi magna latrocinia?* Hence, too, the cultural nihilism, with its evocation of rising towers, palaces, temples, dwellings whose every beam was being gnawed to dust even as it was laid, and whose floors were eaten under the feet.

In point of fact, Tolstoy's vision was the vision of a lost paradise, of a wholeness and an organic age that was already falling apart into fragments. It turned into a myth for a man deeply uneasy in a changing world, and providing a last resort from it. Russian society was on the point of disintegration, and the very sense of wholeness at breaking point revealed to Tolstoy the whole contradictory panorama of Russia, crystallising the links and the disruptions. It permitted him to experience all the more intensely the nature of the disruptive forces at work in society, to stand at the point where they were felt most deeply. He endured and embodied in his life and in the life of his imaginative characters the burden of his age in the

very act of rejecting it and striking protesting moral postures, so that its weaknesses came through him as well as its strength.

When one has lived long enough [Tolstoy wrote in 1892] as I have lived 45 years of conscious life, one begins to understand how false, impossible it is to accommodate oneself. . . to the circumstances of life. There is nothing stable [in it]. One might just as well accommodate oneself to a flood of water. All persons, families, societies – everything changes, melts away and is reshaped like clouds. And before one has time to get used to one condition of society it is no more and has passed into another one.

(*J.E.*, vol. LI, p. 68)

Eykhenbaum, who quotes this entry in Tolstoy's *Diary*, observes that it was

the fruit of a great historical experience, accumulated by a man who began his 'conscious life' in the forties, who keenly and actively lived through the fifties, who, with difficulty, tried 'to get used' to the conditions of society in the sixties, who, with even greater difficulty, measured himself and his behaviour on all the things that were happening in the seventies, who, again, marked out his behaviour in the eighties and who, having entered the nineties, once more came to realize that everything was moving away through his life.¹⁰

The changes were not, and did not result in, mere changes of views. They undoubtedly had something to do with the traumatic 'crises' recorded by Tolstoy in his *Confession* and elsewhere, although they have nothing to do with the dissection of Tolstoy, habitually performed by literary historians, into imaginary two, three or four Tolstoys – the artist, the moralist, the husband, the lover or whatever. His inner conflicts were real enough and they provide much of the tragedy or sardonic comedy of his life. But they are inseparable from his awareness of the changing facts of life as he found it. Even the conflict of good and evil within himself, even the experience of death, the final remover of shams and pretences, were responses to the conflicts of the world in which he lived. One cannot avoid the impression that even such an eminently introspective account of a spiritual pilgrimage as Tolstoy's *Confession* is in a sense a testimony of a mighty relation between death and God struggling to evolve itself from the conflicts in the world in which Tolstoy lived. In the end, his most hidden experience involved him in the predicament of modern society on which the gates of Eden had closed.

Gor'ky put it more ironically: 'Almost the whole of Tolstoy's creative work', he writes, 'can be reduced to one theme: to find for Prince Nekhlyudov a place on earth, a good place, from which the life of the whole world appears to him like harmony, and he himself the world's most perfect and greatest human being'.¹¹ Indeed,

Nekhlyudovs abound, with their searching, their perplexity, their affliction and protestation: Nekhlyudov sickened by the shiny brutality and squalor of Western civilisation (*Lucerne*), Nekhlyudov baffled and defeated by the rift between the master and the serf (*Landowner's Morning*), Nekhlyudov contemplating suicide from moral anguish (*Notes of a Billiard-Marker*), Nekhlyudov resurrected and improved and yet perhaps all the worse for being better (*Resurrection*). Condemned and condemning, they are all imbued with a sense of the dislocation of life.

There was no longer any harmony, no transfigured world, rich, varied, exuberant, with plenty of divine goodness, energy and pantheistic contentment. 'Everything was in disarray in the Oblonsky household.' By the time *Anna Karenina* was written (in the mid-1870s) everything was in disarray in Russia, too. It is significant perhaps that the novel is much more of a jigsaw of art, social and economic relations, town and country politics, science, philosophy, religion, to say nothing of the ambiguity of the author's attitude to Anna herself and the effect on the narrative of his views and still more his feelings about sex, than is conveyed by the 'naturalness' of *War and Peace*. Much of what looks natural in *Anna Karenina* conceals Tolstoy's disquiet about how to 'untie the knots of life', as he puts it himself. Russia's society of landlords and peasants, usurers and beggars, rippling away over the grave course of time was breaking up, and by 1905 had cracked from top to bottom.

Tolstoy's arguments for innocence, when he did argue for it, did not derive from ignorance or inexperience. He was too truthful and unromantic to sentimentalise in the Slavophil, or indeed in the *narodnik* fashion: the peasants were grudging, hard to work, 'smelly'. Nor was there any reason to rhapsodise about the aristocracy: he knew that it was ridden with conventions, parasitic, clinging to its privileges and cut off from real life. Still, the haphazard coalition of a more or less well-provided peasantry with sympathetic landowners – the high-minded beneficent gentry, the Levins, rather than the great nobility – was for a time an essential part of Tolstoy's spiritual and aesthetic experience of society. And this was now impotently ranged against the force of bigger proprietorial interests, the various merchants, bankers, rail-road potentates, textile lords and capital accumulators of the age of emergent capitalism. It was an ominous and vulgar insurgency worse than the authoritarianism of Tolstoy's dreadful statesmen and the worship of utility by his gruff men of action.

Yet Tolstoy was too exposed to the body and pressure of time to merely turn his back on the horror and contentedly close his eyes by accepting the simple pastoral of life, as if nothing had happened. The

sight of dissolution seemed to promote a new sense of direction, or at any rate deepened and exacerbated the sense of justice and injustice. His diary entries and letters from the early 1890s or even earlier (for instance in *What then Must We Do?*) are filled with revulsion against privilege and thoughts about the unavoidable 'crisis' (*razvyazka*). This enhanced Tolstoy's obsession with the falsehood and corruption of society, the need for extreme moral choices, and the idealisation of anarchy. One had no right to live except in stringent opposition, however 'non-resistant', outside and inside time. And Tolstoy took to 'politics' to defend an unpolitical existence, or, as he put it to one of his American correspondents, to seek to do what Christ did:

'I came to bring down fire on earth, and how I wish it were already kindled.' I want to add that the time may already have come, that the world is on fire and our business is only to be kindled by it, too, and if possible to fuse this with all the other burning points. This I intend to do for the rest of my life. (J.E., vol. LXIV, p. 273)

No other imaginative writer in Russian or in world literature found himself so poignantly and all-embracingly committed to spread fire by indicting his society, beginning as early as 1855, with the 'Project for a Reform of the Army' – Tolstoy's first and fairly tame 'I cannot be silent' – to the last and most maledictory *I Cannot Be Silent* in the repressive aftermath of the abortive 1905 revolution. During this half century, and especially after the so-called crisis, with the growth of his sense of approaching catastrophe, he made some thirty major social and political statements. They are instilled with a belief – perhaps the highest as well as most difficult kind of belief – in the impossible: that drastic self-improvement will remove evil from the world. The very 'impossibility' of the belief seemed to make sense of it: a protest so mad, that it drew attention to the madness of the society he lived in. The religious and moral teaching, which reflected Tolstoy's colossal but somewhat immobile mind and in which he came near to performing ventriloquial turns with God, was based on the injunction of being good to one's fellowmen, of half-resigned, half-rebellious, non-resistant anarchy and self-deprivation. At times he assumed that people will undergo conversion by abstaining from sex, tobacco and meat, by 'eating rice-cutlets', although there was of course nothing dim, starchy or spinsterish about Tolstoy, even when he enjoined the path of renunciation. But the assumption could not withstand even Nekhlyudov's moral shock when he sees Maslova in the dock, a condemned prostitute and the woman he has seduced, whose recalcitrance, anger and refusal to repent evokes greater assent than the whole process of his moral

reformation. He comes to react to charity-mongers with as much indignation as Tolstoy himself. He sees them as ostriches who put their head in the sand of benevolence because they cannot forgive people their suffering – ‘parasites intent on feeding the plant whose juice nourishes them’, as Tolstoy said (*J.E.*, vol. xxix, p. 104; see also Nekhlyudov’s own words to this effect, vol. lxvi, p. 183). But at least Tolstoy was always on the side of the poor, even when trying to devise, in his earlier career, a cloud-cuckoo feudal paternalism. The poor had become invisible to the rich. Tolstoy, who was a wealthy landowner, wanted eventually everybody, including himself, to be poor and even the poor to be poorer, which seemed unnecessary since the government was successful in achieving this. No doubt, his call ‘Blessed are the poor’ proved an exile’s, a rich but deeply stricken exile’s, call.

Tolstoy’s politics were, just as to a great extent his philosophy was, rural politics (however radical or socialist) and rural philosophy. He rejected revolutionary violence, just as he rejected the idea that an economic cause was at the root of all problems. A backward, rural country, it would seem, needs no revolution. A backward country had not yet developed those internal strains which make it a social volcano. And yet, ironically, such a development is precisely what Tolstoy became increasingly certain of with a mixture of mounting anxiety and eager expectation, ‘simply’ because, as Korolenko puts it, he had a ‘remarkable propensity to be moved by the mood of the people’. ‘Revolution must come’, Tolstoy wrote in his diary in 1881. ‘It is surprising that it has not yet come’ (*J.E.*, vol. xlix, p. 50). His article *Inescapable Upheaval* was preceded by a number of diary entries in the spring of 1909, reflecting his mood before, during and, significantly, even after the revolution of 1905: ‘Revolution – inevitable, necessary, general [*vseobshchaya*]. Need of a revolutionary consciousness. Inevitable revolution in consciousness. The revolution is inevitable’, and so on.

The notions of ‘inevitability’, ‘inescapability’, ‘necessity’, recur more and more frequently in this context, curiously echoing Tolstoy’s more reflective positions known from *War and Peace*, against a wholly different historical background. It is a well-known truism that at any given moment the future seems inscrutable, while the past as it recedes acquires an air of inevitability. There are some who say that inevitability is just a trick which historians perform with mirrors, for historians are always ready after some upheaval to explain that it was moulded by profound causes long in the making. But when every allowance has been made for Cleopatra’s nose and other contingencies, Tolstoy for one, though no longer concerned with expounding a philosophy of history, was sure that no real

changes could happen by accident. Nor did he think they happened by conscious design. It required his deep if perplexed involvement in the fate of his country, and his genius for distinguishing between what is real and what is spurious, to detect the deeper currents which were gathering in the past and present, but were already breaking the surface and making themselves obvious.

One of the last entries of the diary reads: 'What the revolution has done among our Russian people is that they suddenly saw the injustice of their position. It's the tale of the emperor's new clothes. The child saw the real thing – that the emperor was naked – that is the revolution' (*J.E.*, vol. LVIII, p. 24). Karatayev (or perhaps it was really Tikhon Shcherbatyy) had risen in revolt and thereby forced open the whitened sepulchre of the Russian body politic. Tolstoy could not but 'carry in all this revolution' as he wrote to Stasov in 1905, 'the title of a loyally and willingly accepting advocate of a 100-million strong peasant people. I rejoice in everything that contributes to their well-being, and do not rejoice in anything that has not this as its aim, or diverts from it' (*J.E.*, vol. LXXVI, p. 45). The very least that could be said is that revolution was hunger become articulate. 'The violence of revolutionaries and of the government', he declared, 'is not the same thing. The one is conscious, the other is unconscious' (*J.E.*, vol. LVI, p. 307). Tolstoy may even have concluded – as can be seen from his correspondence with the English historian of the working class Allen Clarke – that the hateful proletarian townsman spreading revolutionary destruction was, in his searing misery, right in the end and that not all eternal verities were simple, nor all temporal ones complex.

It is these attitudes which bear out Lenin's various assessments of Tolstoy.

The originality of Tolstoy's critique, and its historical significance [Lenin says] consists in that it expresses, with a power which is proper only to an artist of genius, the break-up in the outlook of the widest popular masses of contemporary Russia, more particularly of rural, peasant Russia... Tolstoy reflects their mood so truthfully that he imports into his teaching their naiveté, their estrangement from politics, their mysticism, their desire to withdraw, their 'non-resistance to evil', their impotent damnation of capitalism and of the 'power of money'... The teaching assimilates the protest of the peasants and their despair.¹²

The contradictions of the teaching emerge as a feature of the prevailing social conditions, and the social conditions as among the keys to the understanding of the teaching: Tolstoy – the dangerous and endangered representative of the very society which he so uncompromisingly challenged.

The ultimate, the most commendable remedy was still revolution from within, revolution of a conscience unshakable and ready for any sacrifice. But all the evidence supports Korolenko's impression: 'It seemed', he says in his account of three meetings he had with Tolstoy, 'that Tolstoy was ready once again to question and abandon all that he had found and propagated – the anarchism, the non-resistance to evil. . . On being told that the peasants were robbing the landowners, he exclaimed "Good for them! The *muzhik* always starts with what is most important"'.¹³ 'If murder is permitted in war', Tolstoy declared in his address for the Stockholm Peace Conference in 1909 (which was cancelled largely for fear of allowing Tolstoy to make his public challenge), 'then it must be all the more permissible for the people who seek to attain their right in revolution' (*Ź.E.*, vol. xxxviii, p. 122). 'I was in error', he confessed, 'that love does its own work' (*Ź.E.*, vol. lvii, p. 200). The assumption or the precept of warm affection between the upper classes and the peasants and workers proved finished and written off. 'You are mistaken if you think you can shame or move or convince the rich to share their wealth with you', Tolstoy appealed to the people (*Ź.E.*, vol. liii, p. 135; also p. 200). 'Those who oppress cannot, even if they wished to do so, stop oppressing' (*Ź.E.*, vol. xxviii, p. 94).

The villains, indeed the enemies, were no longer individuals of the other side but the whole hierarchy of the social order, everything that made it what it was – the tsarist regime, the organisation of landlordism, the capitalist system, all human superiority based on wealth, birth and race, and not least the camouflaged superstructure of religion whose perversions it was no longer possible to penetrate to reach the truth. *Carthago delenda est* is the title of an essay which Tolstoy wrote in 1889. The evident shift in Tolstoy's attitude away from the illusion that a change in individual behaviour would be enough to overcome injustices rooted in the nature of the social and political order made Suvorin, the editor of the leading conservative paper *Novoye vremya*, avow (in his diary) that 'we have two tsars. Nicholas II and Lev Tolstoy. Who is more powerful? Nicholas II can do nothing with Tolstoy, cannot shake his throne, whereas Tolstoy without any doubt is shaking the throne of Nicholas and his dynasty. The government curses him. The Synod issues its anathema. Tolstoy replies, the reply is banned but spreads secretly in manuscripts and foreign editions. Try to touch Tolstoy! There will be an outcry in the whole world, and our administration puts its tail between its legs.'¹⁴

But Tolstoy made no important distinction between the tsarist 'administration' and the governments of Western Europe and America – Genghis Khans with telegraphic wires, he described them,

using a phrase of Herzen. Naturally, this offended Western commentators, who resented Tolstoy's unwillingness to draw any inferences from the fact that his oppositional writings could be published in America, England and France, but not in Russia, except clandestinely. But for Tolstoy there was indeed not much to choose between the iniquities of tsardom and the enslavement of man in Western capitalist society, the readiness to skin one's enemies alive, the lie in the soul of *laissez-faire* democracy, and all the other things which, in his view, both systems shared by turning the disinherited and unprivileged into a semblance of broken puppets. It is not surprising therefore that even in the West Tolstoy was regarded as a source of subversion (the United States president Theodore Roosevelt, protesting against Tolstoy's interference in America's internal affairs, is a case in point), even while using him as an effective stick to beat Russia with.

Few men's politics remain the same between the ages of twenty-five and eighty, and most of them, as they drift towards the grave, also drift into reactionary conservatism. With Tolstoy the reverse happened, in direct proportion to his growing awareness of the body and pressure of time. No man had a greater share in revolutionising Russia than this pacifist aristocrat in peasant garb, with the exception of Lenin, who saw Tolstoy, in the sense suggested here as the 'mirror of the Russian revolution'. He may be more than that – the *prodromos* of world revolution.

NOTES

1. M. Gorky, *Sobraniye sochineniy* (30 vols., Moscow, 1951), vol. XIV, p. 286.
2. Curiously enough, the first part of this statement repeats the words said by Napoleon (in Egypt) whom Tolstoy had unseated in *War and Peace*: 'Kutuzov never talked of 40 centuries watching from the pyramids' (*J.E.*, vol. XII, p. 183).
3. 'The idea of God is not God', Tolstoy stated. Divine truth was more likely to be found 'among unbelievers. . . , but never among the so-called believers of our class' (*J.E.*, vol. XXXIII, pp. 447ff). God can be, and, according to Tolstoy, who most of his life 'desired' him, often appeared to be, an idol. And the name of every idol is Moloch.
4. The only other Russian writer who approximated to Tolstoy in the unmasking of accepted falsehoods was Herzen. 'Contemporary morality', he writes, 'has no influence at all on our actions: it is charming deception, a moral propriety, a veil, no more. Every person conceals behind his official morality a hidden *esprit de conduite*. . . Perpetual lying, perpetual duplicity. We lie in words, we lie in move-

- ments, we lie from civility, we lie from virtue and from vice. Naturally, such lying contributes to corruption, to moral impotence in which whole generations are born and die, passing through the world in a kind of daze, in a mist... We recognize a wellbred person by his inability to say with candour what he thinks.' A. I. Herzen, *Sobraniye sochineniy* (30 vols., Moscow, 1954), vol. 11, pp. 76ff. Tolstoy's own conclusion early in life was that 'sincerity was the only possible good, both in good things and in bad' (*J.E.*, vol. 11, p. 425).
5. It should be said that this does not convey Tolstoy's later view, in which 'art' gives way to 'morality' and in which artistic criteria are disallowed whenever wrong moral choices have been made. But it may be merely a matter of emphasis, for both before and after the 'crisis' he considered the function of art to be the discovery of truth, which resumes the data of variegated experience. Morality itself becomes a kind of art, and art a kind of morality. Hence the extraordinary moral as well as artistic genius of Tolstoy.
 6. See his correspondence with Botkin and Nekrasov in 1858, but also his almost simultaneous speech on becoming a member of the Moscow Society of Lovers of Russian Literature. *Sebastopol in May*, written in 1854, shows the balance between a detached factual and psychological analysis of events and characters on the one hand and, on the other, explicit social and political criticism, directed against the prevailing atmosphere of deception and self-deception, and the falsehood of the reigning political ideology. Tolstoy's comment on the story was that its 'hero... is truth' (*J.E.*, vol. 14, p. 59). The approach implies, to use literary jargon, a 'mimetic' notion of realism: the realist 'matches' rather than 'makes', invents. He enlivens, deepens, extends the description of the world with its evaluation. He makes moral and social values artistically self-evident.
 7. K. I. Chukovsky, *Tolstoy kak khudozhestvennyy geniy*, quoted by E. N. Kupreyanova, *Estetika L. N. Tolstogo* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1966), p. 181.
 8. *Lev Tolstoy, Semidesyatytye gody* (Leningrad, 1974), p. 111.
 9. This may account for the relative 'fluidity' of some of Tolstoy's principal characters, as distinct from the secondary ones. Andrey Bolkonsky is shadowy by comparison with the old prince, let alone with a Khlestakov or Oblomov. Vronsky is hazy beside Stiva Oblonsky. This is not so with Anna Karenina because, if for no other reason, Tolstoy was in love with her. But Levin turns towards the end of the novel almost into an emblem. Yet Hamlet, too, is not exactly a tangible figure in the sense in which Falstaff is. Tolstoy was amazed at Hamlet's lack of distinct character. He did not suspect that he might have been uniquely following in the wake of Shakespeare, whom he assailed with such relentless antipathy. Tolstoy's later stories, tales and parables, with their array of moral and religious preoccupations, have of course no characters at all. But this is a matter of a different genre of writing, although not altogether unconnected with his basic aesthetic assumptions.

10. B. Eykhenbaum, *O proze. Sbornik statey* (Moscow, 1969), p. 27.
11. *Istoriya russkoy literatury* (Moscow, 1939), p. 294.
12. *V. I. Lenin o L. N. Tolstom* (Moscow, 1969), pp. 36ff.
13. V. G. Korolenko, *Sobraniye sochineniy* (10 vols., Moscow, 1956), vol. VIII, p. 139. See also the testimony to similar effect, with special reference to revolution, by such close friends of Tolstoy as Makovitsky, Abrikosov, Stasov and, with unconcealed horror, even Sofiya Andreyevna, who believed that her position in the Russian landed gentry was ordained by God. See *Dnevniky S. A. Tolstoy. 1897-1909* (Moscow, 1932), p. 242. When, subsequent to the 1905 revolution, the tsarist government started doing away with the village commune and introducing private ownership of communal lands, Tolstoy declared: 'The vast majority of the peasants attaches no significance whatever to all the puny government measures in regard to any changes in the laws about landownership, because it [the peasantry] knows that there is only one solution of the land problem: the complete abolition of the right to own land privately, that is, of slavery. In the knowledge of this it marks its time, which must come and will come sooner or later' (*J.E.*, vol. XXXVIII, p. 30).
14. Quoted by K. Lomunov, *Lev Tolstoy v sovremennom mire* (Moscow, 1975), p. 46.

Tolstoy and religion

E. B. GREENWOOD

I

The subject of Tolstoy and religion is a vast one, and I should like to say at the outset what aspects of it I propose to ignore and what aspects of it I propose to deal with, and how I intend to organise my discussion. I shall not discuss at length G. W. Spence's often acute criticism, as expressed in his book *Tolstoy the Ascetic*, that Tolstoy's thought in this area is too confused. I think Spence sometimes allows his hostility to what he calls 'dualism' to get in the way of doing justice to the complexities of Tolstoy's religious views as a whole, though he deals well with the unsatisfactoriness of a particular essay such as 'On Life'. I shall not attempt either to wrestle with the difficulties of Tolstoy's religious ideas about sexual morality. This topic would need a whole essay to itself, and in this matter I think Tolstoy is even more vulnerable to the criticisms Spence offers. Nor shall I be able to deal at length with the complex question of whether Tolstoy's attack on dogmatic theology is really, as W. M. Urban has argued,¹ an undermining of religion itself. What then will this essay cover?

In this first section I shall take issue with those who argue that Tolstoy is too narrowly rationalistic to be taken seriously as a religious thinker of any depth, notably Father Georges Florovsky and Lev Shestov. In the second section I shall bring further evidence to rebut the charge that Tolstoy was a shallow Enlightenment rationalist, by discussing the nature of Rousseau's immense influence on him and bringing out that what appealed to him particularly was the anti-Enlightenment strain in Rousseau's concern with the importance of religion. I shall also show that Rousseau's thought enabled Tolstoy to overcome the undermining of religious and ethical commitments, implied by the Hegelian sense that all such commitments are historically conditioned – the so-called 'historical view' which many now term 'historicism'. The third section will investigate religious themes as they are dramatised in *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* and bring out the continuities between the fiction and the later Tolstoy's

discursive works. The fourth section will corroborate this continuity, by arguing that Tolstoy's wish for dramatic effect in *A Confession* made him give a misleading account of himself as an uncritical follower of 'the religion of progress' in his youth when, in fact, he had been highly critical of that very 'religion'. In the fifth section I shall discuss Tolstoy's brave and, in some respects, unique attempt to de-historicise the *Gospels* and so get at what he saw as Jesus's eternal message for every age. This attempt now has a fresh timeliness, with the renewal in the last decade of the quest for the historical Jesus and the appearance of the collection of essays entitled *The Myth of God Incarnate*.² The sixth and last section of the essay will discuss Tolstoy's doctrine of non-resistance. This doctrine still seems to me to offer a living challenge in a way much of his explicit teaching about sexual morality (*pace* Malcolm Muggeridge) does not. I shall include in this section a brief critique of R. V. Sampson's brand of 'Tolstoyanism' in his book *Tolstoy: The Discovery of Peace*.

