

Tolstoy's Critique of Modernity in *War and Peace*: Intersections with Foucault

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In the last decades of his life, Tolstoy's activities helped forge his reputation as the apostle of the rejection of modernity. The spiritual guidance he freely offered, his retreat to the quasi-autarkic economy of Yasnaya Polyana, his anarchist convictions, his praise of non-violence, his refusal of modernization, his dress—all these factors contributed to creating the image of a man consciously living on the margins of the modern world and in so doing, influencing the critique of political and economic hegemony around the world (Marks 102–139). It is all the more surprising, then, that literary critics have not paid attention to Tolstoy's evolution in this direction, and above all to his anti-modern thought.¹ To address this lacuna, I propose to return to the Tolstoy of the 1860s, in order to uncover the seeds of his discourse on modernity, and highlight the striking affinities with some of the fundamental paradigms of modernity, in particular with Foucault's writing.

The second part of the epilogue to *War and Peace* encapsulates the principal historiographical arguments in question. It begins by setting out the central problem the writer finds himself faced with: At a moment when history is no longer governed by God, as was assumed by the ancients or in a providentialist Christian perspective, the historian

himself must make sense of the causes and end-point of historical evolution. There is thus a new condition, created by the fact that human affairs have been divorced from divine intent.² Consequently, the rejection of providentialism becomes modernity's defining criteria. In part because Tolstoy continues to utilize providence as an abstract and largely metaphorical concept, as the incarnation of the general movement of history, not all critics agree that Tolstoy presents history as deserted by God in *War and Peace* (for instance, Orwin 100).

Tolstoy speaks of a "new history" that must take stock of this new reality. However, in Tolstoy's view, history as practiced by modern historians has only replaced divine will with that of the man of genius, and divine *telos* with some abstract notion of the end of history, whether it be equality, the Enlightenment, the happiness of all, or the power of the nation (1179–1180).³ For Tolstoy, these substitutions are nothing more than atavistic regression, because they use the same structures of thought, only in a secularized form. What results is a reductive vision of history, inasmuch as the multiple causes of history's unfolding are condensed to the will of a sole individual, just as history's movement toward its end-point is confined to Europe's destiny.

To counter this egregious simplification, Tolstoy, as we know, proposes the metaphor of infinitesimal calculus, notably integration in the mathematical sense. But it is here that his line of thought is often poorly understood. To reveal the laws of historical development, one does not simply calculate the resultant of all the individual wills of the whole population. Indeed for Tolstoy, the search for a first cause of events is futile, since there will always be a more original cause or a factor one could not take into account; moreover, indivisible causes do not exist. The effort to determine the relative proportion of freedom and necessity behind an historical act is doomed to failure because the opposition between necessity and freedom leads to an unsolvable aporia. To recognize the necessity of an historical fact would require absolute knowledge of an infinite number of causes and circumstances. To imagine the notion of a completely free will would raise the opposite problem; one would have to conceive of a person outside of space, time, and causality (1210). Both suppositions are implausible. Freedom, of which we have an undeniable and inalienable awareness, only exists in an infinitesimal moment (1209); but because it is impossible for us to grab hold of what is infinitely small, any attempt to retrace first causes is fated to fail: “By thus admitting the infinitely small as the cause of movement, we arrive at the conviction that the cause, which loses itself in infinity, is unattainable (as in all the sciences)” (PSS 15: 295).

Rather than an absolute opposition between freedom and necessity, Tolstoy speaks of a continuous scale: “The notion of responsibility, and thus freedom, obviously contains a certain gradation” (PSS 15: 258). This depends on epistemological factors—such as the temporal distance between the event and its interpretation, and the visibility of factors governing the action—but also sociological factors such as the degree of an individual's dependence on his entourage. One must then do away with the metaphysics of origins,

which is nothing other than an attenuated, secular form of the providentialism of pre-modern history.

