

Tolstoy ("Moscow," chapter three in the complete work), his service to Tolstoy ("Yasnaya Polyana," chapter four in the complete work), and his connections to the memory, the family, and the followers of Tolstoy in the aftermath of the writer's death ("At the Teacher's Grave," chapter six in the complete work). Then follow chapters on the effect of the October Revolution and its aftermath ("In the Epoch of the October Revolution," chapter ten in the complete work) and on Bulgakov's final years in Moscow prior to his emigration from Russia in 1923 ("The Last Years of My Life in Moscow," chapter eleven in the complete work).

The chapters presented were clearly selected with an eye to foregrounding Bulgakov's personal connections to Tolstoy and to the initial stages of the development of the preservation of Tolstoy's ideas, works, and stature as a giant of Russian literature.

These selections show that in the teens and early twenties of the last century, Bulgakov's attitude toward Tolstoy's most radical ideas was already undergoing a gradual turn in the direction of greater objectivity and diminished enthusiasm, most obviously in connection with the master's unrelenting rejection of the "animal" life of the human being in favor of the "true," spiritual life. This development can be seen to continue throughout the whole text of *How My Life Was Lived* and even more clearly in Bulgakov's *Disputing with Tolstoy: In Life's Balances* ("В споре с Толстым. На весах жизни") completed in 1964 and now in the keeping of RGALI (Russian State Archive of Literature and Art), but not yet published.

The book is supplied with an admirable scholarly apparatus and is the product of scrupulous attention to fact and accuracy. Besides explanatory notes to the chapters presented and a very complete (and very valuable, given the kind of book this is) index of personal names, there are detailed appendices presenting the most important dates of Bulgakov's life (some fifty-five pages) and

what must certainly be a very complete bibliography of Bulgakov's occasional writings, newspaper and magazine articles, and lectures (some thirty pages). The staff who collaborated to prepare the volume deserve the appreciation and gratitude of all students of Tolstoy.

The introduction, written by the volume's editor in chief, Prof. Andrew Donskov, needs special mention. Besides being the force behind the publication, not only of this volume but of the many other valuable publications of the Slavic Research Group at the University of Ottawa, Professor Donskov has provided an introduction to Bulgakov's life and his various contributions to the study of Tolstoy that is both magisterial and authoritative. He presents a portrait of Bulgakov which might be taken as reverential, but may equally well be seen as simply giving credit where credit is due to an intelligent, sincere, not uncritical, but above all faithful follower of Tolstoy's teachings.

The book is a monument of scholarship which should have a place in every serious library of the study of Russian literature.

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**Foster, John Burt, Jr. *Transnational Tolstoy: Between the West and the World*. New York City: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013. 208 pp. ISBN: 1441157700.**

In 2009 Tolstoy's great great grandson Vladimir shared his long-time ambition with a delegation of American government officials at the National Endowment for the Arts. To celebrate the anniversary of Tolstoy's death in 2010, he hoped to invite a select group of world-class writers, artists, and cultural leaders to Yasnaya Polyana for a week-long conference. They would speak not about Tolstoy per se, but about the best current thinking coming out of their countries in their areas of

expertise, thus embodying Tolstoy's spirit as a worldwide ("всемирный") writer whose importance transcends national and disciplinary boundaries. As far as I know, Mr. Tolstoy's plan never came to fruition. Under Putin's leadership, Russia has made a sharp nationalist turn in recent years, and, as Putin's cultural advisor since 2012, Mr. Tolstoy himself now tends to emphasize a cultural agenda focused on facilitating Russian national solidarity at home and projecting Russian cultural prowess abroad.

John Burt Foster, Jr. has picked up where Vladimir Tolstoy left off in 2009. In his timely and challenging *Transnational Tolstoy: Between the West and the World* Foster reminds us once again that Tolstoy belongs not just to Russians, but to all of us. He does so by re-imagining Tolstoy through the lens of "transnationality," which "betokens a widened contextual vision, one that aspires to a worldwide perspective on literature that transverses borders of language, culture, and nation." Through a series of case studies spread over twelve chapters, Foster describes Tolstoy's complex interaction with many different moments, motifs, and trends in both Western and world literature. But Foster is less interested in defining influence and assessing debts than in showing the unique contribution each participant brings to the cross-cultural transaction.