Let us begin then with the crucial question of whether Tolstoy's work has any religious significance at all. One of the strongest attacks on Tolstoy's claim to any status whatsoever as *homo religiosus* is made by the Orthodox theologian Father Georges Florovsky in his essay 'Three Masters: The Quest for Religion in Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature'.³ He quotes 'a startling statement' by D. N. Ovsyaniko-Kulikovsky that Tolstoy was not a religious man, had no gift for religion and taught 'not a religion of soul, but a religion of syllogisms'. His vision and experience were marked by 'the total absence of *transcensus*'. The rest of Father Florovsky's essay strongly endorses these judgements. Stressing the Enlightenment and Kantian strand of religion within the bounds of reason alone (which I shall show is not the only one in the complex pattern of Tolstoy's thought about these matters), Father Florovsky concludes that Tolstoy was naively confident in the infallibility of reason and as sympathetic to Stoicism as to Christianity. He links Tolstoy's defective approach to Christianity with his radical 'anti-historicism'. Father Florovsky argues that Christianity involves historicism in that the Christian is committed to the notion of great historical events having some kind of 'Providential' meaning. Tolstoy is, for him, not Christian, because he restricts the possibility of such meaning 'to the private lives of men and women'. But it should be evident that what is to be considered Christian here is an open and contentious question. Virgil, for example, had a strong sense of the Providential pattern of history as endorsing the destiny of Rome, so having such a 'historicist' sense of Providence is certainly not a sufficient condition for being a Christian. Whether it is a necessary condition is also doubtful. Certainly the notions of acting justly, loving one's neigh-

bour and walking humbly with God would seem more likely candidates. Whether walking humbly with God is compatible with claiming that one knows the pattern He has laid down for history is a nice question, as so many Christians, including Tolstoy himself in certain moods, have made that claim. Anyhow, Father Florovsky writes that 'It is because of his radical "antihistoricism" that Tolstoy was unable to understand Christianity: Christianity is essentially a historic religion.'

Father Florovsky also sees Tolstoy as rejecting any Christian metaphysics and, while conceding Tolstoy's respect for Kant, even says that Tolstoy finds all philosophy 'just nonsense and illusion'. But how could Tolstoy think this and respect Kant? By 'Christian metaphysics' Father Florovsky must mean Orthodox theology. He himself would, no doubt, reject Kant who criticised much theological metaphysics as illusion. Kant also thought (like Rousseau and Tolstoy himself and, for that matter, Pascal) that religion must be 'natural', in the peculiar sense that it must be apprehensible without the need for specialist intellectual knowledge. There has always been a tension within Christianity between what Pascal called the God of the philosophers and 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of the Christians. . . a God who fills the heart and soul of those whom he possesses'.⁴ In rejecting any Christian metaphysics it could well be that Tolstoy, like Pascal, was rejecting the God of the philosophers, accessible only to those with dialectic skill, for the God of the scriptures, accessible to all men.

Finally Father Florovsky accuses Tolstoy of all people, Tolstoy the propounder of non-resistance, of reducing ethics to practical prudence. But many Christians interpret conditionally and prudentially the passage in the Sermon on the Mount about turning the other cheek and giving up one's cloak. Tolstoy on the other hand, takes Jesus's words literally and unconditionally and, with a sublime unreasonableness which even Lev Shestov recognised as more irrational than a belief in physical miracles, urges us to follow them.

I say 'even Lev Shestov' because Father Florovsky is not the only distinguished writer on religious matters to have accused Tolstoy of being a shallow rationalist in matters of religion. Lev Shestov, the famous Jewish existentialist thinker, was another. According to Shestov, Tolstoy worships at the shrine of the good, and forgets that in *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* he rejected Sonya and Varenka because they were too humble and weak to affirm their own beings. For Shestov the real quality celebrated in the undercurrent of those mighty works, whatever their surface preoccupation with Pierre's benevolence and Levin's guilt, was vital egoism. He concedes the philosophical importance of *War and Peace* with its achievement

of 'spiritual equilibrium' regarding the questions of man's place and destiny in the world'.⁵ But he attacks the later Tolstoy's Christianity as follows: 'Even though he always refers to the gospel, there is very little that is Christian in his doctrine. If we wanted to compare his works with Scripture, we could only think of the Old Testament, of the prophets, whom he resembles in the character of his preaching and the strictness of his demands. He does not wish to persuade men but to intimidate them.'⁶ Shestov tells us that the Bible speaks of God as our 'Heavenly Father' and of faith, 'But it is nowhere said in these books that the good is God'.⁷ Tolstoy, according to him, replaces God by 'the good' and by 'fraternal love', and 'Such a faith does not really exclude absolute atheism, complete unbelief, and it leads inevitably to the desire to destroy. . .to crush others, in the name of a principle.'⁸ God, for Shestov, transcends the moral good by sending his rain upon the just and the unjust alike.

Yet however hard we try, we cannot prise away the idea of God in the Judaeo-Christian tradition (or, for that matter, the Platonic, as opposed to the Homeric, tradition) from the idea of the good. Even Shestov could not, for all his struggle against moralism. Indeed in his subsequent writings he came to a view of the later Tolstoy utterly at variance with the one just discussed. Shestov there starts from Dostoyevsky's proclamation of his faith in the physical miracles recounted in the *Gospels*. This proclamation of faith is bound up with Dostoyevsky's struggle against the rationalism of the Enlightenment which had promulgated the argument against miracles as a potent weapon in its anti-Christian armoury. Shestov takes the view that physical miracles as a suspension of what, according to Hume, Mill and the empiricists, are purely contingent laws of nature, would not, in themselves, be anything like as shocking as is commonly supposed. What then, according to Shestov, would be a real miracle? Why, the moral miracle of the adoption of the Tolstoyan doctrine of non-resistance, the core of Jesus's Sermon on the Mount.⁹ It turns out that Tolstoy was not a shallow Enlightenment rationalist remote from the spirit of Christianity after all, but one willing to err with Christ against all reason.

II

However, to understand Tolstoy's relationship to religion we must certainly begin with the French Enlightenment which, as Eykhenbaum, Poggioli and Berlin¹⁰ have stressed was crucial in his intellectual development. Of course some Enlightenment thinkers such as Voltaire and Hume were not atheists, but philosophical theists. What they were hostile to was Christianity with its authoritarian clericalism and its metaphysics and mysteries. Voltaire's influence on the educated members of the Russian aristocracy was immense. Old

Prince Bolkonsky in *War and Peace*, with his dry ironic wit, and his unconcealed contempt for his daughter Mary's religious preoccupations, is a good example of a fictional portrait of the type produced under that influence. He is a Deist who believes in good order and aristocracy and who has nothing but scorn for the religion of the heart that manifests itself in Mary.

The eighteenth-century thinker who most strongly influenced Tolstoy was, as is well known, Rousseau, one of the sources of that religion of the heart Tolstoy portrays in Princess Mary and, in many ways, holds himself. Perhaps the investigation of the nature of Rousseau's role in the development of Tolstoy's thought about religion can best be approached through some remarks in John Plamenatz's book *Ideology*. Plamenatz shows that the Enlightenment had asked a question which had not been asked since Antiquity, and perhaps not even then in the same 'sociological' form, namely 'how it comes about that men have religious beliefs'. Some gave the old Epicurean answer that such beliefs were the product of ignorance and fear. Some, like Montesquieu, whom Tolstoy read while at the university of Kazan, saw them as functioning to buttress social mores. But Rousseau's profound conception is outlined by Plamenatz as follows:

Religion does not only provide men with additional motives for behaving well, or bring them closer together in community of faith, or console them when they suffer; it also provides them with a conception of man's place in the world which makes life worth living. This conception, so Rousseau believed, was of a kind that the sciences, whose progress he did not deny, could not provide. He was not so much an enemy of the sciences as he sometimes pretended to be; he admitted that they destroy harmful prejudices and superstitions. Rousseau spoke of religion in such a way as to suggest that man's need of it goes deeper than his need of science. It is a need that does not grow weaker with the progress of the sciences, though that progress may make us less aware of it and less able to satisfy it. Hence the unhappiness of men whose pride in reason puts faith out of their reach.¹¹

Man is the only creature who is an object of thought to himself. He is aware of himself as a finite being in an infinite world most of which is indifferent, if not hostile, to his purposes. Pascal was one of the first to see that, far from being irrational in its origins, religion arises from needs 'rooted in man's capacity for reason'. Here Plamenatz sees a kinship between Pascal (whom Tolstoy also deeply admired as a thinker) and Rousseau.

Rousseau and the Enlightenment inherited from Descartes a moral psychology which split the understanding and the will. If men followed their understanding alone it would be constrained by things

in themselves as they really are. But the understanding is distorted by the will, with its pride, ambition and anxiety. Rousseau, in particular, emphasised that man is the being who is conscious of himself and so capable of forming an image of himself as he thinks others see him. This gives rise to *amour propre* which in turn gives rise to a fear of what 'society' will say, which prevents the understanding from delivering the truth. Even the fondness for metaphysical subtleties arises out of men's wish to shine before their fellows.¹² Only man can be shamed not merely by a thought, but by a thought of a thought,¹³ namely the thought of his image (perhaps in fact a non-existent one) in the eyes of others. This whole notion was to have a profound influence on the young Tolstoy's concern with the phenomenon of shyness in his diary and in *Childhood, Boyhood and Youth*, and on his ever more subtle preoccupation with the phenomenon of self-deception.¹⁴

Another aspect of Rousseau's thought which deeply influenced Tolstoy was its 'immanentism', its concern with the solution of problems as they present themselves in *this* world, and its rejection of the 'spirit world' of traditional Christian metaphysics. In the 1880s during the period of his religious crisis, Tolstoy wrote in an unpublished fragment: 'We only know life in this world and this is because if there is a meaning in our life, then it is here in this world.'¹⁵ The guidance for the solution of the moral and religious problems that present themselves in this world is found by looking within. Rousseau showed in the sixth of the *Lettres morales* and elsewhere that we must look into ourselves not in order to become more subjective, but, as Ronald Grimsley puts it, in order to escape 'the pride and deceit'¹⁶ which are the very things that lead to subjective system building. By doing so we can also, in Grimsley's words, avoid mistaking 'the social and historical aspects of human nature for its permanent structure'.¹⁷ In short, a man can move from the historical and conditioned to the ahistorical and unconditioned by means of a moral effort of self-scrutiny. This is a crucially important notion. It deeply influenced Tolstoy and lay behind that forceful rejection of the 'historicist' mode of thinking derived from Hegel which will be discussed in part IV of this essay.

It is interesting, in this connection, that Tolstoy, like Rousseau, did not want to found a new religion in the way in which the nineteenth-century French thinkers studied by Professor D. G. Charlton¹⁸ attempted to. Tolstoy did not share, for example, the admiration of his friend, the critic Strakhov, for Renan's attempt to re-define a new religion for the times, a religion rooted in Renan's reverence for science. In fact he abominated Renan. Both the influence of Rousseau and the wish not to replace Christianity but to retain and

purify it, are caught in the following passage which Tolstoy wrote in his diary in March 1855:

Yesterday a conversation about Divinity and Faith suggested to me a great, a stupendous, idea to the realisation of which I feel capable of devoting my life. That idea is the founding of a new religion corresponding to the present development of mankind; the religion of Christ but purged of dogmas and mysticism – a practical religion, not promising future bliss but giving bliss on earth.¹⁹

Thus in *Sevastopol in May 1855* Tolstoy condemns the combatants not in the name of some entirely new religion of humanity and progress, but in the name of ‘the one great law of love and self-sacrifice’ which they profess as Christians, but disobey. All this is quite consistent with the post-crisis Tolstoy of *A Confession*, who dramatically exaggerated, as autobiographers of conversion are apt to do, the discontinuity between his earlier and later self. As late as November 1899 he made an entry in his diary which shows the persistence of the wish to preserve ‘the religion of Christ’ rather than to replace it:

There is neither a Tolstoyan sect nor a Tolstoyan teaching. There is only one unique teaching, that of truth – that universal and eternal teaching so perfectly expressed, for myself no less than for others, in the Gospels. This teaching calls man to recognise his sonship to God, and to realise, according to his understanding, both his freedom and his service, since in freeing himself from the influence of the world he enters the service of God and His will. And as soon as a man has understood this teaching, he enters into free communication with God and has nothing more to ask from anyone.²⁰

Between the young Tolstoy of the 1850s and the post-crisis Tolstoy of the 1880s and 1890s comes the Tolstoy who composed the two masterpieces *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*. The condemnation of war in the former is made on exactly the same Christian grounds as that in *Sevastopol in May*. In *Anna Karenina*, however (and here lies much of its unique power), Tolstoy portrays Levin with much more emphasis on the search for a ‘universal and eternal teaching’ than on the possession of one. The next section will explore Tolstoy’s oscillation between Homer and Jesus, Hebraism and Hellenism, a pride in this world and an opposing sense that the sources of true happiness, though experienced within it, somehow lie outside it, as seen in his two major novels. This oscillation arose to some degree from the ‘dualism’ deprecated in G. W. Spence’s *Tolstoy the Ascetic*. It may be that ‘dualism’ is essential, in some form, to anyone advocating a spiritual apperception of life, whether Platonist, Christian or Buddhist.

III

In *What is Art?* Tolstoy claims that the great authors have always appraised the feelings of the characters they present according to the religious perception of their time. Tolstoy thus sees every major writer as Dr Leavis sees Wordsworth, namely as 'working at a level and in a spirit that it seems appropriate to call religious'.²¹ Homer, for example, held a religious conception in which the interests and powers of the gods reduplicated those of men. Now much as Tolstoy responded to the imaginative powers of Homer he could no longer endorse such a view, not just in his late post-crisis phase, but as early as 1857 when he wrote in his diary: 'Finished reading the incredibly delightful conclusion of the *Iliad*. . . After the *Iliad* read the Gospels, which I have not done for a long time. How could Homer not know that goodness is love! It was a revelation.'²² Nietzsche, in this as in so much else the antithesis of Tolstoy, took the Homeric, as opposed to the Christian, view. In *The Birth of Tragedy* he made the striking remark: 'The gods justified human life by living it themselves – the only satisfactory theodicy ever invented.'²³ Yet, as Nietzsche himself recognised in *The Genealogy of Morals*, it was not so much that the Homeric gods *lived* warfare, as that they enjoyed watching men at war: 'What, in the last analysis, was the meaning of the Trojan War and similar tragic atrocities? There can be no doubt that they were intended as festivals for the gods, and insofar as poets in this respect are more "divine" than other men as festivals for the poets.'²⁴ This 'As flies to wanton boys are we to th' gods – They kill us for their sport' attitude would have been unacceptable to a pagan and materialist such as Lucretius, whom indeed Nietzsche sometimes stigmatised as a tender-hearted anticipator of Christianity in this respect.²⁵ To the Christian and anti-materialist Tolstoy, who went out of his way to attack the Greek identification of the aesthetically impressive with the good, it would have been out of the question. He recognised the Homeric and 'poetic' side of war, but in *War and Peace* (III.ii.39) he comes forward to condemn it from a Christian standpoint identical with that in *Sevastopol in May*.

Over the whole field, previously so gaily beautiful with the glitter of bayonets and cloudlets of smoke in the morning sun, there now spread a mist of damp and smoke and a strange acid smell of saltpetre and blood. Clouds gathered, and drops of rain began to fall on the dead and wounded, on the frightened, exhausted and hesitating men, as if to say: 'Enough, men! Enough! Cease. . . bethink yourselves! What are you doing?'

Yet having in the previous chapter stigmatised Napoleon as the man 'on whom the responsibility for what was happening lay more than

on all the others who took part in it' (a judgement which conflicts with the view in chapter 28 and elsewhere that Napoleon only appeared to be directing the battle), Tolstoy now, in this same chapter 39, exposes the contradiction that lies at the very heart of Christian Providentialism itself by, in fact, shifting the blame to the Omnipotent: 'The cannon-balls flew just as swiftly and cruelly from both sides, crushing human bodies, and that terrible work, which was not done by the will of a man, but at the will of Him who governs men and worlds, continued' (III.ii.39).

These judgements come direct from the narrator himself, but the most striking feature of Tolstoy's work is the unobtrusiveness of the comment in his own person, though it is always present. He gets himself out of the way and brings his characters forward and lets them speak and act, showing the scenes through their own varied and frequently clashing perspectives. The clear light of Tolstoy's own judgement is reflected in different ways from the facets of the crystal he himself has cut. His capitulation to Christian Providentialism (which involves him in the traditional difficulties over free will and predestination) does not matter because there is a sense in which his epic power creates such a degree of perspectivism that the subjective view of the author himself becomes only one unfinalised perspective among others. Its superiority lies not in a single extractable conclusion, but in the ability to contain and portray so many other unfinalised perspectives.²⁶

The characters who carry out the function of articulating religious insights tend, of course, to be the 'open', developing, questioning types, the Pierres, Andrews and Levins and, to a more constricted extent, which reflects the position of women at the time, Natasha, Princess Mary, Kitty, Dolly and even Anna herself. The domestic life of *War and Peace* is, it is true, neither historical reconstruction nor contemporary realism, but has an element of idyllic idealisation about it. In *Anna Karenina*, however, particularly in the case of the portrayal of Levin, Tolstoy relates the 'development' of a character to the changing social and intellectual background in such a way as to mirror the crisis of faith of the age.

In this respect Tolstoy, who, after all, in chapter 9 of *What is Art?* spoke of 'the movement forward of humanity' and of 'a new relation of man to the world about him', is, for all his Rousseauistic 'antihistoricism', a child of the century whose greatest gift to humanity was perhaps that of an incomparably widened awareness of human diversity. Tolstoy had already, in the second epilogue to *War and Peace*, contrasted the view of power taken by the ancients, with its emphasis on individual heroes, and the view of power taken by the moderns, with its emphasis on collective determinants. In

Anna Karenina he gives us in Levin a man sensitively aware, like himself, not only of the difficulty of reconciling the new scientific explanations of his time with the picture of the universe and man's place in it propagated by Christianity, but also of the need to come to terms with other faiths, such as Buddhism, which wider contexts and the founding of comparative religion had made live options in a way they had never been before.

Indeed *Anna Karenina* is so good precisely because Tolstoy resists the temptation to simplify Levin's problems and to offer any premature self-deceiving affirmations. In particular Levin's relations with the peasants are presented in a realistic, sometimes humorous, way which makes any accusation of an over-idealisation of the peasantry unsustainable. Critics sometimes see the words of the peasant to Levin (VIII.11) as an unconvincing example of 'revelation' coming from the peasantry. This is to overlook the fact that these words are presented as the catalyst of a complex train of reflections about the nature of ethics in the next chapter, reflections which probably, by the way, influenced Wittgenstein's anti-utilitarian remarks about ethics at the end of the *Tractatus*. Moreover, these reflections could hardly have arisen without the complex pattern of experience, reading and temperament the whole novel has shown as having gone into Levin's composition. It is not only a peasant woman like Levin's old nurse, but also a girl from the gentry like his wife Kitty, who is shown as exemplifying that 'practical knowledge' of how to behave in the presence of his dying brother Nicholas (from whom Levin himself shrinks). This scene dramatises a crucial formative experience in Levin's religious quest. Tolstoy goes out of his way to tell us that the behaviour of the two women at the dying man's bedside 'was not instinctive, animal and unreasoning', but showed a distinctively spiritual feeling in that 'they both demanded for the dying man something of greater importance than mere physical care, something that had nothing in common with physical conditions' (v.19).

It is significant that the only chapter in *Anna Karenina* to have a title is the one immediately following and that the title is 'Death'. It is the unrivalled concreteness, and unfalsifying steadiness, with which Tolstoy presents what the ghastly process of dying involves, both for the dying man himself and for his dear ones, that earns him the right to pose dramatically, through Levin, the question inescapable to every reflective man who does not allow a temporary run of good fortune to blind him to the miseries potentially inherent in every life, and probably actualised with a fair degree of intensity at some time in most; the question posed in chapter 5 of *A Confession* as: 'Is there any meaning in my life that the inevitable death await-

ing me does not destroy?' It is in their coming to terms with their mortality that men, for Tolstoy, as for Schopenhauer, cannot escape facing the question of their place as individuals in the totality of things; for that mortality reveals more clearly than anything else how awesome the gift of that place really is, and forces them into that 'total reaction upon life'²⁷ which William James identified with religion. It is here too that perhaps the greatest divide among reflective minds reveals itself. There are those on the one hand who, like Lucretius, Montaigne and Santayana, see death as part of the natural order of things and not to be feared by the natural man, and those who, like St Augustine, Pascal and Tolstoy himself, see death as a kind of outrage. Indeed for St Augustine and Pascal death was not natural to the creation, but only came into the world because of the 'aboriginal calamity' of Adam's fall. Tolstoy, in this matter, despite himself, a child of his progressive and historically-minded century, has rejected a belief in this kind of parabolic thinking as literally true, but shares the horror of St Augustine and Pascal at the indignities to which man's physical nature can subject him.

Let me try to bring out the views of the parties contending across this great divide. Santayana, in an eloquent passage, revives the Lucretian notion of life as a banquet that cannot be prolonged forever and of death as a dreamless sleep:

That the end of life should be death may sound sad; yet what other end could it have? The end of an evening party is to go to bed; but its use is to gather congenial people together so that they may pass the time pleasantly. An invitation to the dance is not rendered ironical because the dance cannot last forever; the youngest of us and the most vigorously wound up, after a few hours, has had enough of stepping and prancing. The transitoriness of things is essential to their physical being and not at all sad in itself. . . What is truly sad is to have some impulse frustrated in the midst of its career and robbed of its chosen object; and what is painful is to have an organ lacerated or destroyed when it is still vigorous, and not ready for its natural sleep and dissolution.²⁸

Pascal, on the other hand, makes it clear that there is a sense in which a being with an intellectual memory that has no intrinsic connection with its physical locus can legitimately regard death, not as common and natural, but as an unacceptable and horrifying outrage. This is exactly the way Levin regards death. Pascal's view comes out in a letter which he wrote to his sisters on the occasion of the death of his father:

Socrates and Seneca have nothing persuasive on this occasion. They are under the error which has blinded all men. . . they have all taken death as natural to man, and all the discourses which they have founded on this false principle are so futile that they only serve to show by their uselessness

how feeble man in general is, since the loftiest productions of the greatest of men are so weak and puerile.²⁹

Pascal thinks Socrates and Seneca are weak here because they did not have the benefit of the story of Adam. This shows man as originally created immortal and punished by his creator with death for disobedience to him. In this Pascal follows St Augustine who, as C. N. Cochrane has shown, uses the doctrine of the fall to reject 'the maxim of classical naturalism, *lex est perire*' (death is nature's law) for the view that man is naturally immortal and 'subject to death by reason of sin'. Cochrane writes: 'On this paradox rested the whole of Christian theology.'³⁰ Writing from within that theology, Pascal sees death as necessary to purge men of that concupiscence by which each being is primarily centred on its own affirmation.

Tolstoy, like Pascal, writes from the standpoint of those whom William James in his masterpiece *The Varieties of Religious Experience* saw as having undergone 'a second birth'³¹ which has led them to divine what James called the sadness that 'lies at the heart of every merely positivistic, agnostic, or naturalistic scheme of philosophy'.³² What Tolstoy, like James himself, is deeply aware of, is the fact that the protester against the assertion that, in James's words, 'every individual existence goes out in a lonely spasm of helpless agony',³³ may be advised to wait till he arrives at that moment himself. Both Tolstoy and James see the matter from, so to speak, the point of view of the drowning man himself. Lucretius and Santayana can be calm about it because they see it from the point of view of a spectator on the shore. This makes their Epicurean *ataraxia*, or freedom from agitation, possible.

The moot question is whether the extreme *anhedonia*, or loss of the capacity for happiness, which both Tolstoy and James underwent (the Tolstoy of *A Confession* was one of James's 'cases' in the famous chapter 'The Sick Soul'), does not irretrievably queer their pitch in the view of the resolutely healthy-minded as commentators on the totality of life. Can we trust their apperception of things any more than we can trust that of the disappointed lover? As, in James's words, 'there is no rationally deducible connection between any outer fact and the sentiments it may happen to provoke',³⁴ the grounds for adjudication between, say, Santayana's apprehension of things and Tolstoy's are very delicate. Tolstoy explicitly rejects Epicureanism in chapter 7 of *A Confession* as a philosophy which involves 'making use...of the advantages one has...and licking the honey in the best way, especially if there is much of it within reach'. Epicureanism forgets that such advantages are constantly at the mercy of accident and, moreover, not enjoyed by thousands who

have just as much (or as little) right to them as ourselves. Whether we conclude with James that the 'twice-born' have the deeper vision or take the view that the *anhedonia*, or 'arrest of life', of such men as Tolstoy, is a sickness which discredits the descriptions and conclusions they offer (as Professor Flew does in his book *The Presumption of Atheism*), we shall not, I think, conclude with Father Florovsky that Tolstoy was not a religious man and had 'no gift for religion'. Tolstoy was certainly engaged with the task of offering a 'total interpretation' or 'mode of apperceiving the world', and this is the task which William James and Professor John Hick³⁵ see as the central concern of religion.