Rather than search for a final cause, Tolstoy sees integration as an operation that reveals the shared properties of phenomena in the process of their development, and thus identifies the laws governing these phenomenas' behavior: “Renouncing the concept of cause, mathematics seeks laws, that is, properties common to all unknown infinitely small elements” (1212). In this paradigm shift, a functionalist mode of thought takes the place of the metaphysics of origins. What matters is no longer the identity or essence of the phenomenon, but the recurrences in its functioning. Furthermore, with Tolstoy we enter into a relational universe, where phenomena only gain meaning in a correlation with other phenomena:

It is only when, as the naturalists do, we no longer consider anything but the relations among phenomena, without asking ourselves the question whether or not it is good that the stone falls on earth, nor even what the stone desires, but rather when we will look into the laws that preside over relations, it is only at that moment that we will be on the road to truth. (PSS 15: 230)

In short, here modernity is defined through two different optics: Through one, a rejection of all providentialism and more broadly all historical teleology; and through another, the adoption of a functionalist and relational system of thought in place of a taxonomy of essences and an inventory of origins. For example, to comprehend the extent of the ravages caused by the War of 1812, a level of destruction that seemed to him unrivaled in human history, Tolstoy evokes the behavior of bees, which mutually exterminate each other in autumn, obeying an instinctive zoological law. The question is no longer one of freedom and will, but only one of submission to a law that constrains behavior.

This reference to zoology illustrates the parallels between adjacent sciences. The discovery in statistics (one of the new sciences of the period) that the births and deaths in a given district follow mathematical laws entails a number of consequences for philosophy, psychology, and history. Philosophy finds itself limited to the investigation of the “mirage of freedom.” Psychology has to renounce its search for the “essential properties of the soul” and instead dedicate itself to demonstrating that human psychic activity always corresponds to eternal laws. History is bound to show the innumerable connections between events and individuals, rather than describing the facts and deeds of supposedly historic figures (PSS 15: 232–233). We are looking at the total dissolution of an intellectual paradigm.

Yet Tolstoy does not stop there. For him, this positivist logic is only one side of the coin and one must not forget the other, which assigns humanity an incontestable consciousness of freedom. Scientific discourse has to deny the existence of the soul and freedom to affirm the necessity of the laws it reveals, but science should by no means stand as ultimate truth: “In our time the majority of so-called advanced people, that is, a crowd of ignoramuses, haven’t taken the work of the naturalists, who study one side of the question, for the solution of the whole question” (1203).

Tolstoy here describes a new phenomenon, a split in consciousness that results from the thinking subject’s simultaneous desire for freedom and knowledge of the empirically demonstrable biological laws that govern all. Reason advocates necessity, while consciousness clings to freedom. This duality stems from the fact that consciousness is, at the same time a subject and object of knowledge: “Freedom is that which is examined. Necessity is that which examines. Freedom is content. Necessity is form” (1210).

The subject appears as a problem for itself, and this tension is constitutive of modern man’s reflexivity, which the novel magnificently

illustrates, particularly through the character of Pierre. Reason governs reflexivity, but its object remains paradoxically defined by freedom. One observes a certain epistemological doubt in this formulation, unquestionably Kantian in origin. This means that reflexive reason will never be able to catch up with and take hold of the soul’s totality. In reading the novel, it becomes evident that the reflexive thinking of Andrei or Pierre will never lead to full self-knowledge because the two protagonists always remain in part strangers to themselves.

Without pushing the analogy too far, one finds a peculiar convergence between Tolstoy’s views of modernity and Michel Foucault’s description of the modern *épistémè* in *The Order of Things*. Foucault underscores the problem of identity, as does Tolstoy. Rather than draw up a list of immutable principles that enable classification and comparison as was done in the classical period, modernity raises the question of identity in its pursuits of origins. However, its origins remain inaccessible because of the largely opaque historical density that surrounds modern man. He finds himself thrown into a world that precedes him, in an already constituted society. When he wishes to express himself, he is compelled to borrow a thoroughly used language.