Part one, "Facing West," begins by comparing Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's critiques of Western culture in *Anna Karenina* and *The Gambler*. In this section Foster also discusses a series of dialogues between Tolstoy and Stendhal, and between Tolstoy and Flaubert. Many scholars have described the connections between Stendhal's portrayal in *La Chartreuse de Parme* [The Charterhouse of Parma] of Fabrizio del Dongo's youthful misadventures at Waterloo and Tolstoy's portrayal of Pierre Bezukhov's bewilderment at the battle of Borodino in *War and Peace*. But Foster is the first to my knowledge to uncover a dialogue

between *La Chartreuse* and *Anna Karenina* on the psychological theme of retribution.

Similarly, Foster goes beyond merely discussing parallels between *Anna Karenina* and Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*—a staple of Tolstoy criticism—and shifts our attention to a dialogue between *War and Peace* and Flaubert's *L'Education sentimentale* on "the falsity of the Bonapartist vision of historical grandeur and inspired leadership." Part Two concludes with an analysis of Tolstoy's contact with both Goethe and Proust and their movement beyond the value of "worldliness" privileged by the European novel of manners toward a more humanistic and all-inclusive definition of "world literature," which makes an "effort to grasp the world in its human fullness."

Foster shifts in part two ("Outside the Soviet Canon") to Tolstoy's poetics of realism, which was far more dynamic than the straightjacket of critical realism into which he was forced by the Soviet canon. Some of Foster's most exciting and illuminating close readings are found in this part of his book. He moves (though not always seamlessly) among works from different periods of Tolstoy's career, especially *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, and *Hadji-Murat*. His discussion of the rich and suggestive imagery of passages from each work, and their connection to Flaubert's imagery in the nineteenth century and Nabokov's in the twentieth, is both original and fascinating. I came away convinced that Tolstoy is far more modern than he is often assumed to be.

Finally, in part three ("Into the World") Foster discusses Tolstoy's dialogues with more contemporary writers outside of Russia and the West. He uncovers Tolstoyan moments in Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz (1911–2006) and Indian fiction writer Premchand (1880–1936), and brilliantly analyzes the reactions to Saul Bellow's often (mis)quoted remark "Show me the Zulu Tolstoy," made during a 1988 interview. Many at the time assumed that Bellow's remark stemmed from what Foster calls "Eurocentric cultural

chauvinism with anti-black overtones”—an assumption that points to the irony of how Tolstoy, one of the most transnational of writers, had become so firm entrenched in the Western canon. But Tolstoy’s greatness, Foster argues throughout the book, is precisely that his work, ideas, and sensibilities could travel so easily between the West and the rest of the world.

The book’s twelfth chapter offers a wonderful close reading of *Hadji-Murat*, a novella that Foster believes fully embodies Tolstoy’s conception of world literature as practiced in his earlier masterpieces and articulated in the late essay “What Is Art?” The distinguishing features of Tolstoy’s novella are, according to Foster, its shared human values, emotional authenticity, and an openness to the many cultures of the world. Anthologies of world literature typically include works like “The Death of Ivan Ilyich,” “Master and Man,” and “God Sees the Truth, but Waits.” But Foster argues that *Hadji-Murat* would be a better choice; in fact, it should be considered “Tolstoy’s last word on world literature.” This is perhaps an overstatement; still, it is based on supple and sensitive close readings of several passages from *Hadji-Murat* that are among the most original I’ve read.

Some works of Tolstoy criticism are satisfied to present Tolstoy in what Emily Dickinson called “a certain slant of light.” Others show us new rooms in the vast Tolstoyan architecture that we may not have noticed before. Still others—and Foster’s belongs to this category—strive to build a new structure with fresh methodological tools informed

by an original theoretical framework. But Foster’s book also resembles a work site with still unfinished rooms, craggy edges, and a certain unattractive messiness. His discussions of *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, and *Hadji-Murat*, for instance, are spread out in bits and pieces over many different chapters, with frequent foreshadowing and backtracking, thus creating an overall impression of disjointedness.

However, I suspect that this partly may have been intentional on Foster’s part, for he probably wanted his book to reflect in the very form of its argument the fluid and unpredictable way Tolstoy’s art and thought spontaneously interact with many different artistic movements, historical moments, and cultural phenomena. He has indeed succeeded in not reducing all of that ferment to a linear argument or homogenizing construct. What *Transnational Tolstoy* lacks in elegance, then, it makes up for in intellectual excitement.

Foster has written an important and provocative book that will surely appeal to scholars of Tolstoy, literature, and culture, as well as serious general readers. What I appreciated most is that, despite Foster’s solid grounding in the latest thinking in comparative literary theory and his deep sensitivity to our multi-cultural reality, he also exhibits an all-embracing humanism reminiscent of the old criticism. In this sense Foster’s book, like its subject, is both transnational and universal. Therein lies its greatest strength and most lasting tribute to Tolstoy.

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