Tolstoy's portrait of Levin shows a man struggling to build up such a total interpretation. It is particularly appealing because Levin's experience has analogies with that of a large number of people who, while brought up in the doctrines of Christian theism in their childhood, have come to see those doctrines as unsustainable in the light of the progress of natural science, the historical study of the Bible, the claims of rival faiths and the assault of the post-Kantian critical philosophy on the proofs for the existence of God afforded by rational theology. Their position is described by the philosopher Alan Donagan as follows: 'While fewer and fewer deeply believe the religion in which they were reared, almost none accept any definite alternative to it. . . For good or ill the imaginations of most of us are stained by the religion of our childhood. Few profess atheism, or doubt that inability to believe is an emotional loss.'³⁶ This is exactly the position of Levin: 'In matters of religion Levin, like most of his contemporaries, had very indefinite views. He could not believe in it, and yet was not firmly convinced that it was all false' (v.1). Thus Levin is in the situation of being unable to live with religion as it is, and yet unable to live without any religion at all. Moreover he cannot accept one of those 'paper religions' which, as Alan Donagan has argued,³⁷ are as remote from real religious life as coterie utopias are from real political life. In particular to try to use the vocabulary of philosophical idealism '*spirit, will, freedom, substance*', to solve the problems the religions of the world purport to solve, is to be doomed to disillusionment (viii.9). Natural science cannot touch them either. Levin, therefore, is a man who, like many of us, lives in two worlds, the world of scientific explanations, and a human world which demands the sort of 'guidance for life' that seems to require religious beliefs:

Organisms, their destruction, the indestructibility of matter, the law of the conservation of energy, development – the terms that had superseded these beliefs – were very useful for mental purposes; but they gave no guidance for life, and Levin suddenly felt like a person who has exchanged a thick

fur coat for a muslin garment and who, being out in the frost for the first time, becomes clearly convinced, not by arguments, but with the whole of his being, that he is as good as naked and that he must inevitably perish miserably. (viii.8)

IV

In the second chapter of *A Confession*, the work which followed *Anna Karenina*, and which in many ways is continuous with Levin's perplexities, Tolstoy's wish to give a dramatic account of the conversion experience caused him, not unnaturally, to exaggerate the distinction between his present and his earlier position. This is particularly the case with regard to his account of himself as having been an adherent of 'the religion of progress' when he returned to St Petersburg from the Crimea at the age of twenty-six and adopted what he calls 'the author's creed'. This was the faith in the notion that 'All that exists develops. And it develops by means of Culture.' He goes on to tell us that he held this faith in 'progress' until his marriage, when it was replaced by the notion 'that one should live so as to have the best for oneself and one's family'. These passages from *A Confession* completely overlook the extent to which the Tolstoy of *Lucerne* (1857) and of the essay 'Progress and the Definition of Education' (1862) was bitterly critical of the notion of progress, at least as a general view of history and social movement – in fact, as hostile to it as the guilt-ridden writer of *A Confession*.

The idea of progress was one of those vast speculative theories of history which Leon Brunschvicg called the 'darling vice'³⁸ of the nineteenth century. Whether it appeared as the doctrine of the developing education of mankind (as in Herder, Kant and Hegel), or the doctrine of expanding material well-being (as in Macaulay's famous third chapter), or the doctrine of the law of the three stages of thought, theological, metaphysical and now positive (as it appeared in Comte and Mill), it easily allied itself, despite the caveats of its subtler upholders such as Mill, to a feeling that the course of improvement was inevitable. One of the most potent sources of a faith in historicism – in the sense of the assumption that history reveals the rational plan of a mind unfolding itself in the temporal process and is, in fact, the only true theodicy – was Hegel, whose influence in the Russia of Tolstoy's youth was immense. Alexander Herzen has given us a very vivid evocation of the penetration of Hegelianism into the discussion circles around Stankevich at Moscow in the 1830s.³⁹ Tolstoy belonged to a later generation of students and went to Kazan, not Moscow, to study, but he too met the diffused Hegelianism which, many years later in *What then Must We Do?*, he said 'was the basis of everything'⁴⁰ when he started life. Vague

notions of the 'concrete universal' may have been at the back of his mind when he wrote in his diary, after leaving Kazan to manage his estate, that the purpose of human existence is 'to afford a maximum of help towards the universal of everything that exists'.⁴¹ But by the time of his essay 'Progress and the Definition of Education', in 1862, he had come to define for himself what it was in Hegel and the Hegelians that he most disliked. That something was 'the historical view':

Since the day of Hegel and the famous aphorism, 'What is historical is reasonable', there has reigned in the literary and oral debates, especially in our country, a very singular mental hocus-pocus called the historical view. . . You say that you believe in God, and the historical view replies that history has evolved certain religious conceptions. . . You say that the *Iliad* is the greatest epical production, and the historical view replies that the *Iliad* is only the expression of a nation's historical consciousness at a certain historical moment. . .

Add the word historical to any conception you please, and that conception at once loses its vital, actual meaning and receives an artificial and barren meaning in some kind of an artificially formed historical world conception.⁴²

Tolstoy uses the term 'the historical view' to cover certain traits of the mode of thought now called 'historicism'. Two quotations from Markov, the critic of his educational ideas to whom he was replying, will serve to bring out some of these traits, traits by no means dead today. The first quotation shows a characteristic assumption of progress as a trite truth universally acknowledged and, at the end, the typically Hegelian view that logic and history coincide:

In this natural transmission of the mental acquisitions of one generation to the next lies the progress of education, which needs no other special laws. Every age casts its handful upon the common heap, and the longer we live, the higher rises this heap, and the higher we rise with it. This is known to the point of triteness, and I see no justification in the attempts to shake such a logically and historically manifest truth.⁴³

The second quotation shows Markov's notion that the criterion for the content of education is historically conditioned: 'The criterion is that one must teach in conformity with the demands of the time. It is simple and in absolute harmony with history and with logic.'⁴⁴ Tolstoy makes the trenchant observation that the phrase 'the demands of the time' is an empty formula in that it is the very question as to what those demands are which is at issue. Apropos the notion that it is the historical conditioning of a set of views rather than their intrinsic content that is the most important thing about them to consider, Tolstoy writes:

It may be very amusing to discuss...the historical conditions which compelled Rousseau to express himself in the particular form in which he did express himself, but it is impossible to discover those historical conditions in which a future Rousseau will express himself. I can understand why Rousseau should have written with malice against the artificiality of life; but I positively fail to see why Rousseau appeared, and why he discovered the great truths. I have no business with Rousseau and his surroundings; I am interested only in the thoughts which he expressed, and I can verify and comprehend his thoughts only by thinking, and not by reflecting on his place in history.⁴⁵

Tolstoy held, as we have seen, the Rousseauistic and profoundly anti-Hegelian notion that, by a certain kind of looking within, man can outflank pride and deceit (the very pride and deceit Tolstoy sees as underlying 'the historical view') and avoid mistaking, in Grimsley's words, 'the social and historical aspects of human nature for its permanent structure'.⁴⁶ Sir Isaiah Berlin has seen the quest for 'the permanent relationships of things'⁴⁷ as the driving force behind *War and Peace*. Much of the difference between an Orthodox theologian like Father Florovsky and Tolstoy turns on the fact that Florovsky sees the Christian religion as 'the historical religion' *par excellence*, while Tolstoy thinks he can penetrate to the permanent and historically 'unconditioned' core of the teaching of Jesus. The next section of this essay will try to show that Tolstoy's quest for the historical Jesus took such an arresting form precisely because he transformed it into what one might call the quest for the de-historicised Jesus.

V

I have suggested that the nineteenth century was the century of 'the historical view'. It was permeated by the habit of thinking in terms of process, origin and development. In the field of Biblical criticism this led to what has come to be called the quest for the historical Jesus. Techniques of historical and philological scholarship were applied to the *Gospels* by David Friedrich Strauss and Bruno Bauer in order to see whether it was possible to find out what Jesus really taught as distinct from what the compilers of the *Gospels*, and the early church, thought he taught. Freed by Hegel from dogmatic assumptions, Strauss, according to Albert Schweitzer,⁴⁸ treated the nature miracles as myth and viewed the authentically historical passages as being the eschatological ones about the Second Coming. He contrasted the primitiveness of the environment of Christianity with the sophistication of the environment of modern culture in a way, Dostoyevsky tells us in the early sections of his *A Writer's Diary*, the critic Belinsky used to do in the 1840s, no doubt under

the influence of German thinkers. The later Tolstoy was to write critically of the Straussian view 'that Christ's teaching was only fit to be preached to the savage inhabitants of the wilds of Galilee'.⁴⁹ Bauer started out by wanting to give the person of Christ 'a living relation to history'. But the result of his researches was that he came to view the *Gospels* as merely the creation of 'the religious sense of mankind'. In acknowledging this men can free themselves from historical Christianity and open themselves to a higher religion in which they are not alienated from nature. Renan's *Life of Jesus* (1863) combined the results of the scholarship of Strauss and Bauer with an art that Schweitzer saw as marred by 'trickery and illusion'. We have seen that Tolstoy, despite the interest of his friend Strakhov, abominated Renan.

The paradox is that the message the 'historicisers' Strauss, Bauer and Renan wished to put forward to their readers was bound up with their aim to adapt material from their Gospel studies to the spirit of their own age, so that it becomes a moot point whether they were not falsifying the very Jesus of history they fought to preserve. They wanted a religion adapted to the humanitarian current, a Christ they could transform, by means of 'the historical view', into a figure acceptable to the enlightened liberalism of their times. But, as Schweitzer wrote of Jesus: 'He does not stay: He passes by our time and returns to His own.'⁵⁰ Tolstoy, who embarked on the study of Strauss and Renan intensively at the end of 1877, after having finished *Anna Karenina*, was faced by the same problem, for he too had a strong nineteenth-century 'humanitarian' element in him which made him remote from the world into which Jesus was born, whose beliefs in demons and more ready acceptance of the surface cruelties of life, such as judicial torture, Jesus had to address. However, Rousseau, as we have seen, had led Tolstoy to abominate 'the historical view', as making the conception which the inner need for faith in the teaching of Jesus had awakened lose 'its vital, actual meaning' and receive 'an artificial barren meaning in some kind of an artificially formed historical world conception'.⁵¹ To solve the problem Tolstoy worked out the idea that life at every period always contains an extra-historical element which eludes the purely 'historical view'. He applied this idea to 'the Christian truth' in a letter to Strakhov in April 1878 critical of Renan:

The Christian truth, that is to say the expression of the Absolute good, the highest good that can be, is an expression that has regard to the essence, consequently, outside the forms of time... However, Renan makes its absolute expression and its historical expression coincide, thus reducing it to temporary appearance. If the Christian truth is deep and great, it is uniquely because it is an absolute subjectively. But if you must study

Christianity in its objective manifestation then it is put on the same level as the Napoleonic Code.⁵²

Tolstoy had been deeply impressed by Schopenhauer's philosophy with its doctrine that the knowing subject is not part of the phenomenal world, and he may here be adapting it by treating the historical world as part of the phenomenal world, but the knowing 'subjects' of history as also accessible to each other in a 'non-phenomenal', 'non-objective' way which transcends the historical. Tolstoy's position can also be seen as a kind of modified Kierkegaardianism in that he endorses the subjective element of commitment (i.e. faith is not constrained by 'objective' evidence in the scientific sense) without adopting the extreme irrationalism of the Kierkegaardian. I am, of course, using 'Kierkegaardian' as an 'ideal type' notion, not suggesting any influence on Tolstoy of the historical Kierkegaard. It is significant that both Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard were, like Tolstoy, critical of Hegel's type of 'objectivism'. However, Tolstoy's dualistic positing of both a historical and extra-historical dimension for an understanding of persons and their doctrines allowed him a keen interest in the historical, as well as the extra-historical, dimension. It was this, perhaps, which saved him from the pure subjectivism of a Kierkegaard. We know that Tolstoy was, in fact, intensely preoccupied with finding out what the real 'historical' Jesus actually, i.e. 'objectively', taught.⁵³ This comes out in his bold ventures into amateur textual criticism of the *Gospels* themselves (though he made use, of course, of the work of scholars) and in his keen interest in newly discovered sources such as the *Didache* or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*.⁵⁴ No doubt he hoped that what Jesus 'objectively' taught would turn out to coincide with what he saw as the 'eternal' spirit of Jesus's teaching from within his own 'subjective' relation to it. In some respects, indeed, Tolstoy's position has affinities with that of Schweitzer as expressed in the concluding paragraph of Schweitzer's famous work, though the penultimate sentence might have been given some qualification by Tolstoy: 'Jesus means something to our world because a mighty spiritual force streams forth from him and flows through our time also. This fact can neither be shaken nor confirmed by any historical discovery. It is the solid foundation of Christianity.'⁵⁵

It may be that Tolstoy was mistaken, as W. M. Urban has suggested,⁵⁶ in thinking that religion is possible without dogmatic theology. This is a vast topic which would require an essay, if not a book, to do it justice. Yet, as Professor Hick has recently written in *The Myth of God Incarnate*, it could be that Christians now have to outgrow 'theological fundamentalism' in the way in which the

nineteenth century had to outgrow 'biblical fundamentalism'.⁵⁷ In that case Tolstoy may well speak to them because he rejected dogmatic theology, partly on the grounds that disputes about the Incarnation and the Trinity can easily go along with a most un-Christian alliance with worldly powers and can distract from the 'one thing needful', the ascertaining and following what Jesus himself taught. We have already seen that, perhaps assisted by the already discussed Rousseauistic strain in him, he stood out also against certain strains in historical (as distinct from dogmatic) theology, namely the Strauss, Bauer, Renan adulation of what they saw as the culture of their more enlightened age. He set over against both dogmatists and historicists the extra-dogmatic, extra-historical standard of Jesus, a standard which does not require assent to propositions only arrived at by subtle doctoral dialectic, and a standard which makes demands on the 'permanent structure' of human nature. In *What I Believe* he condemns the believers who think Jesus preached an ideal too high to be followed (an argument one still hears from Christians who want to sanction worldly policies and attitudes which they favour), and then adds:

Others, the unbelievers, the free thinking investigators of Christ's teaching – Strauss, Renan, and others – who follow the historic method, having thoroughly imbibed the Church's explanation that Christ's teaching has no direct reference to life but is a visionary doctrine consoling to feeble-minded people, say most seriously that Christ's teaching was only fit to be preached to the savage inhabitants of the wilds of Galilee, but that for us, with our culture, it appears merely a sweet dream – 'du charmant docteur', as Renan says. In their opinion Christ could not rise high enough to understand all the wisdom of our civilization and culture. Had he stood on the height of education on which these learned people stand he would not have talked such charming rubbish about the birds of the air, about turning one's cheek, and about not being troubled for tomorrow. These learned judges judge of Christianity by the Christianity they see in our society. The Christianity of our society and day regards our present life as true and sacred, . . . and from the teaching of Christ it selects only what does not infringe that life. But as Christ's teaching is the negation of all that life, nothing of it is accepted except mere words.⁵⁸

How else, for example, could the Orthodox Church sanction, as Tolstoy sees it as doing, the growing nationalism and militarism of the tsarist state, a militarism which modern historians have endorsed as an objective feature of the situation leading up to the first world war (present also, of course in the West, notably in the kaiser's Germany and in the British concern for naval supremacy) and not just something subjectively exaggerated by Tolstoy. The nationalism

and militarism of his times led Tolstoy to stress the doctrine of non-resistance as being of central importance in the teaching of Jesus. It is with Tolstoy's interpretation of this doctrine that I shall be concerned in the last section of this essay.

VI

Tolstoy felt that the doctrine of non-resistance was something which the historical Jesus actually taught in the Palestine of his own times, and that it remains eternally valid for Christians at all times and in all places who wish to follow him. In fact the Russia of Tolstoy's day, with its oppressive state apparatus, and its revolutionaries prepared to use violence to overthrow the state in order to bring about the millennium as they conceived it, bears a striking resemblance in some respects to the Palestine of Jesus, except that the millenarian rebels of Jesus's time were not 'Revolutionary Atheists' (as Tolstoy called the Russian revolutionaries)⁵⁹ but zealot Jews of various types. Nevertheless even here the parallel is not too far fetched, for many observers, from Dostoyevsky onwards, have detected in the fervent hopes of the revolutionaries a secularisation of Judaic myth about the coming of the Kingdom.

Tolstoy's doctrine of non-resistance has recently been studied, even, perhaps, embraced, in a recent book by R. V. Sampson, *Tolstoy: The Discovery of Peace*. Sampson recognises the contradiction at the heart of Tolstoy's analysis of power, in that Tolstoy wants to condemn those who exercise power at one moment, and then speaks of power as a bogus entity, and so something never really exercised, at the next. But Sampson then oddly falls into the very error he has diagnosed by claiming that Tolstoy's analysis of power has been ignored because it is subversive of the pretensions to power of the great.⁶⁰ Surely the real reason it has been ignored (save by a few exceptions such as Gandhi) is that it is the very fact that the great really *have* power which makes non-existence so hard to practise. Contrary to what Sampson argues, Tolstoy does reject war and the notion of the just war in *War and Peace*, despite his evident Russian patriotism.⁶¹ But it is not here that Sampson's main mistake lies. His chief error consists in his not recognising just how difficult it is to obey what he calls 'God's law'.⁶² Sampson fails to see that if, because of atomic weapons, people rise up, as he envisions them doing, and show that they 'are not going to commit suicide in order to please Caesar';⁶³ they will probably be doing so for prudential reasons and not in obedience to God's law. Sampson follows Tolstoy in blurring any difference between the legitimate and illegitimate exercise of power,⁶⁴ but both of them completely fail to recognise that this does not in the least get rid of the problem of power in itself. Sampson's

view that we survived the Cuban missile crisis 'thanks to those anonymous people in the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. . . who . . . had never ceased to struggle against the forces of power within their respective societies'⁶⁵ hardly squares with his contention that mankind was humiliated by being dependent on Kennedy and Khrushchev⁶⁶ (even if he hedges his bets by suggesting that their power was only 'temporarily and apparently wielded') and then got rid of both men for having exercised moderation.⁶⁷ Sampson's view brings out the weaknesses of a certain kind of 'Tolstoyanism' and hardly avoids the accusation of falling at times into the 'sentimental' pacifism it indicts.⁶⁸

Sampson approaches Tolstoy's work from the interesting standpoint of one committed to the doctrine of non-resistance, but those in the West who have recently revived the notion that violent acts are justified by their aim, particularly when that aim is seen as the removal of various kinds of discrimination or oppression, have also made a reconsideration of that doctrine particularly timely. Moreover some scholars, notably Professor S. G. F. Brandon, have raised the question as to whether Jesus himself was not some kind of zealot resistance fighter whom the early Christians retrospectively turned into a pacifist because they had rejected Judaism and wanted to live at peace with the Romans.⁶⁹ The Jewish scholar Professor Geza Vermes says that Brandon's theory 'fails to convince'.⁷⁰ Professor Martin Hengel, whose special field is the study of the relation of Hellenism and Judaism in the period immediately before the birth of Jesus, is stronger in his denials. In a polemical pamphlet entitled *Victory over Violence*, directed against those present-day Christians who see violence as justified when it is exercised on behalf of the oppressed, he forcefully argues that the historical Jesus rejected Messianic expectations of a military kind and, on the contrary, claimed that the kingdom was already come among those who rejected the evil in their own hearts.⁷¹ Professor Hengel, in short, would vindicate the Tolstoyan view that what the historical Jesus really taught is important, and that he really taught non-violence. Hengel writes: 'None of his contemporaries criticised more sharply than he the complacent, self-satisfied Babbits that sought the meaning of life in the acquisition of riches. His message was thus socially and politically explosive, a trait that has reappeared repeatedly throughout its history down to . . . Leo Tolstoy.'⁷² Jesus appealed to the uneducated Galilean peasantry, certainly, but, in addition, to the 'traitors to the nation' and 'the exploiters', the hated tax collectors, the quislings who collaborated with the Roman authorities. Furthermore he seems to have sanctioned, in his remarks in the Sermon on the Mount about walking two miles with the man who

compels you to walk one, impressed military service, at least as an auxiliary and baggage carrier.

It could well be then that Tolstoy gave the doctrine of non-resistance a twist which took him to a position different in some important respects from that of Jesus himself, though common to both is a rejection of prudence and a willingness to suffer which goes beyond the rational. Perhaps the lingering elements of the self-willed aristocrat in Tolstoy led him to transform Jesus's doctrine that one should not resist the state in matters like taxation and impressed military service, into something much more like a *frondeur's* doctrine of resistance to the state. In this respect R. V. Sampson is quite right to see Tolstoy as having gone beyond even 'heretic' Christians, who had not questioned the legitimacy of someone's serving the state even if they declined to do so themselves.⁷³ But what Sampson does not consider is whether Tolstoy has not even gone beyond Jesus himself. The spectacle of the later Tolstoy is often a noble one, but it could justly be said that on occasion he forgot that even Christianity at its most extreme called only for the imitation of Christ, and not for his supersession.

But here we come on to very difficult issues which the individual conscience must be left to decide. Moreover Tolstoy's repudiation of Tolstoyanism and his claim that 'There is neither a Tolstoyan sect nor a Tolstoyan teaching. There is only one unique teaching, that of truth – that universal teaching, so perfectly expressed, for myself no less than for others, in the Gospels'⁷⁴ forces our individual consciences back to the consideration of what the real content of 'that universal and eternal teaching' is, and the nature of its claim upon us. Tolstoy thinks that the claim stands even when the supernatural doctrines and sanctions which the historical traditions of Christianity have surrounded it with can no longer be believed in. Whether we also think so, or not, is a matter for each of us to decide.

As I stated at the outset of this essay, it is very difficult to do justice in a short compass to the complexities of such a subject as Tolstoy and religion. There is much that is vulnerable in his position on religious matters. G. W. Spence, for example, points out his wavering between a personal and impersonal conception of God.⁷⁵ I have tried to show that Tolstoy was no dry, narrow rationalist in matters of religion, but that, helped by Rousseau and others, he tried to arrive at a way of seeing certain absolute spiritual truths as having been concretised in the *Gospels*, and as still able to be discerned there in an age that had lost that feeling for the immediacy of God's presence as a person, and his power in the world of phenomena, which the prophets and Jesus evince. If we agree with some Enlightenment thinkers and with Freud in *The Future of an Illusion*

that religion is indeed an illusion which we must learn to live without entirely, then this side of Tolstoy's work will be of no importance to us (except as a psychological curiosity), and may even detract from the merits of his purely novelistic inventiveness, at least in so far as that was expended on mediating a religious apperception of things. But a strong case can be made for claiming that Tolstoy is so profoundly interesting because, in both novel and tract, he actually calls into question whether what the Enlightenment saw as an illusion really is an illusion. He makes us ask instead whether it may not rather be an illusion to believe that man can live without something to which he directs feelings of devotion that would only be fittingly directed to God, and that it is therefore inescapably incumbent on man to seek for the object worthy of that devotion. The question remains then, whether we are to say with Tolstoy 'Pitiful are those who do not seek',⁷⁶ or with the Enlightenment, 'Deluded are those who do.'

NOTES

All references to Tolstoy's works are to the Aylmer Maude translations in the Oxford University Press World's Classics edition unless otherwise stated.

1. Wilbur Marshall Urban, *Humanity and Deity* (London, 1951), pp. 143-57.
2. John Hick (ed.), *The Myth of God Incarnate* (London, 1977).
3. Georges Florovsky, 'Three Masters: The Quest for Religion in Nineteenth Century Russian Literature', in George A. Panichas (ed.), *Mansions of the Spirit* (New York, 1967), pp. 157-79.
4. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, edited by Louis Lafuma, translated by John Warrington (London, 1960), no. 17, p. 14.
5. Lev Shestov, *Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Nietzsche*, translated by Bernard Martin and Spencer Roberts (Ohio, 1969), p. 68 and p. 59.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-2.
9. Lev Shestov, 'The Gift of Prophecy', in *Chekhov and Other Essays* (1916, repr. Ann Arbor, 1966), p. 78.
10. Sir Isaiah Berlin, 'Tolstoy and Enlightenment', *Encounter*, 89 (February 1961), 29-40.
11. John Plamenatz, *Ideology* (repr. London, 1971), p. 87.
12. Ronald Grimsley, *Rousseau and the Religious Quest* (Oxford, 1958), pp. 37-9. I am greatly indebted to this book in my account of Rousseau.