Modern man does not completely possess himself. Divorced from his origins, he is caught in a historical flux beyond his control (Foucault, *Order* 330). Instead of investigating first causes and origins, modernity constructs itself by weaving analogies and correspondences between various historicities. Modernity strives to understand the relations between characters and functions, and more generally analogies between phenomena of different orders rather than the comparison of specific traits (*Order* 251). We thus enter into a relational universe where elements only define themselves in correlation with other elements, be it synchronically or diachronically:

The original in man is that which articulates him from the very outset upon something other than himself; it is that which introduces into his experience contents and forms older than him, which he cannot master, it is that which, by binding him to multiple, intersecting, often mutually irreducible chronologies, scatters him through time and pinions him at the center of the duration of things. (*Order* 331)

In *The Order of Things*, Foucault does not directly pose the question of freedom, but he describes human consciousness's oscillation between positivist truth and eschatological truth, which corresponds to the ambivalence between freedom and necessity adumbrated by Tolstoy. This ambiguity originates in modern man's character as "a strange empirico-transcendental doublet" (318). Man is at the same time a corporeal instrument of knowledge, characterized by conditions that predetermine the empirical know-how he produces, and a subject capable of developing a critique of this knowledge's limits. The subject defines itself in relation to an attempt at constructing absolute truth, located in the future. Thus for Foucault, as well as Tolstoy, epistemological concerns and moral stakes are inextricably linked.

A brief scene in *War and Peace* offers an example of the dispersion of modern man through a number of points in time and space. After the Grande Armée's retreat from Moscow, Pierre looks out over the burnt out ruins of the city and suddenly discovers an aesthetic dimension of the scene, contrary to his contemporaries' intense feeling of defeat and desire for vengeance:

Driving along the streets amidst the charred ruins of houses, he was astonished at the beauty of these ruins. The chimneystacks of the houses, the broken-down walls, picturesquely reminiscent of the Rhine and the Coliseum, were strung out, hiding each other, through the burnt quarters. (1120)

Pierre is rootless, having grown up in Western Europe, and the associations triggered by this view of the city bring him back to his origins. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the iconography of ruins was in fashion among the Russian aristocracy. It is well known that Hubert Robert, the "painter of ruins" counted many Russian aristocrats as his main clients. The analogy between Moscow and the Coliseum or the Rhineland points to the role of the iconography of ruins in Romantic culture, expressing a desire for grandeur, the quest for authentic origins, and a challenge to the political order and aesthetic timidity of the period.

Thus in a moment of spontaneous receptivity, Pierre shows his sensitivity to European aesthetics, which transcend the political cleavages created by the War of 1812.⁴ In the context of nationalist or nativist isolation, Pierre's sensitivity to a pluralist aesthetic is particularly striking (Zorin 241–266; Schönle 45–56). It also seems symptomatic that in this moment of openness beyond the historical logic of the epoch, Pierre also discovers solidarity with the common people, since in the scene carpenters, coachmen, and shopkeepers observe him with shining eyes. Historical contradictions, be they national or social, are temporarily suspended thanks to the power of aesthetic intuition. Here ruins incarnate the survival of the past, the heterogeneity of chronologies through which the present is articulated, and thus the density and plurality of the present moment.

We know that Foucault conceptualizes modernity through analogies he finds between different discursive disciplines, be it history, biology, economics, or philology. Contrary to Tolstoy, he does away with the positivist language of scientific laws, because all truth is simultaneously a manifestation of power, which constitutes reality at the same time as it describes it.

Without a doubt, Tolstoy could not accept this Nietzschean relativism. Yet in their models of social life, the two authors share a hesitation

between the primacy of individual acts and that of monolithic forces, which traverse and govern the social fabric. As does Tolstoy, Foucault maintains, “power comes from below” (*Sexuality* 94). Nevertheless, like Tolstoy, he depersonalizes power, as it comprises a diffuse force that works through social formations rather than emanating from the will of the sovereign. Foucault speaks of power’s “global strategies,” which condition and even constitute the possibilities of individual action, to the point of shaping the identity of the modern subject itself. In this respect, one might recall the formula from the end of *Discipline and Punish*:

The model of the carceral city [Paris in the nineteenth century] is not, therefore, the body of the king, with the powers that emanate from it, nor the contractual meeting of wills from which a body that was both collective and individual was born, but a strategic distribution of elements of different natures and levels. (307)

For the philosopher Charles Taylor, Foucault imputes a systematic nature to power that denies the efficacy of local contexts. Taylor concludes that Foucault “leaves us with a strange kind of Schopenhauerian will, ungrounded in human action” (170). The analogy with Tolstoy is patently obvious.