- On Descartes I draw on Léon Brunschvicg, *Descartes et Pascal* (Neuchâtel, 1945).
13. Arthur Lovejoy, *Reflections on Human Nature* (Baltimore, 1961), p. 92.
 14. For a fuller discussion of this see my *Tolstoy: The Comprehensive Vision* (London, 1975), pp. 22–3.
 15. Quoted in V. Ivanov-Razumnik, *Lev Tolstoi* (St Petersburg, n.d.), p. 108.
 16. Grimsley, *Rousseau and the Religious Quest*, p. 42.
 17. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
 18. D. G. Charlton, *Positivist Thought in France during the Second Empire, 1852–1870* (Oxford, 1959).
 19. *The Private Diary of Leo Tolstoy, 1853–1857*, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude (London, 1927), p. 114.
 20. Quoted in Derrick Leon, *Tolstoy: His Life and Work* (London, 1944), p. 240.
 21. F. R. Leavis, *Revaluation* (London, 1949), p. 164.
 22. *The Private Diary of Leo Tolstoy*, p. 242.
 23. Friedrich Nietzsche, 'The Birth of Tragedy' and 'The Genealogy of Morals', translated by Francis Golfing (New York, 1956), p. 30.
 24. *Ibid.*, p. 201.
 25. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ*, section 30, in 'The Twilight of the Idols' and 'The Anti-Christ', translated by R. J. Hollingdale (repr. Harmondsworth, 1969), p. 142.
 26. For a further analysis of 'the hedgehog and the fox problem' see my *Tolstoy: The Comprehensive Vision* (London, 1975), pp. 93–102.
 27. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (repr. London, 1968), p. 53.
 28. George Santayana, *Some Turns of Thought in Modern Philosophy: Five Essays* (Cambridge, 1933), pp. 88–9.
 29. Quoted in Brunschvicg, *Descartes et Pascal*, pp. 160–1. My own translation.
 30. Charles Norris Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture: A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine* (1940, repr. New York, 1957), p. 448.
 31. James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 163.
 32. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
 33. *Ibid.*, p. 169.
 34. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
 35. John Hick, *Faith and Knowledge* (London and Melbourne, 1967), p. 53.
 36. Alan Donagan, 'The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy', *The Philosophical Review*, LXXIX (1970), p. 131. Donagan thinks the principal puzzle about the traditional arguments for God's existence is the question why honest and intelligent men have taken them seriously. He offers childhood indoctrination into a Judaeo-Christian conception of the universe as a possible explanation.
 37. *Ibid.*, p. 136. The phrase 'paper religions' is from Newman.

38. Quoted in D. G. Charlton, *Secular Religions in France, 1815-1870* (London, 1963), p. 1.
39. See Alexander Herzen, *My Past and Thoughts*, translated by Constance Garnett, revised by Humphrey Higgins (London, 1968), vol. II, pp. 397-408.
40. *What then Must We Do?*, translated by Aylmer Maude (repr. London, 1960), p. 235.
41. *Diaries... 1847-1852*, translated by C. J. Hogarth and A. Sirnis (London, 1917), p. 30.
42. *Pedagogical Articles* translated... and edited by Leo Wiener (London, 1904), pp. 153-4.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 156.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 159.
46. Grimsley, *Rousseau and the Religious Quest*, p. 45.
47. Sir Isaiah Berlin, *The Hedgehog and the Fox* (repr. London, 1954), p. 67.
48. For the account of Strauss, Bauer and Renan I have drawn on Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 3rd edn. (repr. London, 1973), especially pp. 79, 94, 136-57 and 182.
49. *A Confession, The Gospel in Brief and What I Believe*, translated by Aylmer Maude (repr. London, 1961), p. 346.
50. Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, p. 397.
51. 'Progress and the Definition of Education' in *Pedagogical Articles*, p. 154.
52. *Perepiska L. N. Tolstogo s N. N. Strakhovym, 1870-1894*, Tolstovskii Muzei (St Petersburg, 1914), vol. II, p. 164.
53. The conflict between a view anchored in history, and one which is prepared to dispense altogether with the historicity of the events recorded in the Gospels is reduplicated in the difference between C. H. Dodd and Paul Tillich as described in F. W. Dillistone, *C. H. Dodd: Interpreter of the New Testament* (London, 1977), p. 229 and pp. 241-3.
54. See Nicolas Weisbcin, *L'Evolution Religieuse de Tolstoi* (Paris, n.d.), pp. 252-6.
55. Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, p. 397.
56. Wilbur Marshall Urban, *Humanity and Deity* (London, 1951), pp. 143-57.
57. John Hick, 'Jesus and the World Religions', in *The Myth of God Incarnate*, p. 184.
58. *A Confession*, pp. 345-6.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 344.
60. R. V. Sampson, *Tolstoy: The Discovery of Peace* (London, 1973), pp. 162, 165-6.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 186.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 195.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 180: 'all the varieties of theory of legitimization are false'.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 195.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 194.
68. *Ibid.*, pp. 168-9.
69. S. G. F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots* (Manchester, 1967).
70. Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (London, 1973), p. 49.
71. Martin Hengel, *Victory over Violence*, translated by David E. Green (London, 1975), p. 73.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
73. Sampson, *Tolstoy: The Discovery of Peace*, pp. 170-1.
74. Quoted from Tolstoy's diary for 1899 in Derrick Leon, *Tolstoy: His Life and Work* (London, 1944), pp. 240-1.
75. G. W. Spence, *Tolstoy the Ascetic* (Edinburgh and London, 1967), pp. 81, 91-2.
76. V. F. Bulgakov, *The Last Year of Leo Tolstoy*, translated by Ann Dunnigan (London, 1971), p. 91.

Tolstoy's philosophy of history

F. F. SEELEY

It was Tolstoy himself who insisted that the most important element in *War and Peace* was its philosophy of history, although the stupid public was sure to shrug that off and concentrate its attention and enjoyment on the frivolous fiction. But whether or not we regard the philosophy of history as the most important element in the novel, we can hardly fail to recognise it as one of the most controversial, both in its content and in its collocation in a work of fiction. Tolstoy himself was, at one stage, so uncertain of the artistic defensibility of this element that in the 1873 (third) edition of the novel he removed from the body of the text not only part ii of the epilogue but the thirty-one historico-philosophical chapters scattered through volumes III and IV and grouped them in an appendix under the title 'Articles on the Campaign of 1812'.

The philosophy of history, when not ignored, was scathingly condemned by most of Tolstoy's eminent contemporaries. In the last half-century reactions may have been more various, but have mostly remained at best one-sided, at worst superficial. Some commentators content themselves with reverent paraphrase; some seek to utilise the doctrine for their own ideological purposes; those who attack or defend the philosophy on aesthetic grounds rarely if ever attempt to assess its intellectual quality, and *vice versa*.¹

But in fact the philosophy of history raises more kinds of questions than has been generally recognised. In addition to the aesthetic questions, general and particular (what place is there in a novel for a fifty-page philosophical treatise and philosophic disquisitions filling one chapter in six?² How does the philosophic element function specifically in *War and Peace*?) and to the philosophical questions (what are the problems addressed by Tolstoy's philosophy of history and how are they treated?), a comprehensive treatment of the subject would need to grapple with historical questions (e.g., of the place of this philosophy in the history of ideas), literary questions (of the relations between the philosophy and the actual treatment of

history in the novel), and psychological questions (of the character and quality of the thinking and of its relation to Tolstoy's art or to specific aspects of his art).³ The present paper aims at no more than a detailed examination of Tolstoy's argumentation as the basis for an assessment of the general character of his thinking.

The systematic exposition of Tolstoy's philosophy of history in *War and Peace* is contained in the twelve chapters of the second epilogue (epilogue, part ii). Thematically this epilogue divides into three sections. In section 1 (chapters 1-3) Tolstoy passes in review various schools of historiography, pitilessly scoffing at their metaphysical shortcomings. In section 2 (chapters 4-7) he deals with the two questions on which, according to him, history ought to hinge: the question of the nature of power and the question, what determines the movements of peoples? Finally, in section 3 (chapters 8-12) he broaches the problem of free will in relation to a possible scientific approach to history, outlines the scope and functions of such a scientific historiography *vis-à-vis* the natural sciences, and concludes with a paean to what he regards as a Copernican revolution in the field of history.

Section 1 opens with a false antithesis: modern historiography is opposed to earlier historiography in terms of its attitude to God: modern historians exclude divine intervention in human affairs, whereas earlier historians did not, and accordingly were in a position to explain both the power exercised by great men over the masses and the purposes of such great men in terms of a divine will, which made peoples obey their leaders and directed those leaders towards its own providential ends. In fact, such a 'theocratic' conception of history was characteristic of the mediaeval chroniclers, who modelled themselves on the Bible, which itself is rooted in the historiographic traditions of the pre-classical Middle East; but it had been transcended already by major historians of ancient Greece and Rome, who had replaced the god-centred approach by a man-centred or humanistic one: so that the problems which Tolstoy reserves to modern historians were already those of Thucydides.

The most fundamental of such problems (Tolstoy claims) is to find an adequate explanation of the movements of peoples once the divine will is no longer admitted as prime mover; but modern historians have failed to recognise this; and so their accounts are as odd and absurd as the answers of a deaf man to questions nobody has asked. It is characteristic of Tolstoy's philosophising to restrict the essence of an inquiry to a single question and to dismiss as irrelevant or futile all previous explorations of other sectors of the field. Nor does it occur to him to justify his determination of the essence: it is self-evident. No need to consider why the primary concern of

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historians should be with the movements of peoples; nor why they should concentrate on causes rather than, for example, patterns of events.

By way of illustrating the absurdity of modern historiography, Tolstoy offers a skit, unfortunately too long to quote, on a modern historian's account of French history from Louis XIV to Napoleon. Only, far from admitting it is a skit, he goes out of his way to assure us solemnly that it is a very mild version of the way in which 'all' modern history is actually written. This is a useful clue to Tolstoy's tendency to lose sight, from time to time, of the border-line between reality and his own fantasies, besides offering a memorable example of his habitual abuse of the word 'all'. It is not even clear what the skit is supposed to demonstrate. Is it that history presented as the history of mere men is reduced to farce? But surely the loves of Louis XIV and the deliberations of the Congress of Vienna would appear no less farcical if the sovereigns and statesmen in question were conceived as so many scourges of God – divinely appointed to plague mankind? Or is the point that the horrors of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, unless they are assumed to be part of some higher purpose, shrink to the semblance of 'a tale told by an idiot...signifying nothing'? But would it not be equally arguable that if such cataclysms serve no commensurate purpose, they would be seen as more, rather than less, tragic?

Among modern historians Tolstoy goes on to distinguish three kinds or classes, according to their conception of the motive power that produces events. Specialist historians confine their purview to a single nation and assume that events are caused by the power of individual great men; general historians extend their study to a number of nations and seek the causes of events in the interaction of a multiplicity of persons and variously directed forces; historians of culture regard ideas as the moving forces behind events. But each of these three modes of writing history is self-contradictory or self-stultifying. The specialist historians disagree among themselves as to whose power was responsible for this or that event. The general historians are caught up in a vicious circle, for they alternately view the historical personage as, on the one hand, a product of his time (and his power as a product of complexes of forces) and, on the other hand, as an efficient cause of events. But cultural history is not so much self-contradictory as absurd: pretending, for instance, that Frenchmen had taken to slaughtering each other because certain men had written certain books (i.e., that the blood-baths of the Revolution and the ensuing wars were attributable to the writings of Rousseau, Voltaire and the Encyclopaedists – those preachers of love, equality, and the brotherhood of men).

Is there not something painfully artificial about the whole framework of this polemic against 'modern history' – in this segregation of historians in hermetically sealed pigeonholes of Tolstoy's devising to be shot at as sitting targets? In fact, of course, biographical history, in Tolstoy's sense, involves knowledge of the history of the groups and ideas among which the great men live; general history presupposes knowledge both of the biographies of the chief actors and of the cultural forces to which they were subject; while a history of culture must be cognisant both of those who develop and those who are affected by theories and beliefs, and also of how such theories and beliefs were worked out in the lives of individuals and of nations. And one is impelled to ask oneself, into which of Tolstoy's arbitrary pigeonholes could one with a good conscience fit such works as Guizot's *Histoire Générale de la civilisation en Europe*, Ranke's *Deutsche Geschichte im Zeitalter der Reformation*, Mommsen's *Römische Geschichte* or Buckle's *History of Civilisation in England*, all of which were written before *War and Peace* and should have been known to, and considered by, anyone presuming to discuss the historiography of his time? By definition, no doubt, Guizot's would be a 'general history' and the other three 'specialist histories'; but what resemblance do they bear to Tolstoy's characterisation of his categories?

If it were worth while to explode Tolstoy's charges, one might point out that a book well known to Tolstoy, the Bible, had caused more bloodshed than *Le Contrat social*, and that there is no logical contradiction in stating that power is the result of events and that power produces events – provided that the events which are said to have produced this power are not the events which this power is said to have produced. So that Tolstoy's strictures against the historians of culture and the general historians are far from impressive.

He rounds off this first section of his treatise with the contention that, in order to explain the movements of peoples, history requires to posit some force commensurate with the totality of such movements and that, so long as history is conceived in terms of individuals, historians cannot but attribute to the individuals in question this basic motive force in the only form adequate to their requirements: in the form of the concept of power.

Here we pass to the second section of the treatise. What is power? It obviously does not lie in the physical or moral superiority of the ruler to the ruled. So it is outside the ruler one must look for its source – in the relations between ruler and ruled. These relations are the study of jurisprudence (we might say 'political theory'), with its doctrine of the social contract, according to which the sovereign has been invested with power by the collective will of the ruled. Tolstoy

enjoys himself (and for once we need not grudge him his fun) spotlighting the dilemmas inherent in this theory. How about usurpers: by what collective will are they invested with power? And what of those who rule by right of conquest, or of the heads of factions in a civil war? Then again: what are the criteria for determining whether a given leader has or has not been invested with power by the collective will? And is such investiture supposed to be unconditional? or subject to definable conditions? or subject to conditions which are not definable?

But, as if unable to believe that he has now demolished the social contract doctrine of sovereignty, Tolstoy proceeds to pile Pelion upon Ossa. If the biographical historians were right in viewing historical personages as embodiments or expressions of a collective will, what could this mean in concrete terms? Do rulers embody this collective will even in the most intimate moments of their private lives? Surely not; but then how are we to determine which moments of the activities of the great do have historic significance? So-called philosophical historians purport to solve this problem by postulating as the goal towards which mankind is moving some cloudy, impalpable abstraction such as liberty, equality, progress, civilisation or the like, and proceeding to study those personages whose lives are most fully documented in the measure in which they judge them to have promoted or impeded advances towards the goal in question. Yet obviously there is no proof that any of these abstractions represents the goal of humanity: that is an assumption as arbitrary as the assumption of a collective will. And so, Tolstoy concludes, 'the activities of millions of men, moving from one land to another, abandoning their own tillage to slaughter one another, can never be expressed in the activities of a dozen men who never set fire to houses nor labour in fields nor kill their fellow-humans'.

If the assault on the social contract theory exemplifies what votaries of Tolstoy would call 'his formidable analytical powers' – it leads up, as these exercises so often do, to a *non sequitur*. What Tolstoy set out to prove was that a ruler (or government) cannot be a major factor in the causation of wars; all he has proved, on his own showing, is that a ruler (or government) cannot 'express' or 'epitomise' (*vmestit'*) the life of a nation.

However, Tolstoy assumes that he has now disposed of the only conception of power worth serious consideration and turns to the much more hazardous enterprise of developing his own theory of power.

Although power as conceived by jurisprudence is a figment, it is a matter of experience that power does exist: namely as the relation of 'dependence subsisting between the expression of a person's will

and the execution of that will by other persons'. This formulation is to be noted, as it is not easily reconcilable with the definition reached later in this section.⁴

Whereas the will of God is timeless and undetermined by factors external to itself, the will of man always operates in a context of time and of interaction with other wills. From these premisses Tolstoy infers that 'no command is ever given arbitrarily and none can ever comprise a whole sequence of happenings, but every command issues from some other and covers not a whole sequence of events but always only a single moment of the event' and that 'those who command take the smallest part in the action itself, and that their activity is exclusively directed to commanding'.

The first of these inferences means that Napoleon never ordered war against Russia and could not have ordered anything of the kind; when such expressions are used, they represent nothing but summaries of a long series of orders and measures corresponding to a series of events which terminated in the entry of the French armies into Russia. Whereas when the same Napoleon had issued another series of commands aiming at an invasion of England, they remained ineffective because there was no succession of events which corresponded to them. For, in fact, any order that is carried out is only one of many that are never carried out.

Evidently, it did not occur to the Countess Tolstoy to point out to her husband that if she wrote to the housekeeper that the family would be returning to Yasnaya Polyana on such and such a date with such and such guests and that rooms and meals must be ready when they arrived – that would be a command which did *not* issue from any other and which did cover a whole sequence of events; and that if such an order had not been duly carried out, he as well as she would have felt surprised, if not perturbed! As for Napoleon, it is just not true that his orders concerning an invasion of England were not carried out: the preliminary stages were put into effect, the final order was never given. Similarly, it is indefensible to divorce the military, diplomatic and cognate measures of the first half of 1812 from the purpose of making possible an invasion of Russia: some such underlying, contingent purpose is required to explain why these measures were taken. On Tolstoy's principles one might perhaps prove that Tolstoy did not write *War and Peace* and never could have written it: (1) because no decision of his made in the context of time and of the interaction of human wills could have covered the five-year series of acts which the writing of the novel was to comprise; and (2) because the novel as we have it represents only one of many uncompleted, reworked and superseded drafts. And if we wanted an analogy to the abortive invasion of England –

why not the abortive plan of *The Decembrists* (out of which *War and Peace* was eventually to emerge)?

However, Tolstoy, untroubled by such considerations, pursues his argument thus: 'in no case can an order be the cause of an event'; yet between orders and events 'there does exist a determinate [relation of] dependence'. For any joint enterprise men band together, and the structure of relationships between those taking part is 'always' the same, irrespective of any difference of objectives (between one enterprise and another). So invariable is this structure of relationships that it can be expressed in the rule: 'in achieving a common purpose men always combine in such a way that the more directly they participate in the achievement of the purpose, the more numerous they are and the less able to give orders; and [conversely], the less directly they take part in the action itself, the fewer they are and the more orders they give. . .'. As an illustration of such a structure of relationships Tolstoy cites the army, with its inverse correlation between numbers and direct participation on the one hand and, on the other, authority, that is, the issuing of commands. This structure (he remarks) might be represented by a cone, in which the base and lower part would correspond to other ranks, the apex to the commander-in-chief, and the intermediate levels to non-commissioned and commissioned officers. (One is reminded of Natasha's vision of Boris as a wall-clock and of Pierre as a red and blue quadrilateral.)

But Tolstoy has yet to clarify what he means by saying that certain events 'correspond' to certain commands; and this clarification deserves to be quoted *in extenso*: 'Men are hauling a log. Each one expresses his view as to how and where it is to be dragged. The men finish dragging the log – and it turns out to have been done just as one of them had said. [It was] he [who] gave the command. Such are command and power in their primal form.'

And in case we might feel that we must have misunderstood him, Tolstoy concludes this second section of his treatise with explicit answers to the two questions propounded earlier:

(1) What is power? . . . Power is a relation between an individual and other individuals such that the more this individual expresses opinions, theories and justifications of the joint action in course, the less part he takes in that action. [This refers back to a previous definition of the function of rulers or 'leaders' as being not to rule or lead but to assume and bear the responsibility for the acts, and more particularly the misdeeds and crimes of the masses they are supposed to be ruling or leading.]

(2) What force causes the movement of peoples? . . . The movement of peoples is caused neither by power nor by intellectual activity nor yet by any combination of these two factors, as historians have thought, but by the activity of *all* the persons taking part in the event, who always [!] band

together in such a way that those who participate most directly in an event assume the least responsibility; and *vice versa*. From a moral point of view [*V nraustvennom otnoshenii*], power appears to be [*predstavlyayetsya*] the cause of the event; from a physical point of view – those over whom power is exercised. But since moral activity is inconceivable without physical [activity], the cause of the event is to be found neither in the one nor in the other but only in the conjunction of both. Or, in other words, the concept of cause is inapplicable to the phenomenon which we are studying.

Some of the logical and factual errors in the arguments of the preceding five paragraphs are too evident to call for much comment. The pronouncement that ‘in no case can a command be the cause of an event’ presumably rests on a confusion of ‘cause’ in the meaning of ‘sufficient condition’ and ‘cause’ in the sense of ‘necessary condition’. A command can never be the sufficient condition of an event, for if it is a causal factor, it will be correlated with the responses of the person or persons to whom the command is given; but a command may very well be a necessary condition – a *sine qua non* – of an event.

More curious is the assertion that all human collective enterprises display an identical structure, typified by that of the army. As cursory reflection will show, such a structure is indeed common in large organisations but not generally characteristic of small ones: in a football team, an aircraft crew, a group of scientists engaged on some joint research project (as in countless similar units) there is no inverse correlation between authority and directness of participation in the action, even in the arbitrarily limited sense in which Tolstoy conceives direct participation. But mishandling of such logical categories as ‘all’ and ‘some’ is a not uncommon feature in Tolstoy’s polemics; it has been held to reflect a fundamental trait of his mentality – its all-or-nothing bent.

In choosing the army to typify the structure of collective undertakings, Tolstoy, as an ex-officer, might have been expected to know and respect the facts: whereas we find him wrenching them to fit his thesis: even in a modern army non-commissioned and junior officers will be as fully involved as other ranks in the fighting, while the involvement of middle- and high-ranking officers has varied considerably in the course of history.

As for the parable of the hauling of the log, the kindest thing one can say is that it is beneath criticism: not even in the Russia of Alexander II would the crudest of peasant shacks have been assembled in such a manner. And if we suppose that what Tolstoy had in mind was not the practices of his own day but those of some prehistoric tribe, it would still be the case that his mythic picture

bears no recognisable relation to what is generally understood by power or authority.

The concluding summary of this second section is as self-contradictory as Tolstoy makes his 'general historians' and as basically at odds with realities as, according to Tolstoy, the historians of culture. In saying that the cause of events is found in the conjunction of physical with moral activity, that is of power with the action of the masses, Tolstoy is conceding what he has till this point so strenuously denied: that power does enter into the causation of events. To infer from his own admission that events are caused by a combination of power and physical action, that the concept of cause is inapplicable to historical events, is to highlight the central weakness of the whole 'philosophy': Tolstoy's failure ever to explain what he means by 'cause'. It would have been simple to say, 'the will of a "great man" can never be the sufficient condition of historical events: the sufficient condition must comprise the totality of circumstances and participants together with the history of the past which has produced just those circumstances and those participants'. And in that sense the concept of cause would indeed have been, if not inapplicable, useless. But if that had been all Tolstoy had wanted to establish, he need not have written the second epilogue or the thirty-one chapters of reflections on history. What he wants to establish is that, in assessing the causes of the campaign of 1812, 'For us [i.e., in retrospect] the willingness or unwillingness of this or that French corporal to serve a second term appears as important a cause [*takoy zhe prichinoy*] as Napoleon's refusal to withdraw his troops behind the Vistula and to restore the Duchy of Oldenburg' (III.I). It is true that he himself perceives the absurdity of this claim, for he hastens to add: 'for if he had refused to serve, and a second and a third and a thousand corporals and soldiers. . .there could have been no war'. This mode of argumentation – camouflaging a spectacular absurdity under relatively defensible glosses and then proceeding as if the absurdity had been validated – is another of the 'paradoxes' of Tolstoy's philosophising. All that this passage actually establishes is that Napoleon could not have invaded Russia without an army obedient to his commands; the impression it seeks to leave is that Napoleon could not have invaded Russia without the assent of every single soldier in the *Grande Armée*: in other words, that historical events are not only determined by all those who take part in them (which is true) but are determined in equal measure (which is nonsense).

This second section of the treatise is doubly pivotal: as a most characteristic illustration of Tolstoy's way of thinking and as embodying the crux of his thinking on history. His attack on the

concept of power is directed against two of his pet bugbears: rationalism and the image of the 'great man'. In other words, he is attacking two assumptions about human conduct (which are not peculiar to history but common to the sciences of man): that human action may be determined by reason, and that human action may be determined by the will of others. The first of these assumptions is repugnant to him on the grounds of his own experience, inasmuch as his whole life had been (and was to continue to be) a desperate – and largely unavailing – struggle to harmonise his behaviour with his principles. The second assumption – that the acts of a man may be determined by the will of others – he rejected as an intolerable encroachment on his own freedom and independence; so that it links up with his offensive against the 'great man'.

Throughout *War and Peace* Tolstoy wages a relentless war on the idea of the great man – above all, in the person of Napoleon. The great man is a man who believes in the reality of power as a major cause of human activity and, as a corollary, believes that history can be made by a small minority of men and that he is one of those who is making history. Napoleon sees himself as a titan, and is punished by being degraded to the status of a puppet, a buffoon, a cipher. This hostility to the great man we can see to be rooted in the feeling, to which Tolstoy gives expression with his usual candour, that it is an outrage on human dignity to suppose that we are – any of us – inferior to Napoleon!

This only echoes, in minor key, the creed of young Irtenev, who already in *Adolescence* (chapter 26) had declared: 'I believe that all men are proud and that whatsoever a man does – is all done out of pride'; and goes on to define pride as 'the conviction that I am the best and the most intelligent of men'. In this urge – to be not merely one of the best and most intelligent, but *the* best and most intelligent of men – we can see one of the main roots of all Tolstoy's philosophising. He is driven to cast down and destroy existing authorities – or to put himself in their place. The ex-officer, who had never won a battle, who had been unable to expel the enemy from his native land, decides that military genius is a myth and that great conquerors owe their fame only to the propaganda of charlatans – represent, in fact, the projection of a collective illusion. Later, the dramatist, having failed to fit Shakespeare's crown on his own brow, will seek to tear it from Shakespeare's and dash it to pieces. (Tolstoy's critique of *King Lear* is not apt to be taken seriously by anyone who knows anything about literature; so it seems odd that philosophers, whose proper business is to call all things in question, should prove so much more suggestible.) Finally, after Napoleon and Shakespeare – Christ: we see Tolstoy the prophet annex and reformulate the teach-

ing of Jesus. A real theomachy: 'God by god goes out discrowned and disanointed.'

But this is all in the future; at the date of *War and Peace* Tolstoy is concerned only to proclaim the gospel of a new historiography; and this is the theme of the third section of his epilogue. History can leave the mystery of human free will to theology, jurisprudence and ethics, for to the historian human action presents itself always and everywhere in the form of an indissoluble synthesis of freedom with necessity. In every action of ours liberty and necessity are inherent, and inversely correlated: the more freedom, the less necessity, and *vice versa*. Necessity or freedom seems to us to prevail (says Tolstoy) according as the action is more or less remote from us in time and as we know more or less about its circumstances and causes; but our knowledge can never be so exhaustive that an action seems to be wholly determined, nor is our ignorance of its conditions ever so complete that it could seem to us totally free. In short, freedom is the mode in which our own actions present themselves to our consciousness – in which we experience our own activity; while necessity is the mode in which action – our own or that of others – is understood by us. This might be expressed philosophically by saying that freedom is the content of action, necessity the form of action.

It is not clear why history should be dispensed from wrestling with the relation between freedom and necessity except that that is just the role which Tolstoy has decided to allot to history. Nor is it true that the remoter it is in time, the less free an action appears: to me the murder of Caesar appears no less free than any contemporary political murder; in fact, insofar as the murder of Caesar appears to have been committed by politically motivated men acting on their own initiative, whereas analogous contemporary murders appear often to be the work of lunatics and/or hired killers, it is the contemporary actions which appear less free.

However, Tolstoy continues: history should be a science, and the aim of the sciences is to subsume under rational laws the manifestations of some form of energy (such as electricity, gravitation or chemical affinity); for this purpose they study not the essence of such energy, which is unknowable, but its operations: not what it is but how it functions. Similarly, the object of historical study is human life, human action, of which the essence is freedom; but as a science history must be concerned to study not what this freedom is (a subject for metaphysics) but how it manifests itself in the context of space, time and causality. In this context free will is on a level with all the other, non-conscious, forces in the universe which are studied by the other sciences. Since to study these forces means to subsume their operations under laws, a science of history must likewise aim

to bring under laws the movements of peoples and of humanity. These movements must be probed and analysed till they yield a system of laws analogous to that of any other science. But in such a system there can be no place for the concept of free will as a causal factor. It must, therefore, be treated, in Tolstoy's euphemistic formula, as an infinitesimal quantity. And this, he claims, corresponds, for history, to the Copernican revolution in astronomy; one may expect it will provoke similar opposition and dismay, but these, too, in time will be recognised to be groundless.

So that this last section of the epilogue represents an essentially positivistic schema. History is to be assimilated to the physical sciences. Tolstoy recognises that this will remove history from the compass of morals. But he, the moralist, salutes this as a Copernican revolution; he, the iconoclast, tamely accepts the claims of the physical sciences to constitute the sole model of human knowledge.⁵ One is put in mind of Taine: 'You. . . are aware that, on the whole I am an idealist. Properly speaking, facts do not exist, they only seem to our mind to do so; in reality nothing exists but abstracts, universals. . .'⁶ So in investigating the nature of power Tolstoy, as we have seen, turns to the abstractions of the social contract theory (only to find that unacceptable) and to fact-flouting fantasy (the hauling of the log; power only a scape-goat assuming responsibility for the sins of its society) – instead of to his own experience. As an officer Tolstoy had been subject to power or authority; he had exercised power or authority as an officer over his men, as a serf-owner over his serfs, as a teacher over his pupils. Why does he not explore the conditions in which he had, or had not, been able to enforce his authority? He could not afford to do so because he would have had to recognise that the exercise of power is rooted – always in the psychological conditioning of those who obey, and, at least sometimes and partly, in the abilities and personality of those who command.

Thus, the first section of this epilogue is essentially a diatribe against Romantic historiography (not, as it purports, against all modern history). The third section amounts to an attempt to marry history to Positivism. But the centre of interest for students of Tolstoy lies in the second section with its vendetta against the notion of power. It would sound paradoxical, and it might seem perverse, to condense one's assessment of Tolstoy's philosophising into the epigram that when it is thinking, it is not original, and when it is original, it is not thinking. But it would be no more paradoxical, or perverse, than many of Tolstoy's own propositions regarding history, penology, morality or art. In chapter 19 of the semi-autobiographical *Adolescence* there is a quite extensive account of young Irtenev's processes of cerebration. Several points stand out. Ideas presented

themselves to his mind so clearly and strikingly that he not only imagined himself to be the discoverer of great and important truths but set about applying them in life with quite reckless extremism, that is, with a flagrant lack of realism or perspective. His favourite philosophic attitude was scepticism: which led him not to any Cartesian base for a positive philosophy but, on the contrary, to a sort of solipsism which at one point looked like luring him into the quicksands of insanity. Both in this chapter and, more explicitly, in chapter 27 we can observe his delight in pursuing ideas to the point of intellectual dizziness (which throws a revealing light on the non-intellectual roots of the whole business).

Tolstoy is, like Dostoyevsky's heroes, not so much a thinker as an ideologue and heresiarch. Like them, too, he is pre-eminently a polemist; but whereas the polemics of a Raskol'nikov, a Kirillov, an Ivan Karamazov are aimed against the social order, the order of the universe, or God, the polemics of Tolstoy are largely personal: directed against men of fame or power – rulers, teachers, creators – or their doctrines. Eykhenbaum notes how as a boy at college Tolstoy 'reads the *Nakaz* not as a law student but as if he were a rival of Catherine preparing to assume the government of the Empire'.⁷ And Shklovsky, in commenting on the fact that Tolstoy's main sources for the history of the 1812 campaign were popular, rather than authoritative, historians, writes: 'In my opinion, what Tolstoy required was primarily material which he could quarrel with. He needed someone whose view of the period...would provoke his protest.'⁸

Moreover, Tolstoy shares with Dostoyevsky's ideologues something of their obsessive character: he, too, does not possess the idea but is possessed by it. A thinker starts from one or more hypotheses with the aim of arriving at truth. The ideologue starts from the conviction that he already knows the truth; his mission is to inculcate it in others. For the thinker, truth is relative – or, at least, his own apprehension of truth is so; for the ideologue both are absolute: hence his fanaticism.

It may be of some interest to note how Tolstoy and Kirillov, starting from similar premisses, contrive to differ radically in their conclusions. Kirillov declares in effect: there is no God any more; therefore man must take the place of God. Tolstoy, inveighing against 'modern' historians, takes the line: you have banished God from history and imagine you can put man in his place as the cause of events; but man is not up to such a role: to replace a divine causality, a causality of a quite different magnitude is required. Kirillov is a revolutionary humanist; Tolstoy, as Eykhenbaum and Shklovsky have pointed out, is an archaist and legitimist. Just as Murat is not,

for Tolstoy, a true king nor Napoleon a true emperor, so man cannot be a true First Cause.

It has become a commonplace of criticism to assert that whatever the shortcomings of Tolstoy's synthetic or positive thinking may be, his analytical or critical thought strikes devastatingly home. How far is that borne out by close examination of his philosophy of history?

Shklovsky distinguishes three sorts of writer: those who handle ordinary materials in an ordinary manner; those who deal in extraordinary materials; and those who treat ordinary materials in such a way as to make them appear extraordinary. Tolstoy belongs to the third of these groups; and this 'set' of his creativity derives from his basic scepticism, which embodies his distrust of other people and his hatred of authority. He is always seeking to 're-invent' everything, to rethink every problem as though it had never been tackled before.

This *virginity of vision* constitutes his artistic strength; but in his thinking it is a two-edged instrument. It does indeed slice through the tangles of conventional assumptions and, by isolating the individual elements of a situation or problem, invests them with a relief and brilliance which they are bound to lack when seen in context. But, on the other hand, the urge to reject anything commonly admitted or approved drives Tolstoy to warp or falsify – if not the elements themselves (although this, too, does happen), then the relations between them. And he is all the more prone to do this – quite apart from any ulterior motives – as concentration on single elements in a field of view is apt to blur or throw out of focus the context of their relations with one another. As an example of the extravagances into which even Tolstoyan analysis may fall it is enough to recall his treatment of the concept of power.

For an understanding of these and other singularities of Tolstoy's philosophising one can profitably turn to Jean Piaget's masterly studies of the evolution of intelligence: from the preverbal stage to that of mature reasoning through the various intermediate phases which he designates as pre-logical.⁹ The thought of the child, like other modes of primitive thinking, has as its primary aim not truth but emotional satisfaction (and, we may add, this is equally the case with the ideologue, irrespective of his intelligence and his sincerity in pursuing and professing the truth).

This pre-logical thought is characterised by two root-qualities: its egocentrism and its concreteness. By egocentrism is meant that the subject is incapable of distinguishing clearly between ego and non-ego: his consciousness of self is not objective but immediate, so that in each operation of thought everything has to be referred back to the self as centre and starting point, and consequently the manipulation of relations, which is the key process in mature thinking, is

marked by rigidity or irreversibility. Thus, the child at a certain stage of development will be able to handle relations only insofar as they are centred on himself: knowing perfectly well that John is his brother, he will be unable to grasp that, by the same token, he must be John's brother; or he will be capable of identifying his own right and left hands quite correctly but will fail to do the same for a person sitting opposite him.

The concreteness of pre-logical thought (its second root-quality) means that this thinking is so tied to concrete particulars as to be precluded from efficient handling of general concepts as well as of relations, whether spatial, temporal, or logical. The inability to handle relations manifests itself predominantly in two tendencies which Piaget calls 'syncretism' and 'juxtaposition'. Syncretism is the invention of non-existent relations (an example of which might be such creatures of mythology as the sphinx, the chimaera, the centaur). Juxtaposition is the failure to recognise existing relations, which comes out clearly in many children's drawings, where, e.g., all the parts of a bicycle will be thrown together on the paper with no regard for their relative sizes or functional connections.

The foregoing analysis of Tolstoy's philosophy of history will have evidenced how largely all these characteristics figure in his polemical thinking. Rigidity or irreversibility – in particular, the inability to entertain alien points of view even by way of hypothesis – is constantly noticeable. A capital example of this is his insistence (which forms the starting point and pivot of the whole philosophy) that the sole question for modern history must be the cause of the movement of peoples, and that historians addressing themselves to any other problem are deaf men answering questions that nobody has asked. Equally basic (but less out of the common) is his refusal throughout to envisage alternative conceptions of causality.

Syncretism (the invention of relations) is at the root of all the parables: of the locomotive, the herd of cattle, the hauling of the log, the ship. One might see it, too, in the spatialisation of moral relations: the commander-in-chief is the apex of a cone; history is made by those who do the actual killing (but then, why not, as Dragomirov wittily observed, by the bayonets, bullets and shells rather than the soldiers?).¹⁰

The whole definition of 'power' furnishes as dazzling an illustration of *juxtaposition* (failure to recognise real relations) as could be desired. Tolstoy looks at human power or authority as he makes Natasha look at the opera (or as he himself, in the course of the novel, looks at Napoleon). Natasha's perception of the opera is magnificent art in its psychological context, that is, in terms of her state of mind that evening. But it is not opera as any opera-lover

could recognise it: opera (and ballet) with the music (and the choreography) left out – Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. Similarly, Napoleon throughout the campaign of 1812 is systematically denied any intellectual or emotional depth, any will-power, any ability, any personality.

Quidlibet audendi pictoribus atque poetis. As artists, that is, and in their own field. But thinking is an art on its own; and, like every other art, has its technique, which can be learned. Tolstoy never bothered or never managed to learn the technique of thinking. He did learn the techniques of writing; and so he was able to transcend them – and become a Napoleon of literature. Napoleon had studied the techniques of generalship; and so he was able to transcend them – and become a Tolstoy of the battlefield. Tolstoy and Napoleon were geniuses. So when they set themselves to do things for which they had no adequate training – to philosophise or to rule an Empire, respectively – they could put up performances which were in some respects remarkable. But they could not put up performances comparable to those they did put up in their proper fields, nor yet equal in all respects to what might be given by lesser men with adequate training. Tolstoy's philosophising is a capital element in his life and work; and as such, is properly of interest to biographers, historians of literature and literary critics. And as one main root of the tragedy of the man and the greatness of the artist, it may be of profound interest to psychology. But all this does not imply that it need be of any interest to philosophers; the onus of proof rests squarely on whoever believes that it is.¹¹

NOTES

An earlier version of this paper appeared in Italian in *Ricerche slavistiche* in 1962 ('La "filosofia della storia" di L. Tolstoj', *Studi in onore di Ettore Lo Gatto e Giovanni Maver*, G. C. Sansoni, Rome, 1962). In spite of shifts of emphasis and modifications in the light of my rereadings of Tolstoy and reading of new books about him, the substance of the two papers is the same; I am, therefore, obliged to Messrs Sansoni for their courteous permission to publish this.

1. For a gallant attempt to defend the part assumed by the philosophy in the novel see: A. A. Saburov, '*Voyna i mir*' L. N. Tolstogo (Moscow, 1959). But even Saburov is driven to the admission: 'In Tolstoy's act of creation the philosopher is not always subordinated to the artist. At times he shakes off the fetters of the literary plot and speaks out as an autonomous, independent power, ousting the artist with his literary

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subject. And this in turn leads to the autonomous development of a philosophic form with its characteristic circumstantiality and pedantry of argument.' For a forthright condemnation of all the ideological digressions in the novel (of which the philosophy of history is far the most important) see R. F. Christian, *Tolstoy's 'War and Peace'* (London, 1962): 'From an artistic point of view there is little to be said for the digressions. . . Their structure is laboured, their syntax cumbersome. They abound in oratorical tricks, heavy irony, questions and answers, divisions and sub-divisions. . . Besides the offence they give to many readers by their tedious style and their uncompromising position, they are structurally unfortunate in that they lay too heavy an emphasis on what should emerge naturally from the course of the fictional narrative.'

2. In volumes III and IV; in the first two volumes the philosophy of history had not yet crystallised.
3. Several of these questions are illuminated in Sir Isaiah Berlin's whimsically entitled essay, *The Hedgehog and the Fox* (London, 1953). This offers us, together with an ample paraphrase of Tolstoy's views on history, an examination of some of the literary antecedents of those views, and a kind of apologia in which he contrives to relate Tolstoy's historical 'paradoxes' to his artistic apprehension of life. But readers of the essay, while they can hardly fail to admire so much erudition expressed with so much eloquence and to feel stimulated by many of the insights into the interaction between Tolstoy's intellect and his creative emotions, would seek there in vain for the kind of critique called for by Sir Isaiah's initial indignant rejection of the attacks on the intellectual quality of the philosophy of history made by Turgenev and other contemporaries and never effectively met.
4. Here we have an explicit recognition of a relationship in which an action performed by B represents the carrying out of an expression of will by A: very different from the fortuitous 'correspondence' between the actions of the many and the haphazard emission of 'opinions, theories and justifications' by the one, postulated in the hauling of the log and the whole peroration of section 2.
5. This, in the very decade when Dostoyevsky's underground man was not afraid to raise the banner of revolt against the claims of 'Science' to reduce the human individual to the status of an item of statistics. True, he was at a loss for an acceptable substitute; but it is arguable that at that time, to reject the absolute authority of the mathematical and physical sciences was at least as 'progressive' (as rewarding and fruitful), whether for the creative artist or the teacher, as to make idols of them.
6. *Life and Letters of H. Taine*, translated by Mrs R. L. Devonshire (London, 1902-8), vol. II, pp. 215-16 (quoted in James Westfall Thompson, *History of Historical Writing* (New York, 1942), vol. III, p. 446).
7. Boris Eykhenbaum, *Lev Tolstoy* (Munich, 1968), vol. I, p. 19.
8. Viktor Shklovsky, *Material i stil' v romane L'va Tolstogo 'Voina i'*

mir', Slavistic Printings and Reprintings (The Hague-Paris, 1970), p. 44.

9. In particular, to his *Psychologie de l'intelligence* (Paris, 1952). If the figure of Freud dominates the psychology of the first three decades of this century, that of Piaget may come to be seen as dominating the following three. An excellent introduction to Piaget's many-faceted work is: Herbert Ginsburg and Sylvia Oppler, *Piaget's Theory of Intellectual Development: An Introduction* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1969). The pre-logical period divides into three phases, sensorimotor, pre-operational, and the stage of concrete operations. It is tempting to quote two or three brief passages from Ginsburg and Oppler. 'In summary, the preceding five properties of the young child's speech – the faulty use of pronouns and demonstrative adjectives, the incorrect ordering of events, the poor expression of causality, the tendency to omit important features, and finally, juxtaposition – all are concrete manifestations of the young child's egocentrism; that is, his inability to take the other person's point of view' (pp. 92–3). With 'the faulty use of pronouns' compare Tolstoy's habitual misuse of 'all'. His 'incorrect ordering of events' is exemplified by his restriction of man-centred historiography to the modern period. This, and 'the tendency to omit important features' (as in the discussion of power) are, in fact, varieties of juxtaposition.

Again: 'In addition, however, the older child shows a kind of legalistic fascination with the rules. He enjoys settling differences of opinion concerning the rules, inventing new rules, and elaborating on them. He even tries to anticipate all the possible contingencies that may arise. Piaget tells a delightful anecdote about the legalistic tendencies of this stage. He observed a group of boys aged 10 and 11 who were preparing to have a snowball fight. Before getting on with it, they devoted a considerable amount of time to dividing themselves into teams, electing officers, devising an elaborate set of rules to regulate the throwing of snowballs, and deciding on a system of punishments for transgressors. Before they had actually settled on all these legalistic aspects of the game, it was time to return home, and no snowball game had been played. Yet, all the players seemed content with their afternoon' (p. 102). This will no doubt put students of Tolstoy in mind of his early diaries, with their proliferation of codes never carried into effect. At a still earlier stage, 'at the same time that the child believes the rules to be sacred and immutable, he also does not know them too well and does not follow them. Again we seem to be faced with a paradox: how can he place so much faith in the same rules that he consistently breaks?' This obviously has a bearing on the whole long succession of Tolstoy's codes and creeds; in the present context – on his inability to apply his philosophy of history consistently in his presentation (in the body of *War and Peace*) of the historic events of 1812, which I have examined elsewhere ('Le réel dans le roman de L. Tolstoï', *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves*, University of Brussels, XVIII (1968), 347–54).

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10. M. I. Dragomirov, *Razbor romana L. Tolstogo 'Voyna i mir'* (Kiev, 1895), comprising six articles originally published as the separate volumes of the novel appeared.
11. To those who may be shocked by such close reading of texts – or by what they take for a slighting of Tolstoy's 'intellectual power' – it is worth pointing out that it is perfectly possible to be both highly intelligent and an indifferent logician. Moreover, insofar as Tolstoy's philosophising is an impassioned search for truth (in which a great deal of the passion, admittedly, gets directed against those whom he sees as obstructing such a search), it should be borne in mind that logic is an art at which few of us remain adept when our vital interests are involved: when passion intervenes, we are all more or less apt to regress to earlier patterns of thinking or behaviour.

The Purleigh Colony: Tolstoyan togetherness in the late 1890s

M. J. DE K. HOLMAN

Why in a community? One ought not to separate oneself from other people. If there is anything good in a man, let that light be spread about him wherever he lives. What numbers of people settled in communities, yet nothing came of it! All their energies went at first into the external arrangement of life, and when at length they settled down, there began to be quarrels and gossip, and it all fell to pieces . . .

(Tolstoy to an aspiring colonist, July 1908)¹

Tolstoy strongly objected to being called a Tolstoyan. He was, moreover, frequently at pains to deny the existence of any specifically Tolstoyan movement. Nevertheless, at its height, the movement to which he had, *nolens volens*, lent his name, extended throughout Russia, North America and almost every country in Europe.² Its strength naturally varied considerably from one country to another, as indeed did the forms in which his followers chose to give practical expression to their beliefs, but in almost every country where his political, social and religious ideas achieved widespread popularity, attempts were made to establish Tolstoyan communities or colonies. These alternative societies, their advocates insisted, would both enable participants to 'get out of the system', leading simple honest lives untainted by the evils of capitalism, and provide a practical demonstration of the efficacy of Tolstoyism in resolving the dilemmas of modern industrialised society.

Nowhere, outside Russia, was Tolstoy's popularity greater in the last twenty years of his life than in England. Whereas in Russia he had revealed himself gradually, his English readers enjoyed no such gentle introduction. They were forced to discover him in a rush, as it were, for Tolstoy the artist and Tolstoy the social reformer were revealed to them almost simultaneously. And being unaware of the sequence in which works of fiction and works of social criticism had been written, his English readers could hardly appreciate, for example, that twenty years separated the writing of *War and Peace* and works such as *What then Must We Do?*, *What I Believe* and



A group of well-wishers seeing off V. G. Chertkov and P. I. Biryukov in St Petersburg, February 1897, after they were ordered into exile. Chertkov is on Tolstoy's left in the back row, Biryukov immediately to Chertkov's left, Chertkov's wife is seated fourth from left, and the small boy on the ground is Chertkov's son (lent by Dr B. J. Kenworthy)



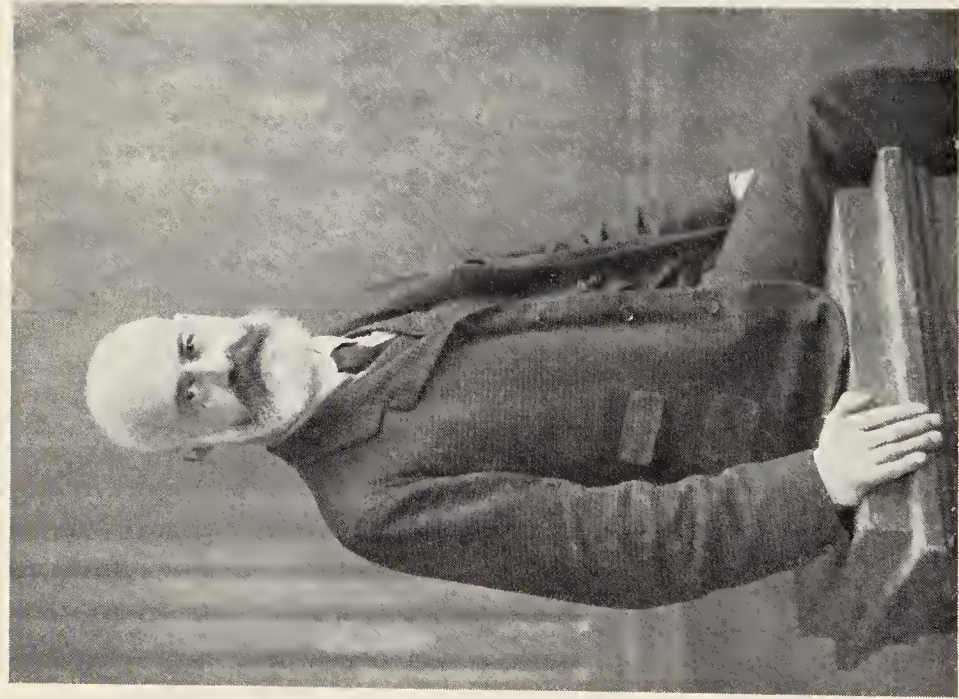
Tolstoy and Vladimir Chertkov (1908/9?). Taken by Thomas Tapsell after Chertkov's final return to Russia in June 1908 from exile in England (tent by A. Brandt Esq.)