In order to avoid recourse to metaphysical reification, Foucault proposes a sociological analysis of power, even if some of his ideas lend themselves to confusion. Power is not a property that belongs to an individual. On the contrary, it consists of a relational structure that seduces, facilitates, or prohibits certain types of action (Burkitt 54–58). Though abstract, power only exists in relation to individuals struggling to realize themselves in the social sphere. It follows then that power cannot be theorized in a philosophical manner, because it is not a real thing, but can only be empirically described in its mode of functioning;

hence Foucault’s analysis of modern structures of incarceration or the imposition of sexual practices and forms of identity.

Literary criticism has misunderstood the sociological dimension of Tolstoy’s thought, in particular his elaboration of a critique of modernity. In the first part of the epilogue, Tolstoy in fact offers a sociological analysis of the modern world. As he raises the problem of accounting for the unprecedented destruction during the Russian campaign, he advances the following factors. It would first be necessary for the French to organize themselves into a large enough military unit, second that they abandon all their traditions and customs, and finally that their leader be an individual capable of justifying the deceptions, brigandage, and murders that come with the movement of a great army (1132). In other words, this historical novelty, the diffusion and normalization of destructive behavior, necessitated: 1) The creation of an institution both colossal and powerful, the modern army; 2) the moral and cultural detachment from the past, the feeling of living in a society that defined itself as it constituted itself and was not bound by tradition; 3) the existence of an ideology that supplanted the moral and cultural norms of the past and justified the present; an ideology incarnated by a single man, who stood both as leader and model. To quote the author:

And starting with the French revolution, the old, insufficiently large group is destroyed; old customs and traditions are obliterated; step by step a group of a new size is produced, along with new customs and traditions, and that man is prepared who is to stand at the head of the future movement and bear upon himself all the responsibility for what is to be performed. A man without convictions, without customs, without traditions, without a name, not even a Frenchman [...] is borne up to a conspicuous place. (1133)

One notes in the description the role of an individual who incarnates the break with the past and concentrates power in his hand, which he exercises by controlling an institution, the army, and using a legitimizing discourse. Thus, modernity is characterized on the one hand by the rejection of the past, and on the other, by the concentration of power into institutions that regulate human behavior in a rigid fashion.

Ideological discourse does not directly provoke social action. Tolstoy categorically rejects the kind of history that gives ideas a determining force. While admitting that ideas play a new role in the modern era, since he speaks of the *new force* of ideas, the role is neither exclusive nor determinative. At least this is what emerges from the image Tolstoy employs to characterize their effect. Ideologies “take away the moral responsibility of the people who produce events. These temporary goals are similar to the brushes that go in front of a train to clear the way on the rails: they clear the way of people’s moral responsibility” (1198). It is the locomotive that governs history, but the brush it carries frees up the terrain. Ideologies take the place of an individual’s critical reflection and allow the forces of history to subjugate peoples.

Modern institutions govern human behavior:

For common activity people always form themselves into certain units within which, despite the variety of purposes set for the joint action, the relation among the people participating in the activity is always the same. (1196)

These identical and recurring relations are the result of the relationships of authority that exist in any hierarchy. Tolstoy cites the army as a model of the mechanical social structures created by modernity.

To sum up, one could say that modernity creates rigid hierarchies that subjugate individuals to modes of normative behavior, are based on the

rejection of tradition, and take the place of moral reflection by supplanting the individual’s free will. There is a militarization of society, denounced by Pierre toward the end of the novel, which incidentally is not unique to France under Napoleon.