Tolstoy's Yasnaya Polyana house from the south. Tolstoy lived here on and off between 1856 and 1910. Taken by Thomas Tapsell in 1908 (lent by A. Brandt Esq.)



Left to right: Tolstoy's doctor, the Slovak Dushan Makovitsky (1866-1921); the English photographer Thomas Tapsell (died 1915); Tolstoy; his daughter Tatyana L'vovna Sukhotina-Tolstoya (1864-1950). Probably taken in the autumn of 1909 (lent by A. Brandt Esq.)



Aylmer Maude (1858-1938)
(lent by the grandchildren of Aylmer Maude)



John Coleman Kenworthy (1863-1948)
at the time of his involvement with English
Tolstoyism
(lent by Dr B. J. Kenworthy)

*Walk in the Light While There Is Light.*³ They could only marvel at the remarkable combination in one man of the imaginative artist and the political polemicist. Certainly, so far as the ideas in Tolstoy's non-fictional writings are concerned, in England they fell on fertile and well prepared ground. His moral fervour, his penetrating analysis of the ills of contemporary society and his combination of a very basic, personalised Christianity with what can best be called anarcho-populism, accorded well with the prevailing anti-establishment mood. The closing years of Victoria's reign were marked by intense public and private debate embracing a whole variety of fundamental social, political and religious questions. The Independent Labour Party, led by Keir Hardie and both socialist *and* Christian – not Marxist – was enjoying its first parliamentary successes; the Fabian Society flourished; and in a series of major strikes affecting the whole country, organised labour was testing the resolve and challenging the power of the 'bosses'. In this atmosphere of unrest and inquiry Tolstoy's political and religious tracts with their advocacy of a 'third way' found an avid readership among individuals and groups eager to experiment with new forms of communal living and new patterns of labour.⁴

One such group, from which the Purleigh Colony directly sprang, was the so-called Croydon Brotherhood Church. This was set up in May 1894 under the leadership of an honorary pastor, John Coleman Kenworthy, and its members used to meet, rather appropriately, in former Salvation Army Barracks in West Croydon. (Kenworthy himself had no connection with the established church – the title of pastor being chosen primarily to indicate the moral authority he enjoyed in the eyes of his flock.) A prolific writer and a man of considerable persuasive powers, he played a leading role in the establishment of a variety of community experiments in the 1890s and was the prime mover behind the Purleigh enterprise. Born in Liverpool in 1863, he spent the years 1877–90 in commerce. He joined the socialist movement early in the 1880s and from the start was evidently attracted more by its utopian and moral, than by its purely political, aspects, for his reading centred on Emerson, Henry George and Ruskin, and he was, in fact, a member of Ruskin's Guild of St George. It was not until 1890, when in America, that he came across the works of Tolstoy, but the encounter changed his life. In Tolstoy's writings he found a confirmation and expansion of all he had previously thought and felt. He abandoned his plans to settle in the New World, gave up what promised to be a successful career in business – one source suggests that he had accepted a post as manager of a large bacon factory⁵ – and returned to England after only eighteen months away. 1892 found him in London, living

among the poor in Canning Town and working, without any real success in numerical terms, but with much publicity among concerned circles, to establish cooperative societies in connection with the Mansfield House University Settlement. It was this work that brought him to the notice of the Croydon group and led to his being appointed as honorary pastor to the Brotherhood Church.

Although it naturally drew its members from anti-establishment groupings, at the outset the Brotherhood Church had no clear, well formulated ideology of its own. Nellie Shaw, a member of the original Committee of Management, makes this lack of a constructive unifying principle abundantly clear, when she writes:

It may be doubted if ever a more mixed and diverse crowd ever gathered within four walls than used to assemble weekly at the old Salvation Army tin tabernacle in Tamworth Road. Every kind of 'crank' came and aired his views on the open platform, which was provided every Sunday afternoon. Atheists, Spiritualists, Individualists, Communists, Anarchists, ordinary politicians, Vegetarians, Anti-vivisectionists and Anti-vaccinationists – in fact, every kind of 'anti' had a welcome and a hearing, and had to stand a lively criticism in the discussion which followed.⁶

All agreed that the *status quo* was intolerable, but no-one could agree how best to rectify the situation. Even the people occupying 'official' positions within the Church entertained widely differing views. G. D. Blogg, usually referred to as 'Comrade' Blogg, was a social democrat; Mary Grover was a theosophist, a Fabian and a strong suffragist; David Fraser and his wife were both spiritualists, as also was William Swainson; Fred Muggeridge was a socialist and stood in the local elections; while Arthur St John, who was later intimately involved with the emigration of the Doukhobors, came from a military family, had resigned a commission in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and was an aristocrat through and through. The unifying influence was provided both by the ideas and by the magnetic personality of Kenworthy. Although his brand of Christian-communist anarchism offended the more doctrinaire parliamentary socialists among the membership, it provided a positive ideological direction and a constructive unity of purpose to the majority who were prepared to go along with him.

Some six months after the formal establishment of the Brotherhood Church, in January 1895, Kenworthy started a monthly news-sheet first called the *Croydon Brotherhood Intelligence* and then, from the November 1895 issue, the *New Order*. In this little magazine, which provides a fascinating picture of English Tolstoyism in the late 1890s, Kenworthy could formulate policy and give the movement positive guidance. He could also, of course, reach a

larger audience than was possible in his regular addresses to the Croydon group's Sunday meetings – a fact reflected in the wider appeal of the journal's altered name. From the start Kenworthy had a clear idea of the Church's main aims. In the very first issue of the journal he writes:

The Brotherhood Church, as the name implies, aims at gathering together people of ALL CLASSES, to learn and to practise the fraternal principles of the SERMON ON THE MOUNT. Nothing, to an honest and good mind, can be plainer than this purpose.

Our message is, and must be, especially to the working people and the poor – the fellows of those who, of old, heard Jesus gladly. Whatever work may eventually become, the duty of the hour is to carry the doctrines of SOCIAL SALVATION into every heart and home that we can reach. We desire to help every Social activity that makes for righteousness; and to waken the minds of men with a gospel that calls for, and shows the way to, honest and right conditions of industry and business, which are the first needs of social life. Upon this foundation we labour to build up the spiritual and moral natures of ourselves and of others, after the Christ-ideal.

May I urge upon every member the duty of making our work, his own particular work. Each one must labour in his own surroundings and help to unite people of character and ability who may eventually take part in the CO-OPERATIVE INDUSTRIES which we hope to establish. Our aim is BUSINESS: secular things are with us sacred, and we would apply the principles of true religion to all the affairs of life, beginning with the primary forms of labour.

Kenworthy's tone was insistent, his language the language of campaigning Christianity and populist socialism, and his ultimate aim, as we learn from subsequent issues of the *New Order*, was the establishment of an alternative society based on brotherly love and honest labour. In a later issue of the journal he elaborates on his vision of this ideal society towards which he sought to move his readers:

In this ideal society, each ought to do his fair share of useful work with brain and hand, labouring first to make and spread about the necessities of life, food, clothing and shelter; the less necessary work to be done after this necessary work. By such a division of labour no man need have too much work, nor need work be unpleasant; and none would be cursed with idleness.

In this ideal society, men would not bargain, or compete, or monopolize, as they do now; but each would make it his business to see that his neighbours got what they needed and wanted, just as he would wish his neighbours to do to him.

In this ideal society, no man would have power to force others to do his or their bidding; for men, seeking each the other's good, would need no laws with soldiers and police for protection against others, or for the compulsion of others.

In this ideal society, there would be no enmities over religion, and no effort of some to force their opinions on others; for all men would try to learn and follow truth, fact; and would find themselves able to agree, because they would be honest and frank to each other.⁷

Truly a utopian vision! And one very much inspired by the writings of Tolstoy. The difficulty, of course, was how best to set about the business of transforming this vision into reality. Tolstoy, Kenworthy believed, did manage to practise what he preached:

in Tolstoy's writings [Kenworthy writes in *The Labour Annual* for 1896] is conceded, and insisted upon, everything for which the most advanced Socialism and Communism contends. Common property in land and capital; the fraternal, loving, common participation of all in the benefits of nature and the products of social labour; the abolition of force in government – no reformer asks for more than Tolstoy demands. But how few reformers *give* as much as Tolstoy does! He not only *believes* these things, but he *lives* them; and the crown of his teaching is the precept, that *the world will never be reformed until men reform themselves*. What is the use, he would ask, of talking about Socialism, Communism, Christianity, while you are not prepared, personally, to live an honest and true life? You cannot, yourself, reform the world; but you can reform your own life; and the world is waiting for salvation until men do just this simple – yet how difficult – thing.⁸

In essence Kenworthy held the view that in order to bring about genuine reform, action was needed on two main levels – firstly the individual, and secondly, progressing naturally from the first, the social. If one were to conduct one's personal life in accordance with the principles of the Sermon on the Mount, then one could hardly tolerate poverty, the slums and the cynical manipulation of the mass of workers by a small class of capitalist employers. What was needed, therefore, were new forms of labour and living to provide honourable and just alternatives to capitalistic exploitation.

The Brotherhood Church members found one such new form of labour in their various cooperative enterprises. These included the Brotherhood Publishing Company, producing Tolstoyan and kindred literature; the Brotherhood Trust Store, which supplied groceries, fruit, vegetables, books, stationery and a variety of Labour and socialist papers; a laundry, which advertised regularly in the *New Order*, promising 'Best Wages. Shortest Hours. Fair Prices. No Private Profit.' – thereby underlining the absence of exploitation in any form; and a Dressmakers' Society run along anarchist lines, which undertook to provide good wages and short hours for the workers and good work and fair prices to the customers. Of these cooperative enterprises, the Brotherhood Trust Store, managed by David Fraser and Frank Henderson, who later, in his capacity

as a publisher, brought out the first English-language edition of *Resurrection* with Leonid Pasternak's illustrations,⁹ was the most ambitious in conception. It also advertised regularly in the *New Order*, and in every advertisement the list of goods offered for sale was preceded by a list of the Trust's declared objectives. These were:

1. To form a Store for the supply of Goods produced with the least injury to the producers.
2. To carry on a business the gains of which will NOT be devoted to the private profit of any individual, but to further the FRATERNAL and INDUSTRIAL objects of the Trust.
3. The ultimate establishment of a self-supporting group of Co-operative industries.¹⁰

Wherever possible the Trust purchased goods from cooperative societies. Thus its cocoa came from the London Productive Society, its jams and wheat meal from the Methwold Farm Colony and Village Industries Association, and its needles from the Alcester Needle Makers' Cooperative Manufacturing Society. Private profit was anathema, whereas cooperatively produced goods were goods produced by honest labour, no worker having been exploited and no individual having thereby benefited financially in the course of their manufacture.

The other honourable form of labour open to Brotherhood Church members eager to follow Tolstoy's example and to put their Sermon-on-the-Mount principles into practice, was active participation in a land colony. The cooperative enterprises after all, although certainly representing an advance on the traditional capitalist forms of business, were in many ways merely a kind of half-way house along the road to a truly moral and genuinely constructive life. Only in a land colony, many members believed, labouring without compulsion or exploitation, alongside like-minded colleagues far from the grime and hubbub of the cities, could the ideal be fully realised. Only in such a colony, moreover, would it prove possible to 'get off the backs of the workers', as they put it, and indulge in a properly Tolstoyan form of 'bread-labour'. This concept of 'bread-labour' or 'honest labour' was one much talked about in Brotherhood Church circles, for it appeared not only to prove the moral superiority of the manual worker, whose cause they championed, but also to provide them with the ideological and moral justification for the establishment of a land colony. As such the concept merits some comment.

Although, of course, a great part of Tolstoy's post-crisis thinking has to do with the primacy of physical work, he never claimed to be the originator of the term 'bread-labour' or *khlebnyy trud*. The true originator of the term, as Tolstoy indicated in the essay translated

by Maude as *Industry and Idleness*,¹¹ was the peasant sectarian Timofey Mikhaylovich Bondarev whose ideas he first came across in 1884. So closely did they correspond with his own that he immediately set about championing his cause.

Bondarev contended that the prime duty of man consisted in reducing his consumption to a minimum and in earning his bread – meaning the basic essentials of food, drink, clothes, shelter and fuel necessary to preserve him from death by cold or hunger – by the labour of his own hands. Such physical labour Bondarev called ‘bread-labour’, claiming that if all men were to simplify their lives and to undertake their share of ‘bread-labour’, then inequality and exploitation would vanish from the face of the earth, cooperation would replace competition and all causes of strife and unhappiness would disappear. The scriptural basis for his belief in man’s need and duty to indulge in physical labour he found in Genesis 3.19: ‘In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread’ – a verse which he clearly interpreted as a commandment whose observance would lead to salvation, rather than as a curse, uttered following that fateful tasting from the tree of knowledge. Expressed in its most basic form, and this was certainly the way it was seen by the Brotherhood Church members, every individual possessed in his own two hands the wherewithal to achieve salvation, and that salvation, initially individual, but ultimately also collective, lay at the end of a spade! ‘Bread-labour’ essentially meant digging one’s way to the Kingdom of Heaven. In order to be able to dig, however, one needed land, and land could only be purchased with money, of which the Brotherhood Church had very little. From the start, therefore, not only was it understood that any profits accruing to the various semi-industrial cooperative enterprises would be placed towards the establishment of a prospective land fund, but also that members would actively search for a suitable site to which certain of their number would eventually go forth, spade in hand, to fill their lungs with fresh country air and by tilling the soil earn their bread in the sweat of their faces. Produce grown on the colony land, moreover, would be sold in the Brotherhood Trust Store and each enterprise would thereby contribute to the other’s success.

Although a full two years were to elapse between the formal establishment of the Brotherhood Church and the actual purchase of suitable property, from the beginning the pages of the group’s journal bear eloquent witness to the single-mindedness with which the search for a suitably priced and strategically sited plot was conducted. Thus, in the March 1895 issue we find a note indicating that an action committee had been formed, consisting of friends Fraser, Gosling, James Henderson, Millen, St John and Sidey, with a view

to 'acquiring a good-sized piece of land in some pleasant situation near Croydon'.¹² And in his leading article in the April issue for the same year Kenworthy writes, somewhat optimistically as it turned out: 'soon we hope to have our market-garden started'. Two issues later we find him noting that Arthur St John was leaving Croydon for the Rev. H. Mills's Farm Colony at Starthwaite near Kendal: 'there to learn the things he needs to know to fit him for the life of true work which he means to lead. He takes with him our love, and the hope that, when others of us are ready here, he and we may share the new life together'.¹³ Clearly Arthur St John, with military efficiency, intended to be equipped with the relevant knowledge when the time came for the Croydon group to embark on their own land colonisation project.

Following Kenworthy's visit to Tolstoy¹⁴ in the winter of 1895-6, the *New Order*, at Tolstoy's suggestion, began to carry a regular feature given over to news of communal living experiments not only in England, but further afield as well. This feature included, for example, reports on the New Australia scheme in Paraguay, the very successful and well-regimented Ruskin Cooperative Association of Tennessee City in America, and, rather nearer home, the 'Free Communist and Cooperative Colony' established at Clousden Hill Farm near Newcastle. The Newcastle experiment, although only a relatively recent venture, had, it was noted, already been honoured by visits from a number of anti-establishment personalities, including the Labour leader Tom Mann and the anarchist Prince Kropotkin. Clearly the Croydon folk were not alone in their desire to escape from the parasitic life of the city and to partake of the genuine, good, simple life on the land. They were part of a world-wide home-colonisation movement, growing in strength with each passing year.

In the second half of 1896 efforts to find suitable land were finally successful, and a plot was purchased from a certain Mr J. Nunn of Hill House in Purleigh who had some years previously bought up the large Avenals estate near Cold Norton for sale purposes. Being a member of the Christian Levellers and actively interested in land settlement colonies, Nunn was particularly pleased to be able to sell to the Brotherhood. According to E. Hopwood, writing in the *New Order* for December 1896, the initial sum necessary to buy the land and to provide the enterprise with a working capital of approximately £20 per acre was put up by six of the better-off Church members. Each apparently contributed between £50 and £60, thereby lightening the burden on their individual consciences and making it possible at last for the Brotherhood to put its collective principles to the test. (Had they relied on capital accruing from profits made by the cooperative enterprises alone, the wait would

have been a far longer one, for the total profit of the Brotherhood Trust Store for the fifteen-month trading period to February 1896 only amounted to a meagre £25.) At a later stage the Colony received financial support from a number of sources, the main one being Arnold Eiloart, who, before eventually joining the first pioneers in the spring of 1897, had been a lecturer in chemistry at the Royal College of Science in Kensington. Having come into a legacy and feeling that it would ill accord with his principles to make use of the money himself, he donated something in the region of £2,000 to the Colony general fund. According to William Sinclair, one of the original three colonists, who wrote to Aylmer Maude on 14 November 1912 providing what he called an 'approximate statement of the funds of the Purleigh Colony', the total receipts amounted to £2,415 and were made up as follows: Maude - £230, Eiloart - £1,650, Kenworthy - £100, Hammond - £70, Sinclair - £180, Protheroe - £10, Henderson - £25, Spratley - £100 and Marsland - £50. On the debit side he noted that the following sums were paid out: £395 for land, £550 for buildings, £120 as a donation to the Whiteway Colony, about which more will be said later, £40 as a repayment to Hubert Hammond, £28 for two cows given to Hone, £382 for general expenses and the maintenance of the colonists, and by far the largest single amount, £900 donated to the Doukhobors. Sinclair, who was obviously writing from memory, goes on to add:

Eiloart thinks he must have paid in £2,000, judging from the amount of his 'inheritance' and his efforts to trace its disbursement. *He says none of the money he put into Purleigh was paid to the Doukhobors*, but I have a distinct recollection that when we made up our accounts and allowed enough to finish the buildings etc. then in hand and 6 months maintenance for the Colonists there was a sum of £900 available for the Doukhobors.¹⁵

More will be said about this donation to the Doukhobors below, but the important thing to note here is not so much the precise sums donated by the various individuals, but the fact that without Eiloart's legacy the Purleigh Colony might never have been started. As is the case today with so many alternative societies¹⁶ whose members wish to opt out of the capitalist system by embarking on projects aimed at agricultural self-sufficiency, an initial compromise with capital had to be made in order for the experimental society to come into existence at all. Such niceties, however, would have been of little concern to the Brotherhood members at the time. Under the heading: *Our Colony Begun*, the *New Order* for November 1896 proudly reports: 'At last we have secured, and actually begun work "upon the land". We have bought ten acres of good arable land, with a frontage for houses, at Purleigh, near Maldon, Essex.'

So the movement to the land had finally commenced. Enthusiasm among members ran high. 'It makes one smile,' writes Nellie Shaw, 'but in those days it looked to some of us as if to gain salvation one must join the Colony'.¹⁷ Indeed one receives the impression that if wise counsels had not prevailed, almost all the Church's members would have descended on 'their plot of land' during that first winter of 1896. As it was, however, until the following spring the population of the Colony was kept intentionally small – just three enthusiastic, able-bodied, but agriculturally ill-prepared young men. Two – William Sinclair and Hubert Hammond – had previously been employed as bank clerks, while the third and youngest member of the group, Sudbury Protheroe, had been planning to enter the world of property as an auctioneer. Although the *New Order* for the early part of 1897 provides little information on the young men's experiences during the first few months – the three pioneers were as yet too busy preparing the ground for crops to supply the journal with what eventually became a regular *Purleigh Notes* feature – accounts recorded later indicate that it was a long and difficult winter. As the plot had no housing attached, the men were lodged in two cottages, rented for £8 per annum, half a mile away in the hamlet of Cock Clarks. They lived a life of spartan simplicity, being allowed a maximum of five shillings per week for their keep, and having to wash, clean and cook for themselves. Their diet, according to a not particularly sympathetic *Clarion* reporter who visited the Colony in August 1898, consisted for weeks on end of 'cold porridge, and an occasional onion to take the taste away'.¹⁸ However, undeterred by the simple fare and physical discomfort of their bachelor existence, Hammond, Sinclair and Protheroe persevered with spirit and dedication. Occasionally they received visits from Brotherhood Church members, the most welcome, no doubt, being from William Hone, who had formerly worked as a gardener on a large estate and could therefore provide useful practical advice. By April 1897 much progress had been made, and Hammond could report with obvious satisfaction in the *New Order*:

The work is going on splendidly. Much planting has been done, fuller particulars of which will appear in the *New Order* for May. The workshop is nearly finished; we can already use it, as it is weather tight. It is twenty feet by ten. The tool-shed has been up for some time. Three fowl houses have been built. Sinclair has over a hundred eggs in the incubator which he made last year. He hatched most of the present stock of forty fowls with it. A wire fence has been put up round the land to keep off cattle and sheep which pass on their way to market. About three acres have been turned over during the winter, and nearly half-an acre dug three feet deep for the orchard, which we hope to plant in the autumn. The erection of

the greenhouse has been begun; it will be a hundred feet long. We have bought a swarm of bees.

In fact throughout 1897, which must be considered physically the most creative and spiritually the most harmonious year of the Colony's existence – a year of 'home-building' in the time-honoured tradition of almost all experimental communities – agricultural and construction work continued unabated. And the numbers of people involved – both of active, full-time colonists and of sympathisers residing in the area – steadily grew. By April William Hone together with six pullets, two goats, his three sons, his wife and his fifteen-year-old daughter – the first female presence – had joined the three pioneers. (As Hone was a man with family responsibilities, Eiloart guaranteed him a weekly wage of £1, for a practical gardener sharing the colonists' aims and ideals and permanently in residence was clearly an asset worth securing.) Eiloart himself also became a full-time colonist in the spring of that year. By November 1897 Hammond was able to report that the number of full-time colonists had risen to fifteen and that, in addition, there were scattered around the district some thirty-five people who had come to Essex, as he says, 'with some desire to live worthy lives'. In under a year the Colony had become very much a going concern, attracting considerable attention both in Essex and beyond and giving the participants the feeling that they were at last 'getting their own lives right'.