In this analysis, one discovers a relational and pragmatic definition of power, not without analogy to Foucault’s. For Tolstoy, it is clear that power does not emanate from the spiritual or intellectual force of a political leader (1188). Napoleon only incarnates a historical movement that overtakes him. Moreover, Tolstoy seems to share the insight into the constructive and constitutive force of power. Even an individual’s psychological structure cannot escape the clutch of his epoch. In rejecting the notion of the psychological stability and fixedness of the human being throughout time, modernity creates a shift comparable to that made by the Copernican revolution in astronomy (1213–1214).

Power produces and shapes reality, as much at the discursive level as for social practices. For Tolstoy, however, power’s productive capacity stems from a rejection of traditions, and thus a rupture with the past. At an epistemological level, the writer hails this intellectual upheaval. In the drafts of *War and Peace* he invokes the modernist rhetoric of *tabula rasa* in exhorting historiography to transform and reconstruct itself on the basis of new intellectual premises. But in the novel, and in particular in Pierre’s speeches against the militarization of society, the rupture with the past is seen as a pernicious development that facilitates the usurpation of power by institutions. By reducing individuals to their social role, modernity destroys the human capacity for moral and aesthetic judgment. In the case of Napoleon’s personality, typical of modern man, Tolstoy underlines precisely “the total absence of a sense of beauty and justice” (PSS 15: 205).

The novel confirms this institutional critique. One will remember that the narrator compares

Madame Scherer's salon to a spinning mill or a conversation machine. The Russian army is described as the cogwheel of a clockwork, set in motion by the commander-in-chief's will. The Grande Armée also takes on a mechanical form. When Pierre is taken prisoner, he feels as though he has fallen between the workings of a machine (963). On several occasions, the army is shown to be a system that forces people to act against their will (*PSS* 15: 100). Here rationalization, at the heart of modernity, takes a harmful turn because it confers excessive power to institutions.

The vision of the social body as a mechanical system corresponds with the first-hand description of a guillotining in Paris in 1857 that Tolstoy shared with his friend, V. P. Botkin. What shocked him most about this spectacle of state force was precisely the implacable rationality of this instrument of death, the total absence of passion, signifying the rigorous application of a political law:

I have seen many horrors in war and in the Caucasus, but if a man were torn to pieces in my presence, it would not have been as repulsive as this ingenious and elegant machine by means of which they killed a strong, hale, healthy man in an instant. There [in war] it is not a question of the rational [will], but the human feeling of passion, while here it is a question of calm and convenient murder finely worked out, and there's nothing grand about it [...] Then the repulsive crowd, the father explaining to his daughter what a convenient and ingenious mechanism it is, and so forth. The law of man—rubbish! (*PSS* 60: 167–168)⁵

The guillotine becomes a metaphor of the well-oiled machinery of the state, of the depersonalization inherent in any perfectly mechanized assemblage.

Modernity is thus nothing other than a rational bureaucratic machine. The analogy between Foucault and Tolstoy can in part be understood by

a genealogy or at least a consonance that goes from Foucault to Max Weber and, further back, to Tolstoy. We know the German sociologist to have been an assiduous reader of Tolstoy. Weber refers to the writer in the context of a discussion on science's powerlessness to answer final questions. Science is part of the process of the "intellectual rationalization" of existence, leaving the human being in a position of disenchantment. The conviction that any force, any relation can be made to submit to man means that man now depends on science, which, given that progress is always provisional, is incapable of offering a definitive answer to the question of the meaning of life. However, Weber maintains that Tolstoy grasped the fact that death loses all meaning in the modern world, because it is only a random interruption of an always-contingent existence, based on an infinitely incomplete and ephemeral understanding of the world (488–489). Caught in the infinite wake of progress and the absence of teleology, death can never represent the culmination of a life, which deprives life of any deeper meaning.⁶

The relationship between Weberian and Foucauldian genealogies remains controversial, although many critics agree about the resemblance between the former's notion of rationalization and the latter's intuition of an inextricable link between power and knowledge. For Foucault rationality is not an anthropological given, but a product of discursive formations. Nevertheless, it is clear that he agrees with Weber in his fundamental analysis of the social body as an instrument of control and objectification. Without wanting to imply a relation of influence, one notices the same affinity in Tolstoy's works.