The year 1897 also witnessed a considerable strengthening of the colonists' ties with the wider Toystoyan movement. Within a few months of each other Vladimir Chertkov and Aylmer Maude both moved from Moscow with their respective families to settle for a time in the Purleigh area. Chertkov had angered the tsarist authorities by his active involvement on behalf of the Doukhobors, championing in particular their right to refuse military service, and as a consequence of his participation in the production of the pamphlet *Pomogite! (Help!)*,¹⁹ he was ordered into exile in February. Preferring exile abroad to banishment to the Baltic provinces, he chose to come to England, where he was assured of a friendly welcome and a secure base from which to continue his campaign. He stayed first in Croydon, making contact with Kenworthy and the Brotherhood Church, and later in the year removed to rented accommodation at Mill House in Purleigh. Maude's departure from Russia was of a more voluntary nature, but one also occasioned by his association with and temporary conversion to the principles of Tolstoyism. He had spent more than twenty years in Moscow, going there in the early 1870s and rising to become Director of the Russian Carpet Company, but following his introduction to Tolstoy

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in 1888 and particularly his repeated meetings with him in the winters of 1895-6 and 1896-7, he found himself no longer able to reconcile his sympathies for Tolstoy's philosophy with his own world of buying and selling.²⁰ He therefore decided to resign and return to England. He left Moscow at the end of March and, like Chertkov, after a brief stay at the Brotherhood Church, moved to the Purleigh area, taking up residence with his family at Wickham's Farm in Danbury, just a short walk across the fields from the Colony land. In settling near Purleigh it was clearly the intention both of Maude and of Chertkov to make contact with the colonists and to cooperate with them in the propagation of Tolstoyan ideas. Although Maude was later to write very critically both of the colonists' principles and of their personalities,²¹ from his arrival in Purleigh until his departure for Canada in September 1898, he and his family made a considerable contribution to the physical and spiritual welfare of the Colony. They donated liberally to its finances, made an additional presentation of two cows - Mrs Hone used the milk to make butter - and invited the colonists to the musical evenings they held at the farmhouse. They also provided food and accommodation: Sudbury Protheroe moved in to live with them, eventually using the large farm oven to bake the Colony's bread, and Mrs Maude cooked the midday meal in the communal open-air kitchen and served it at tables set up under a protective awning. Indeed so closely did Maude himself at one time become involved with the Colony's affairs - this was in addition to his translating work - that when the *Essex County Chronicle* reported on the undertaking beneath the heading *Another World in Essex*, he was referred to as 'a distinguished member of the "Brotherhood"' and his very positive interpretation of the group's aims and methods given great prominence.

Our idea [he is reported as saying] is to raise a sufficient food supply to keep us by cultivating the land. It is generally conceded, I believe, that the labourer, as a rule, receives 30 to 40 per cent of the value of his work in the shape of wages. We, therefore, think that we ought to get a decent subsistence by a cent per cent return. If we can do this and show that our scheme is really a practical one, it will be a useful example to others, and we can see no reason why it should not be adopted as a means of relieving the slums of London eventually.²²

Certainly there is no indication here of his later censure and intellectual reservations.

Chertkov's connections with the Colony were far less intimate than Maude's. His primary concern was not so much to live by 'bread-labour' with a group of similarly minded brethren, but rather to popularise Tolstoy's writings and other endeavours. He therefore

dedicated himself to writing, translating, lecturing and publishing, drawing on the Purleigh colonists and the Brotherhood Church members in Croydon for whatever assistance he could, as and when he needed it. Purleigh, like Croydon, served him only as a temporary base and jumping-off point for his wider proselytising activities, for in both centres he was able readily to make the acquaintance of English Tolstoyans who later rendered him sterling service after his establishment of the highly successful Free Age Press²³ and his move to Christchurch in Hampshire. Yet he did give the colonists a sense of being in regular and direct contact with Tolstoy and he did attract a considerable number of Russians, from simple Doukhobors to revolutionaries of noble descent, to the Purleigh area.²⁴ And like Maude he was made an honorary colonist and thereby permitted to participate in the monthly meetings, having an equal voice with the full-timers in resolving Colony business. On balance, however, he and his Russian entourage took more from the Colony than they gave. They arrived before the colonists had had time physically to establish themselves in their new environment and spiritually to adjust to the novel experience of living in a community working on the land. Merely the great influx of English participants together with wives and families in 1897 rendered interpersonal relations in the Colony considerably more complex than had previously been the case with only the three men in residence, but the untimely arrival of the Russian contingent and the unavoidable involvement of the colonists in the constant comings and goings of the Doukhobor migration, exhilarating though it was, subjected the group to unfortunate additional stress.

Indeed in the latter part of 1897, even before the presence of the Russians had really begun to impinge on the life of the Colony, the initial signs of frustration with achievements and disagreement over principles were already becoming apparent. In what concerned the horticultural work, of course, the increase in numbers enabled good progress to be made. Ground that had been trenched, ridged and dug during the winter was broken down according to the requirements of the various crops to be grown. Early potatoes were planted on the half acre of deep-dug ground. Peas, beans, oats, sun-flowers and spring wheat were sown and the six-acre meadow, which was to be used for hay, bush-harrowed and rolled. By June thirty-five feet of the planned hundred foot greenhouse had been completed, fitted with heating apparatus and planted with tomato plants and three vines. Other semi-horticultural operations were also carried out, as witnessed by Hammond's September report:

We have undertaken a serious work this month in cleaning out the Colony

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pond. The brickmaking and building operations had used up most of the water. The rest was pumped out, and then began the task of digging out the mud, which probably had been accumulating ever since the pond was made. With the aid of a wheelbarrow, horse and cart and wooden platforms, at least a hundred tons of black mud has been moved out. This has been splendid work as the mud will be valuable for the land next spring and we shall be provided with a deep pond later on. . . The third batch of bricks is now ready for burning. The brick-work of the cottage is completed and the roof is on. There is still much to be done before it will be ready for habitation, however. A wooden shed, with glass roof, has been built round the greenhouse boiler. This will be used as a coke store and for drying seeds etc.²⁵

However, this almost total preoccupation with the business of providing for the physical necessities of life in the way of food and accommodation meant that little time remained to spread the message of communal togetherness and alternative patterns of labour among the neighbouring villages. The colonists received plenty of visits from intellectual sympathisers coming from further afield – some to observe and participate, others just to observe – but the unintellectual agricultural folk in whose midst the experiment was being conducted, remained largely unenlightened. Occasionally, it is true, they were invited to social evenings organised by the colonists. However, these gatherings do not appear to have been aimed at winning converts or engendering ideological understanding. On one Saturday evening in August, for example, over one hundred people gathered in a barn lent for the occasion by a neighbouring farmer and were entertained to a programme of glees, musical sketches and songs. On the Sunday the barn provided accommodation for a function of a more devotional nature to which the villagers were again invited. Some eighty people attended, Labour Church hymns were sung, three readings given, including *A Dream of John Ball* by William Morris, Arthur St John delivered an address, and the proceedings were rounded off with some humorous singing which afforded considerable enjoyment to the villagers, especially the children. On both occasions the accent was on entertainment rather than enlightenment. Even these organised social contacts were the exception rather than the rule, and for the most part relations between the locals and the ‘Brotherhood’, as the Colony came to be known in the area, remained on the level of casual contact, with neither side going out of its way to communicate. Certainly what impressed the villagers most about their new neighbours was not their ideas, of which they clearly knew little, but their outlandish working clothes. Aylmer Maude being interviewed calmly cutting kale barefoot, wearing a tennis shirt and trousers and what the

reporter refers to as 'a kind of sombrero'²⁶ must have cut a most unconventional figure in the Essex countryside. The colonists' dress also impressed the correspondent Whatnot from the *Clarion*, who wrote:

In appearance the colonists are. . .outré. They seem to run to extremes so. Such hats! and such footgear! – when they have any. And their trousers!!! A few of them seem to wear trousers that have been plucked before they were ripe. Several old ladies in the district have been scandalised by 'them' colonists who wear such scanty continuations. I couldn't help wondering whether those who wore such conspicuous attire were developed by taters and whatnot or Tolstoy and beans.²⁷

This failure of the colonists to make any impression on the rural population – other than by their eccentric attire – was the source of quite considerable discussion and disagreement within the group. Of course, before the establishment of the Colony no common policy had existed on what attitude they ought eventually to adopt towards their new neighbours. Nobody had probably ever given it a thought. After all, until land had been found and a start made, the problem of what relative emphasis ought to be placed on winning local converts to the colonisation cause (thereby saving jobless agricultural workers from the evils of the city), and on digging the proverbial potato patch (to provide bodily sustenance for the converted), was purely hypothetical. And once land had been found and a start made, opinions, it was discovered, differed. The more practical members, like Hone, preferred to get on with the business of growing crops; Kenworthy, who had never been particularly skilful with his hands, and whose talents lay in manipulating ideas and people rather than agricultural implements, supported – in his actions if not in his writings – the claim of the proselytisers; Hammond, on the other hand, emphasised the importance for each individual intelligently and conscientiously to work out his own salvation and develop a genuine attitude of inner understanding without pressure from any quarter. 'Bread-labour is undoubtedly of very great importance,' he wrote in the *New Order* for November 1897, 'but so also is good temper.' Already, therefore, with the agricultural experiment hardly a year old, the colonists had begun to wrestle with the perennial problems of the right relationship of good works to inner goodness, and the relative value to society of spiritual and physical labour. In most established societies these problems are, of course, also discussed, but there usually exists very little practical possibility of such discussions radically altering the *status quo*. In the Purleigh Colony, however, things were very different.

The most fundamental of the Tolstoyan precepts acknowledged by

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Kenworthy and accepted as a firm basis for a moral life by the Purleigh colonists, was the total rejection of violence in all its forms. Along with this rejection of violence went a denial of the moral authority of all coercive public bodies and a raising of the individual conscience to the position of supreme arbiter of right and wrong. All externally applied rules presupposed the existence of sanctions, and for sanctions to be administered, violence in one form or another would have to be threatened, and, if necessary, employed. Logic, if not common sense, therefore demanded that any alternative society based on Tolstoyan precepts should have but a single rule: that there be no rules. So it was that the Purleigh Colony had neither rules nor a constitution to guide it on its way. This lack of any formal structure and the resulting very fluid behaviour patterns tended to accentuate the importance of personality and mood. It also meant that any discussion of minor everyday matters tended to escalate into a discussion of principles, and such discussions always had the potential to end in principled action that threatened the Colony's continued existence. That the differences of opinion in the first year did not present an immediate threat can be explained primarily by the fact that the novelty of home-building, and of sowing seed, of watching plants grow and harvesting the fruit, had not yet worn off. Productive work on the land may have been proving more of a full-time occupation than some of the members had anticipated, but for the time being they submitted to the patterns and restrictions which it imposed.

Although a considerable amount of agricultural work was completed in the early part of the year and a further thirteen acres purchased in May, 1898 saw the various personal tensions and ideological differences increase to such a pitch that they could no longer be passed over in the excitement of shared endeavours. In the early stages of the Colony's existence even the more anarchistically inclined brethren could accept a certain limitation of their personal freedom, if only because the doctrine of 'bread-labour', to which they all subscribed, required that everyone perform his fair share of physical work, and physical work imposed a pattern of its own. They could, therefore, easily convince themselves that their submission was made consciously and voluntarily, and was, moreover, to a natural rather than a man-made law. Yet, as time went by, the mere fact of living and working together led to the growth of certain additional patterns and routines which had their origin in social and organisational requirements. Affairs of general interest to the Colony, for example, came to be discussed at a regular weekly committee meeting, which all ordinary and honorary members could attend. No action was taken on any issue unless unanimity could be

achieved, and if this proved impossible within the space of a single meeting, then the issue was left over until the following week. A more democratic procedure could hardly be devised, but in the absence of any formal rules it operated to the advantage of the talkers rather than the workers. Certain unwritten codes of conduct similarly came to be established in matters relating to work. In theory colonists were free to work or not as they felt inclined – a ‘work-what-you-like-hour day’ the *Clarion* called it²⁸ – but it gradually became apparent that one of the essentials for a colonist was that he be a good, energetic worker. A minimum daily output tacitly came to be expected, and those who consistently failed to achieve the standard were, as Nellie Shaw remembers: ‘treated to severe looks and more or less “sent to Coventry”’.²⁹ It was, in fact, this problem of productivity, and the related issue of the criteria to be adopted when considering applicants for membership, that gave rise to the most fundamental disagreements and eventually caused the Colony to crumble and collapse.

In theory anyone could join, and initially neither procedures nor conditions for the acceptance of new members existed. Gradually, however, certain procedures did develop. Applications from prospective colonists came to be considered at the weekly business meetings, the applicant first having been informed of the group’s ideological and financial position, and it being left to him to decide whether or not to join. The colonists thus put the onus of decision on the applicant, making it appear as if he were accepting them, and not vice versa. The natural consequences of such a procedure were to turn away the man of conscience, who either felt that he would not ‘fit in’ ideologically or that the Colony’s finances could not support an extra member, and to welcome the loafers and spongers less concerned with the overall welfare of the group. Subsequently certain conditions of membership, albeit unwritten ones, also established themselves. The Colony was by no means self-supporting, it was besieged by a whole host of applicants, its accommodation was limited and its financial reserves dwindling. If its survival as a group were to be safeguarded, then new members could not be accepted indiscriminately and in unlimited numbers. But was its survival as a group really of such cardinal importance? Was it not of far greater importance to maintain the ‘truly Tolstoyan’, no rules, open admission policy? The idealists, who saw Purleigh as the practical expression of a principle, and of value only so long as it remained true to that principle, felt that all who wished to become members should be free to do so. The realists, who understood that the ideal could not be attained immediately and that certain compromises would have to be made if the organisation which would bring that ideal

nearer were to be preserved, felt that some restriction on membership should be imposed. As with the disagreement the previous year concerning the relative merits of propaganda and work in the fields, this difference of opinion once again involved issues fundamental to the group's basic philosophy. This time, however, it proved impossible to bridge the gap between the two factions.

Matters came to a head at a July business meeting, when it was decided to tell Brent and Trafford, two young men from the Midlands who had spent the previous month at Purleigh as novices, that their presence in the Colony was no longer desirable. By actually resolving to expel two aspiring colonists, who had already been sharing in their lives, the group demonstrated in the clearest possible way that the principle of no rules and no sanctions had in practice been abandoned. Subsequent events, moreover, showed that the decision had been far from unanimous. It so happened that a young Quaker journalist from Gloucester, Samuel Veale Bracher, who had come into an inheritance of £1,000 which he wished to put to public and not private use, was also staying with the colonists during that fateful summer. The treatment of Brent and Trafford, however, persuaded him to abandon his original intention to throw in his lot – and his money – with the Purleigh folk, and he resolved to start another group, where all would be welcome, irrespective of their views on work, sex, religion, money or anything else. That Whiteway, the colony which he and his money helped to found, soon abandoned its initial anarchistic and communistic practice is not of primary importance here. What is important is that a fair number of the Purleigh idealists joined Bracher's new enterprise, leaving Kenworthy with a much depleted following. Among those who left were two of the three pioneers – Protheroe and Sinclair – Joseph Burt – another bank clerk – and Eiloart, the Purleigh Secretary and its main benefactor. Nellie Shaw, a frequent visitor to Purleigh, although never actually a member, also passed into the Whiteway orbit.³⁰ This loss in manpower also meant a loss of capital, both real and potential, for not only did Bracher take his inheritance back to the West Country with him, but the colonists remaining at Purleigh repaid their departing brethren a proportion of the money they had originally deposited in the general fund. (Ideological differences evidently occasioned no lasting personal animosity.)

The Whiteway split could not have come at a worse time, for it coincided with a period of intense Doukhobor activity, and in this the colonists could not but become involved. Since Kenworthy's editorial in the December 1895 issue, the *New Order* had carried regular and sympathetic reports on the plight of their 'brothers in spirit'. Moreover, following the arrival in Purleigh of Chertkov,

and the participation of many colonists in his activities, they had had ample opportunity to hear first-hand accounts of the increasingly brutal persecutions,³¹ both from visiting Doukhobor families and from those organising the campaign in their support. In July 1898, for example – just when the expulsion issue was being so hotly debated – the two Doukhobor families of Peter Makhortov and Ivan Ivin, together with Prince D. A. Khilkov, descended on Purleigh, only to leave almost immediately for Cyprus, whence they soon returned for a further stay before departing for Canada at the beginning of September. As early as December 1897 active support for the Doukhobors had claimed the almost full-time services of Arthur St John. Between September and December 1898, Aylmer Maude was away in Canada negotiating with the Canadian authorities on the Doukhobors' behalf, while later in 1899 the Colony permanently lost Herbert Archer, who left for Canada to supervise the latter stages of the resettlement. However, the flurry of activity, the personal tensions and the loss of manpower occasioned by the Doukhobor migration, while certainly coming at a most awkward time, were only temporary inconveniences which would hardly have caused the Colony any lasting damage. Of far greater consequence was the colonists' decision to support the operation financially. Taking but little thought for the morrow, and following the traditions of 'real' Christianity as propounded by Tolstoy in his post-crisis writings, Archer, Eiloart, Protheroe and Sinclair wrote to the Doukhobors offering their help:

We who write are a Committee appointed by some of the Colonists here who have money, to administer that part of it which they have decided to offer you in the hope that you will accept it to help your emigration.

In the first place there were voted for this purpose £500 which we could easily spare. Later, when we read your telegram to Tchertkoff saying 'cannot wait', the Colonists decided to reserve only enough money for about six months and to offer you the rest. This amounts to £800. But of the £500 first mentioned nearly £100 has been spent in the journey to Cyprus made by your comrades Ivin, Mahortoff and Hilkoff. Altogether, then, we have £1,200 at your disposal, and we beg you to use the whole of it if you find it necessary. For after six months, even if we do not before then receive help from our friends, we can earn our living by working outside the Colony. . .³²

Thus, at a stroke, the colonists gave away a sum equal to half the total income of Purleigh since its establishment. On the face of it, an act of complete folly, but as men of principle who had continually offered verbal support to the Doukhobors and who professed to live by the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, what alternative did they really have? The Doukhobors' situation was critical, and their

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need immediate. Not to have donated the money might have enabled the Colony as an organisation to survive and perhaps even to thrive, but only at the cost of those principles which had called it into being and which provided its continuing *raison d'être*. Clearly the money had to be given, even if this left the general fund so severely depleted that six months later the colonists might have to re-enter the capitalist system as 'wage-slaves' and the Colony itself assume a radically altered character.

Purleigh never properly recovered from the problems and disagreements of the summer of 1898 – difficulties not made any easier by 'excessive heat, and a plague of wasps, journalists, visitors and sympathisers'.³³ After the Whiteway split, and the additional surrender of personal and financial resources to the Doukhobors, the will to work seemed to go out of the majority of the group. Attitudes polarised and it soon became clear that little agreement would be possible between the two factions of 'thinkers' and 'doers'. Hone, as usual, emphasised the primacy of practical work and organisation. Realising that genuine freedom and true self-respect could never be achieved by dependence on charity, he took the theorists and talkers to task in an article printed in the November *New Order*. 'Lack of concentration of effort', he diagnosed, was the movement's greatest weakness. If all who wished to 'live worthy lives' were ever to be able to come to Purleigh, then this could only be achieved if the group were to become self-sufficient. And self-sufficiency could only be attained as a result of hard work. 'Much time spent in meditation coupled with vague or visionary ideas that somehow things will come out all right', he argued, 'will never accomplish much in the direction of building up Colonies.' He had little sympathy for those extreme non-resisters in the movement who were prepared to surrender all their material possessions rather than 'actively object to the action of others whatever course they pursue'. While not ignoring the spiritual side of the movement, he saw the only path to success as one requiring patience, perseverance, a modicum of social pressure and a fair measure of self-discipline. He, and one or two other members, would have been satisfied with some form of efficiently run, collectively organised market garden, and it was no doubt thanks to their efforts that agricultural and constructional work continued well into 1899. Tomatoes were planted in the greenhouses, eight acres were sown with corn, one acre with potatoes and half an acre with peas; the fruit trees were attended to and thanks to a welcome donation from two unnamed friends there was sufficient money to permit the building of a further cottage. This gift, however, was hardly sufficient to offset the donation to the Doukhobors, and there was little that could be done to convince the theorists that

'bread-labour' actually meant working and not just talking about work. They set themselves firmly against Hone's market garden idea, which they regarded as a back-door return to commercialism, and concerned themselves with problems of a less mundane nature, tuning their consciences to an ever increasing degree of sensitivity. The greater part of their deliberations revolved around the evils of state power and how to be consistent in their attitude towards it. If one objected to the coercive nature of the state, ought one to pay rates and taxes? Should one use the postal services and the railways? Ought one to use money at all? Perhaps barter would be morally more acceptable? But then barter too implied the possession of private property, for to be able to offer goods in exchange one must first legally own them. Maybe begging – possessing nothing beyond what was necessary to satisfy the most immediate and elementary requirements of food, shelter, warmth and clothing, and relying on others to assess what those requirements were – would make for genuine ideological consistency? And if one rejected the authority of the Established Church, ought one not also to reject the official marriage ceremony? Was not a 'free-union', a coming together by mutual consent, witnessed by other members of the community and without promises or oath-taking, morally superior to the official Church service? Where, ultimately, should one draw the line between the claims of the individual conscience and the collective will of the group? Then, of course, there was the infamous 'Sex Question', referred to as 'S.Q.' by the colonists and considered by Nellie Shaw to have played a major part in the decision to start a new enterprise at Whiteway.³⁴ How closely ought one to follow the teachings of Tolstoy on the subject? Surely Tolstoy could not have wanted people to take him literally when he advocated total abstinence from sexual intercourse, even for married couples? These questions – and many more besides, all likewise stimulated by the desire to live a perfect life in an imperfect world – exercised the minds of the theoreticians (and tried the tempers of men like Hone), during the latter stages of the Colony's corporate existence. Little wonder that a visitor in the early summer of 1899 observed that 'argument seemed to be the farm's chief produce'.³⁵

In the course of 1899 Kenworthy saw his creation gradually disintegrate about him, as, one by one, colonists and sympathisers drifted away. Some were attracted to more radical ventures elsewhere, in the first instance, of course, to Whiteway. But there were other experimental communities too: Starnthwaite in the Lake District, Norton near Sheffield and the 'Christian Communist Group' in Blackburn, itself a further development of the Brotherhood Church in Leeds, which Kenworthy had done so much to

support in 1898. Others chose to return to a less communal way of life and to tasks better suited to their talents. The Maudes immersed themselves in the business of translating and publishing *Resurrection*, while Frank Henderson, who had taken over the editorship of the *New Order* from Kenworthy in February 1898, went into publishing. Kenworthy himself, who had continued to travel up and down the country in support of kindred ventures even during the period of his closest involvement with Purleigh – he had therefore never been more than an honorary, part-time colonist – does not appear to have spent any more time at Purleigh in 1899 than he had in previous years. Indeed his lecturing programme would suggest that he was absent rather more. January found him in London, Halifax and Leeds; February mainly in London, lecturing on successive Sundays to the ‘London Tolstoyan Society’ – yet another of his ventures – on ‘Property’, ‘Sex’ and ‘The Higher Life’, while in August he was again in London, this time speaking twice every Sunday – in the evening to the Tolstoyan group and in the afternoon (‘weather permitting’!) to a rather more mixed gathering at Marble Arch, Hyde Park – on ‘The Money Relation’, ‘Egotism’, ‘The Futility of Plans’ and ‘Idealist Morality’. On the occasions when he was to be found in Purleigh, however, he appears to have made a point of subjecting any potential recruits to a lengthy ideological interrogation. Percy Redfern, who was later to act as Secretary to the loosely constituted Manchester Tolstoy Society, and who visited Purleigh in June 1899 with a view to joining the Colony, has left the following account of the grilling he was given:

It was proper that even a waiting candidate should be tested; and when I called on J. C. Kenworthy I was taken in hand. The spiritual leader of the colony sat at an easel, painting very deliberately, and with his eyes upon his apparently so careful work, between each stroke of the brush he threw at me some new, transfixing question... Head of a movement generated in a well-to-do London suburb, the tall, severe man at the easel was free, and as one who could neither understand nor tolerate any failure to find personal freedom he spared no arrow. Did I not admit the falsity of existing economic and social relations? Could any man live by falsehood? Was not truth life, and life truth? Could I not trust to truth for my living? Would God, being absolute truth, let any man serve truth and starve?³⁶

Such an interrogation would have been quite unthinkable in the early days of the Colony, and, not surprisingly, Kenworthy’s attempts to avoid a recurrence of the previous summer’s difficulties by insisting on ideological conformity met with no success. Such rigidity, especially at a time when freedom was paramount, and Whiteway could say of itself: ‘Does not barter, but gives and takes freely,

recognizes no laws or external rules beyond those of conscience, and has burnt its title-deeds, not believing in property-holding',³⁷ was hardly likely either to win new recruits or to induce existing colonists to stay on. In June, when Redfern visited Purleigh, there was still some communal life to be observed. When Francis Sedlák, a Czech Tolstoyan who had come from Yasnaya Polyana on Tolstoy's advice, arrived in July, he found only the Hone family remaining. To all intents and purposes, Kenworthy's Tolstoyan land colonisation experiment was at an end, for a single family, however large, hardly makes a colony. And as if to emphasise the venture's final passing, the October issue of the *New Order* published – without editorial comment, save for the brief, but all-important statement that this was happening 'for the first time' – the 'Articles of Constitution of the Brotherhood Colony, Purleigh, Essex'. The various articles had to do with rules and rights and duties and procedures – especially procedures to be followed in the event of colonists wishing to withdraw from the enterprise. And the objects, set out quite simply in the very first article, were: 'to form a Colony for carrying on Agriculture and other pursuits as far as may be on Communal lines'. Nowhere was there any mention of 'bread-labour', non-resistance or Tolstoy.