It is important nonetheless to highlight the fundamental differences between the Foucauldian vision of modernity and Tolstoy's. First, as opposed to Foucault, Tolstoy does not think of reality as a discursive patchwork, but rather as a constellation of actions, both private and public, that constitute social life. Furthermore, Tolstoy does not go as far

in the dismantling of the subject and this constitutes a fundamental difference. Here I would point to another brief scene in *War and Peace* that unfolds at Otradnoe, the Rostovs' estate, during the Christmas holiday. Natasha, ordinarily joyous and always making the most of the present, finds herself suddenly afflicted with a melancholy mood, confessing to her brother the impression that everything good has already happened.

The conversation turns to dreams and Natasha suddenly feels a strange sensation: "I think when you remember, remember, remember everything like that, you could go until you remember what was there before you were in the world." Sonya replies that this resembles what the ancient Egyptians called metempsychosis. Natasha responds, "No, you know, I don't believe we were in animals [...]. I know for certain that we were angels somewhere else, and visited here, so we remember everything..." (521). The vague markers of her sense of space, rendered more faithfully as "somewhere over there and here," seem to indicate an interlacing of immanent and transcendent spheres. When her brother asks her why, if they were angels, they had fallen so low, Natasha firmly responds: "Not lower, who told you it was lower?" (522). In other words, her intuition of transcendent spiritual space depends on a rejection of Christian axiology and the myth of the Fall of Man. She can participate in the present in a plurality of spaces, can remember what preceded her life, and thus live in a sort of heterogeneity that goes beyond the spatial and temporal limits of her empirical being.

One could think of the multiple and interconnected chronologies Foucault refers to, but with the difference that for him their interweaving remains closely linked with the knowledge of finitude. "Modern man [...] is possible only as a figuration of finitude" (*Order of Things* 318). For Natasha, on the other hand, and by extension Tolstoy, the interconnection of chronologies can lead to an intuition of a spiritual sphere that suggests immortality.

Tolstoyan modernity very clearly distinguishes itself from a Hegelian vision of history. The laws that Tolstoy proposes to demonstrate should not be confused with Hegelian teleology. It is here that one discovers the paradox of the writer's philosophy of history. First, he questions the role of reason in history. The first part of the epilogue to *War and Peace* contains a clear aphorism: "If we allow that human life can be governed by reason, the possibility of life is annihilated" (1131). In other words, only that which escapes reason truly lives.

This anti-rationalist presumption is repeated several times in the course of the epilogue, notably in the form of a polemic with Darwinism and Positivism. In an 1863 article entitled "Progress and the Definition of Education," written just before Tolstoy tackled the novel, he directly takes on the notion of historic progress. The piece begins with a refutation of historicism, based on the Hegelian axiom, "all that is historical is reasonable" (*PSS* 8: 236). Tolstoy shows that in reducing a phenomenon to its position in history, one legitimates any development and in so doing abolishes any supra-historical criteria: whether religious, moral, or aesthetic.

Historicism leads to a relativism that, when pushed to its limits, deprives events of any intrinsic signification. Moreover, Tolstoy believes that nothing should lead us to think that historical changes necessarily lead to progress. "I do not concur with the religions of progress; besides faith, nothing proves the necessity of progress," he affirms (*PSS* 8, 328).⁷

Tolstoy first attacks the partiality of this conception of progress, notable its focus on European civilization. Furthermore, according to Tolstoy, even at the heart of Western civilization, technological progress only benefits the upper classes. The peasants of his epoch have in no way benefited from the invention of electricity or the telegraph, nor the steam engine, nor the train, not even from the invention of the printing press.