A number of years had yet to pass, however, before Purleigh completely disappeared from the Tolstoyan and home-colonisation map. As we have seen, there was a fair degree of mobility between the various communal experiments, and shortly after the turn of the century, when Kenworthy, Chertkov and the Maudes had all turned their attentions elsewhere, a serious attempt was made to reopen the venture by people who had grown dissatisfied with their colony experiences in other parts of the country. By the spring of 1902 – the year of the Essex smallpox epidemic – there were already ten people, mostly from Leeds and Blackburn, living in the Colony barn. Hone too was still in Purleigh (indeed he was still there in 1912), but there is little evidence to suggest that he became involved with the newcomers. They were in the main of persuasions even more radical than those of the original Purleigh settlers: they scorned the legal marriage ceremony, refused to register the birth of their children, as far as possible avoided the use of money, preferring to live on charity rather than to work for wages, and objected in principle to being vaccinated. During the epidemic eight of them became infected. One colonist died. The public health authorities were forced to take action, and rather than transport the sick colonists to hospital, turned their barn into a temporary isolation unit.³⁸ Following the barn's subsequent thorough disinfection, the colonists returned to live there, giving themselves up increasingly to the practice of spiritualism. (It will be remembered that there had been a fair number of spiritual-

ists – and anti-vaccinationists! – among the founding members of the Croydon Brotherhood Church.) Late in 1903 two of the colonists, one a medium and both ‘no-money’ men, even begged and borrowed their way to Yasnaya Polyana in what they later recognised to have been a totally misguided attempt to convert Tolstoy to spiritualism.³⁹ Bitterly disappointed by Tolstoy’s cool reception, the two men made their way back to England the following June, and by 1904 most of the colonists appear to have finally dispersed. A small group returned to Leeds,⁴⁰ and at least one member⁴¹ eventually went to assist Chertkov at Tuckton House in Christchurch. The attempt to revive the Colony had only ever been partially Tolstoyan in concept, but with the group’s dispersal Purleigh’s link with Tolstoyism and the English home-colonisation movement was finally broken. As one commentator wrote: ‘the adventure ceased’.⁴²

The reasons for the swift collapse of the original Purleigh ‘adventure’ have been variously explained. Kenworthy, who also soon turned to the spirits for solace and was later confined in a psychiatric hospital, attributed the crash to lack of *character*;⁴³ Maude felt that a want of *definiteness* was the group’s main failing;⁴⁴ Tolstoy, who had written to Kenworthy as early as July 1896 expressing his lack of faith in ‘brotherhood or church communities’ and his disapproval of what he calls ‘a community of saints among sinners’,⁴⁵ felt that ‘the form of life which was chosen by the Colonists for the realization of their spiritual needs was not adequate’.⁴⁶ There are certainly elements of truth in what all three men have to say. In essence the colonists attempted too much too quickly. United by their common desire to escape from an evil society in which they saw themselves forced to be both ‘wage-slaves’ and ‘parasites feeding off the blood of the workers’, they had only the very haziest conception of the social organisation with which they wished to replace it. Moreover, although they had talked much in the Brotherhood Church’s early days of Tolstoyism and the alleged unity of principles and practice in Tolstoy’s private life, they had thought little of the practical, everyday implications of certain aspects of Tolstoy’s teaching. The fundamental opposition of the organisational demands of ‘bread-labour’ and the anarchistic implications of non-resistance to evil had never occurred to them. Tolstoyism, like the Sermon on the Mount, is concerned with developing attitudes of the spirit rather than with establishing patterns of social organisation, and spiritually the colonists were ill-prepared for community life. The fierce individualism that had made possible their uncompromising stand against the system outside the Colony precluded any compromise with the developing system inside. Percy Redfern, writing in the *Labour*

Annual for 1900, well appreciates the difficulties of experimental communities such as Purleigh, when he writes:

Such colonies start with everything against them. Nothing has been done for them by previous generations. All lessons are fresh ones. Customs which a nation has been fashioning for centuries are cast aside, and new ones have to be made in a year or two; while the men and women who propose to do this, by reason of the strong individuality that makes them outstrip the rest, are often the less fit for the work. In a large society there is sufficient diversity of character to secure a fair amount of harmony. In an isolated group of a few uncommon individuals the reverse must often be the case.⁴⁷

Indeed, when one considers the numerous additional difficulties faced by the Purleigh colonists, one can only wonder at their considerable achievements. Size and survival are ultimately not the sole criteria of success, and principles are rarely, if ever, consistently practised. As Tolstoy pointed out later in the conversation with an aspiring colonist quoted at the beginning of this article: 'the ideal of the material life cannot be fully realized, any more than the ideal of the spiritual life. The whole point is in the constant effort to approach the ideal.'⁴⁸ Certainly, when the history of English Tolstoyism eventually comes to be written, a chapter at least deserves to be set aside for Kenworthy and his pioneers, for between the autumn of 1896 and the summer of 1898 their venture really did offer English home-colonists and Tolstoyans of diverse nationalities the promise of an honourable escape from capitalist competition and, it seemed, a short cut to the Kingdom of God.

NOTES

1. A. B. Goldenveizer, *Talks with Tolstoi*, translated by S. S. Kotliansky and V. Woolf (London, 1923), p. 173.
2. For an excellent, brief assessment of Tolstoyism as a world-wide movement see W. B. Edgerton, 'The Artist Turned Prophet; Leo Tolstoj after 1880', in *American Contributions to the Sixth International Congress of Slavists* (The Hague, 1968), vol. II, pp. 61-85.
3. *War and Peace* had to wait some seventeen years for its first English edition (Vizetelly, London, 1886), whereas *What then Must We Do?* first appeared in England a mere two years after its completion (*What Must We Do Then?*, Walter Scott, London, 1888). *What I Believe*, finished in 1884, appeared the very next year (Elliot Stock, London, 1885). *Walk in the Light While There Is Light*, finished in 1887 and frequently recommended to aspiring English Tolstoyans as seminal reading, appeared twice in English in 1890 as *Work While Ye Have*

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- the Light*, in Heinemann's International Library and in the October and November numbers of the *Fortnightly Review*, LIV [OS], XLVIII [NS], 531-58, 707-37.
4. A comprehensive historical survey of English experimental communities can be found in W. H. G. Armytage, *Heavens Below; Utopian Experiments in England 1560-1960* (London, 1961). Of special interest, although not always accurate in emphasis and detail, is the chapter on Tolstoyan communities (pp. 342-58) which reproduces material from an article by the same author published earlier as 'J. C. Kenworthy and the Tolstoyan Communities in England', in *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, XVI.4 (1957), 391-405.
 5. *Essex County Chronicle* (12 November 1897).
 6. N. Shaw, *Whiteway: a Colony on the Cotswolds* (London, 1935), p. 21.
 7. *New Order* (March 1897).
 8. J. Edwards (ed.), *The Labour Annual* (London, 1896), pp. 229-30.
 9. L. Tolstoy, *Resurrection: a Novel*, with thirty-three illustrations by Pasternak, translated by Louise Maude (London, 1900).
 10. *New Order* (July 1896).
 11. L. Tolstoy, *Essays and Letters*, translated by A. Maude (London, 1903).
 12. *Croydon Brotherhood Intelligence* (March 1895).
 13. *Croydon Brotherhood Intelligence* (June 1895).
 14. Kenworthy's account of his trip to Russia, during which he met both Aylmer Maude and Vladimir Chertkov for the first time, can be found in J. C. Kenworthy, *Tolstoy: His Life and Works* (London, 1902), pp. 48-98.
 15. From a letter in the 'Maude Papers' and kindly lent to the present writer by the trustees of the will of Lionel Maude Esq.
 16. For a thorough study of British alternative societies in the 1960s see P. Abrams and A. McCulloch, *Communes, Sociology and Society* (Cambridge, 1976). Parallels with Purleigh are too numerous to mention, but for problems of finance and self-sufficiency see in particular pp. 132-5.
 17. Shaw, *Whiteway*, p. 32.
 18. *Clarion* (20 August 1898).
 19. Although the Appeal, signed by Pavel Biryukov, Ivan Tregubov and Vladimir Chertkov, was issued in Russia on 12 December 1896, the full Russian text was only published the following year, when Chertkov was already in England (*Pomogite! Vozzvaniye k obshchestvu po povodu goneniya na kavkazskikh dukhoborov...S poslesloviyem L. N. Tolstogo* (London, 1897)). An English version, with an introduction by Kenworthy, was issued by the Brotherhood Publishing Co. in August 1897 in *Christian Martyrdom in Russia; Persecution of the Spirit-Wrestlers (or Doukhoborts) in the Caucasus* (London, 1897).
 20. Maude gives a detailed account of his 'conversion' to Tolstoyism in a lengthy article published in the *New Order* for September 1898 and entitled 'An Awakening to Right and Wrong'.
 21. A. Maude, *The Life of Tolstoy: Later Years*, 2nd edn (London, 1911), pp. 546-7.

22. *Essex County Chronicle* (19 August 1898).
23. Chertkov set up the English section of the Free Age Press at Maldon in Essex early in 1900, moving to Tuckton House in Christchurch in the winter of the same year. All publications were marked 'No Rights Reserved' – a policy of which Maude, who undertook many of the early translations, strongly disapproved (Maude, *Tolstoy: Later Years*, pp. 556–9), but which did not prevent the venture from producing and selling Tolstoy's religious, social and ethical works in unprecedented quantities. A. C. Fifield, who was manager and joint editor from the beginning until his resignation in 1902, wrote in 1933, in an unpublished account of his time with the Free Age Press (kindly lent to the writer by A. Brandt Esq.):

all unused to business by nature and training as he was, . . . Tchertkoff yet bowed his neck to my English yoke and subdued himself for three years sufficiently to enable me to issue no less than forty three separate publications of a total length of 2,024 pages, . . . with a total circulation of 209,000 copies besides a quarter of a million leaflets. And multiplying the page length total by the circulation attained one can say that 'The Free Age Press' put before the English-speaking world no less than 424 million pages of Tolstoy's writings, on a self-supporting basis, with no personal profit; besides permitting very extensive reproduction of the articles and stories in magazines and newspapers.

Fifield eventually opened his own publishing house, and in 1905, his wife, who had been able to observe not only the work at Tuckton House, but also the life of the Brotherhood Church and the Purleigh Colony from close quarters, wrote a fascinating fictionalised account of the different Tolstoyan undertakings (S. Hocking, *Belinda the Backward: A Romance of Modern Idealism* (London, 1905)).
24. Apart from the large Chertkov household and the two 'representative' Doukhobor families of Ivan Ivin and Peter Makhortov, Russians who either visited or actually worked in the Purleigh Colony include Tolstoy's friend and biographer P. I. Biryukov (1860–1931); the Tolstoyan and later socialist-revolutionary, Prince D. A. Khilkov (1858–1914); and V. D. Bonch-Bruyevich (1873–1955), who was active in the Revolutionary Movement and after 1917 held a number of ministerial posts in the Soviet Government.
25. *New Order* (October 1897).
26. *Essex County Chronicle* (19 August 1898).
27. *Clarion* (20 August 1898).
28. *Clarion* (20 August 1898).
29. Shaw, *Whiteway*, p. 36.
30. In the July 1899 *New Order*, Nellie Shaw and Lucy Andrews announced that they were closing down their 'Brotherhood Dress-making' enterprise in Croydon. This was not, they insisted, because they could not make the enterprise pay – since its inception it had provided almost constant employment for four people and had an annual turnover of approximately £122 – but because they felt unable

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to continue a business which, although run according to anarchist principles, nevertheless depended almost exclusively on the custom of the well-to-do for survival.

31. For further information on the Doukhobors see A. Maude, *A Peculiar People: the Doukhobors* (New York, 1904) and G. Woodcock and I. Avakumovic, *The Doukhobors* (London, 1968).
32. *New Order* (September 1898).
33. *New Order* (October 1898).
34. Shaw, *Whiteway*, p. 36.
35. P. Redfern, *Journey to Understanding* (London, 1946), p. 92.
36. Redfern, *Journey*, p. 92.
37. Edwards (ed.), *The Labour Annual*, p. 115.
38. Between 1 January and 3 May 1902 there were 953 reported cases of smallpox in Essex, and the infection of the colonists was widely reported in the local press. Beneath the heading 'Afflicted Altruists' the *Essex Weekly News*, for example, wrote on 28 March:

The outbreak of small-pox among the few remaining communists at Cock Clarks, Purleigh, is the topic of the hour in the Maldon district. The socialists are familiar figures in the neighbourhood, and often attract attention, as they cycle or ramble about the locality, by their unconventional attire, while their ideas as to money and commerce are a subject of frequent comment. It seems almost an irony of fate that these people, who habitually set so many of the ordinary dictates of Society at defiance, should thus be reminded of their kinship with the world from which they hold themselves aloof. One of their principles is that they shall never 'turn the stranger from the door', and in obedience to this command, they appear to have offered free and open hospitality to a tramp, regardless of his dirty condition, and not knowing, probably, that he was suffering from small-pox. When the visitor was officially declared to be infected with the dread disease – in spite of their professed belief in 'all men's good' – they refused to be re-vaccinated, and who can be surprised at the result?

39. One of the men, Tom Ferris (1870–1935), who had played a major role in the Leeds and Blackburn ventures, later wrote in his unpublished memoirs (kindly lent to the writer by A. G. Higgins Esq.):

As I shared Tolstoy's ethical ideals...he received me with open arms. But when it came to discussion, I found him obstinately unreasonable. I wrote him many letters, and remained in Moscow for some months, going to Yasnaya Polyana several times to see him. But all to no purpose. The truth was, that he was unable to adapt his mind to new concepts. 'You know, Mr. Ferris,' he said at our last interview, 'I am too old to receive new truth.' I rather dissented from such a proposition; but I could not but accept its finality, and return home.

Now, however, I am inclined to justify him... (1916).

40. At the time of writing an offshoot of the Leeds group is still in existence at Staplcton near Pontefract in Yorkshire. Unlike Kenworthy's original

Croydon venture, which abandoned the title of Brotherhood Church in October 1897, the Stapleton group, which is now run on a family basis, continues to call itself 'The Brotherhood Church'.

41. The member concerned, Ernest Ames, had earlier participated in the original Leeds and Blackburn communes. While working with Chertkov he became involved with Latvian revolutionaries also helping at Tuckton House and edited a small volume in the ILP Socialist Library: *The Revolution in the Baltic Provinces of Russia* (London, 1907).
42. Redfern, *Journey*, p. 94.
43. Kenworthy, *Tolstoy*, p. 17.
44. A. Maude, *Leo Tolstoy* (London, 1918), p. 205.
45. *New Order* (September 1896).
46. Maude, *Tolstoy: Later Years*, p. 569.
47. Edwards (ed.), *The Labour Annual*, p. 117.
48. Goldenveizer, *Talks*, p. 174.

Tolstoy studies in Great Britain: a bibliographical survey

GARTH M. TERRY

It should first of all be explained that the original aim of this bibliographical survey was to record all work on Tolstoy by British scholars. This posed several immediate problems, however, which proved to be insurmountable. The difficulty in tracing material sent abroad by British scholars for publication, and the difficulty in identifying those British scholars who had emigrated to Australia, Canada, the United States and elsewhere, were the two determining factors. It was decided, therefore, to limit the scope of the bibliography to only work on Tolstoy which had been published in Great Britain. This would thus ensure that the vast majority of British work was covered but would exclude the aforementioned material published abroad. On the other hand, work by foreign authors published in Great Britain would come within the bibliography's scope, although this proved to be, as it turned out, only a negligible amount.

The study of the life and works of Leo Tolstoy has a long tradition in British scholarship stretching far back into the nineteenth century. It is the English language which apparently has the distinction of being the first Western language into which a work by Tolstoy was translated. This is listed in the British Museum catalogue as *Childhood and Youth*, a 270-page tale translated by M. von Meysenbug and published in London by Bell & Daldy in 1862. Sixteen years elapsed before the first English version under an American imprint became accessible – *The Cossacks*, translated by E. Schuyler. It was again in England that the first attempt to produce an edition of Tolstoy's works in English translation was made under the editorship of Aylmer Maude but, sadly, three volumes only appeared. Although two American editions subsequently appeared – the 'International Edition' of twenty-two volumes published by Scribner of New York in 1902, and a fourteen-volume edition translated and edited by Leo Wiener and published in Boston in 1904–12 – it was the Tolstoy Centenary Edition in twenty-one volumes under the editorship of the same Aylmer Maude and published by the Oxford University Press in 1928–37 which is generally recognised to be the best edition. Maude's edition is, in fact, probably the best and most complete translation of Tolstoy ever made.

The British are similarly prominent at an early stage in the field of critical and biographical studies. The first known critical work in a Western language seems to be an article by W. R. S. Ralston entitled 'Count Leo Tolstoy's novels' and published in the *London Nineteenth Century* (v, 1879, 650-69). It is essentially a straightforward retelling of *War and Peace*. A truly critical study followed eight years later entitled 'Count Leo Tolstoy' which was written by Matthew Arnold and published in the *Fortnightly Review* (XLVIII, 1887, 783-99). Among the many biographies of Tolstoy, two early English studies, both written by Aylmer Maude, were, and still are, considered authoritative. They are *The Life of Tolstoy: First Fifty Years* (London, Constable, 1908, 464 pp.) and *The Life of Tolstoy: Later Years* (London, Constable, 1910, 688 pp.).

Such a tradition in Tolstoy studies has continued throughout the present century. It was the intention in this bibliography to record all material on Tolstoy's life and works published in this country from the appearance of the first known translation in 1862 to this very day. It soon became apparent, however, that this was too large an undertaking for this present volume of essays and so the bibliography was reluctantly shortened to cover only post-war publications. There are a large number of bibliographies available, however, which cover British works on Tolstoy in the period up to 1945 and through these one can compile at least a basic bibliography, particularly of the very early period.

1862-1945

Material on Tolstoy to the turn of the nineteenth century is adequately covered by three bibliographies – Maurice B. Line, *A Bibliography of Russian Literature in English Translation (Excluding Periodicals)*, London, The Library Association, 1963, 74 pp.; Yury Bitovt, *Graf. L. Tolstoy v literature i iskusstve: podrobnyy bibliograficheskiy ukazatel' russkoy i inostrannoy literatury o gr. L. N. Tolstom*, Moscow, 1903, 375 pp.; and Leo Wiener, 'Bibliography of Works and Articles on Tolstoy in English, German, and French', in *The Complete Works of Count Tolstoy*, trans. and ed. by L. Wiener, London, Dent, 1905, vol. xxiv, pp. 403-35. Maurice Line's bibliography contains over 121 English-language translations of Tolstoy's works of which more than eighty were published in Great Britain. A very useful chronological list of the first appearances of translations is also provided. Bitovt's work, unlike that of Line, covers critical studies and translations in all languages although the predominant language is Russian. He lists 4002 items in all, of which 265 are written in English. These are divided into seven critical

studies and 258 translations. According to Wiener in the preface to his bibliography, Bitovt's work is far from complete or bibliographically exact. Whereas Wiener lists 238 German-language items, Bitovt includes only twenty of these. A similar situation exists for the English-language material. Wiener's work is much more reliable, containing 346 English-language items, 238 German, and eighty French.

A useful and most reliable bibliography covering British scholarship during the last twenty years of the nineteenth and the first thirty years of this century is that by A. Yassukovitch entitled 'Tolstoi in English, 1878-1929: a List of Works by and about Tolstoi available in the New York Public Library', *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* xxxiii.7, July 1929. This article was also published as a special offprint in the same year (37 pp.). Yassukovitch lists several hundred items with either an American or British imprint.

The period from 1900 to 1945 is covered by A. Ettlinger and J. M. Gladstone in their bibliography *Russian Literature, Theatre, and Art: a Bibliography of Works in English, Published 1900-1945*, London, Hutchinson, 1947, 96 pp. This is a useful but not complete bibliography of books in English on Russian literature, including translations into English of Russian authors. Works on Tolstoy are to be found on pp. 81-6.

Translations into English of Tolstoy's works are very adequately covered by R. C. Lewanski's work *The Literatures of the World in English Translation: a Bibliography*. Vol. II: *The Slavic Literatures*, New York Public Library, 1971, 630 pp. It attempts to register all translations of Slavonic literatures from the very beginning to 1960. Entries for Tolstoy may be found on pp. 370-87 of which there are many hundreds including those contained in anthologies and journals. The All-Union State Library of Foreign Literature in Moscow has also compiled and published a bibliography of Tolstoy's works translated into the languages of the world for the same period - *Khudozhestvennyye proizvedeniya L. N. Tolstogo v perevodakh na inostrannyye yazyki*, Moscow, 1961, 588 pp. - but this should be used with care since the accuracy of some entries is unreliable.

1946-1977

The following list contains material published on Tolstoy in Great Britain during the period 1946 to 1977. Material covered comprises monographs, parts of monographs, journal and newspaper articles, translations, dissertations, reviews, and miscellaneous items such as films. The majority of entries are in English, of course, but some Russian titles are listed - for example, those in the Bradda series of

Plain Russian Texts. They are transliterated according to the scheme used by *The Slavonic and East European Review*.

The list is arranged chronologically by year of publication. An exception to this arrangement are reviews and review articles of monographs published in this country. These are listed together with the work they review, irrespective of when the reviews were written. Reviews of monographs published abroad, however, are listed under the name of the reviewer and under the year in which the review appeared. The publication date of each item has been omitted except in those cases where it differs from the year under which that item is listed.

Translations pose a problem since many of these, especially those by Aylmer Maude and Constance Garnett which were first published at the beginning of this century, have been constantly reprinted throughout the decades. In order not to overload this bibliography with reprints, therefore, I have listed such translations under the first year of their reprinting during the period covered by this bibliography, 1946–77, with added notes as to reprints and the original date of publication. Several monographs have similarly been reprinted. These are again listed under the year of their first printing although references have been included in this case under the years when a reprint was issued.

Although the bibliography is as comprehensive as possible, it should be stated here that very brief items relating to Tolstoy have not been included – *The Times*, for example, contains several such notices of two or three sentences only. Finally, a name index is to be found at the end of the bibliography together with an index to the works of Tolstoy published in this country either in the original or in translation.

It may be worth mentioning here two interesting Soviet articles which survey British scholarship on Tolstoy during the 1950s and 1960s. These are to be found in *Russkaya literatura i eyo zarubezhnyye kritiki: sbornik statey*, chief ed. U. A. Gural'nik, Moscow, Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, 1974. They are V. Gornaya, 'L. Tolstoy v otsenke kritiki stran burzhuaznogo Zapada (60-e gody)', pp. 132–97, and D. Zhantiyeva, 'Angliyskoye literaturovedeniye 50–60kh godov o Turgeneye, Tolstom i Dostoyevskom', pp. 198–242.

In this bibliography the place of publication is London unless otherwise stated. The following abbreviations have been used:

<i>Cam Q</i>	<i>Cambridge Quarterly</i>
<i>Crit Q</i>	<i>Critical Quarterly</i>
<i>E in C</i>	<i>Essays in Criticism</i>

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<i>FMLS</i>	<i>Forum for Modern Language Studies</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Russian Studies</i>
<i>L</i>	<i>The Listener</i>
<i>MLR</i>	<i>Modern Language Review</i>
<i>OSP</i>	<i>Oxford Slavonic Papers</i>
<i>SEER</i>	<i>The Slavonic and East European Review</i>
<i>T</i>	<i>The Times</i>
<i>TES</i>	<i>The Times Educational Supplement</i>
<i>THES</i>	<i>The Times Higher Education Supplement</i>
<i>TLS</i>	<i>The Times Literary Supplement</i>

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