Finally, Tolstoy calls the very definition of the good life into question. As is his wont, he finds multiple parameters that do not evolve in a parallel manner. Hence, the notion of progress is nothing but an optical illusion based on a partial consideration of pertinent factors.

History, in and of itself, has no intrinsic legitimacy. To say something is historical does not mean it is good. The rationality that characterizes modernity cannot find a basis in itself. Modernity requires external justification, and Tolstoy convincingly shows in the novel that this is wanting. Rationalization concentrates power and creates institutions that disregard individuals' free will and moral conscience. Even at the heart of consciousness, reason is a colonizing faculty, wholly incapable of grounding and defining subjectivity, because of the human subject's spiritual dimension and penchant for freedom.

Tolstoy plainly anticipates what Adorno and Horkheimer later described as the "dialectic of enlightenment," the intellectual trajectory of reason, which in pursuit of an ever-escaping legitimacy, ends by destroying itself and opening the door to a new mythology, dictatorial power. Pierre's political activities at the end of the book find meaning in the refusal of society's rationalization and militarization he observes with terror. When Pierre denounces the fact that "there are no independent people like you and me left," he proposes a return to individual responsibility and free will (1169).

Tolstoy definitively falls back on a political vision of resistance, based on an autonomous subject, to an inexorable process of modernization and rationalization. One clearly sees the acuity of the Tolstoyan vision of modernity on the one hand, and on the other, the intensity of his rejection of this new period, a rejection that underpins the public role Tolstoy took on in the last decades of his life.

Notes

Translated by Robert Watson.

This article was first published as "La critique de la modernité dans le Tolstoï de *Guerre et paix*: intersections avec Foucault," *Un autre Tolstoï*, ed. Catherine Depretto (Paris: Institut d'études slaves, 2012: 53–67) and is reproduced in translation by permission of the editor. For the sake of consistency with the style of the translations quoted, this article will use traditional, non-gender-neutral philosophical language.

1. According to Boris Eikhenbaum, Tolstoy's critique of modernity is inscribed in his anarchist "anti-historism" of the 1860s and a retreat to domestic life, conceived as immutable and hence not subject to history. Eikhenbaum's thesis does not take into account the complexity and evolution of Tolstoy's views. His "anti-historism," as we will see, proceeds from a rejection of the Hegelian notion of history's rational unfolding, but in no way signifies that Tolstoy denies the reality of historical changes, even and especially in private life (PSS 2, 221).

2. In the drafts of the novel, Tolstoy clearly defines what he means by the new history: "Although the gaze of history has turned away, step by step, from ancient monuments (by new history I mean the historical schools of the end of the last century and beginning of this one), in this era of anti-religious movements, in the wake of the rejection of divine intervention in human affairs and the recognition that divinity does not make humans submit to one authority and does not dispose of their will, the theoretical disagreement between new and ancient historians manifests itself in a particularly pronounced manner." (PSS 15: 186) Tolstoy adds, in a crossed-out gloss, a reference to Voltaire and his *Poem on the Lisbon Disaster* (1756), which became the paradigmatic text for this new era abandoned by God.

3. Translator's note: English quotes from *War and Peace* are from Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky's 2007 translation.

4. For Robert's Russian clientele, see *Hubert Robert et Saint-Pétersbourg*. For more details on the aesthetics of ruins elaborated by Tolstoy, see Schönle 61-72.

5. Translator's note: The English translation comes from Jackson 56-57.

6. Edith Hanke comes to the conclusion that Weber, who had intended to write a book on Tolstoy, had a "comprehensive" knowledge of his works and used the writer, seen as the apostle of the rejection of modernity, as a foil in order to elaborate an alternative, an ethics of responsibility (*Prophet des Unmodernen* 169-173, 189-208). See also Gane 45-63.

7. In *Confession*, Tolstoy explains that in his own life, faith in social progress and the perfectibility of man took the place of his childhood faith in God and the Church, but that this philosophy amounts to saying that one lives by allowing oneself to be swept along by the current of a river. It is the spectacle of witnessing the guillotine in action that made him call into question his naïve faith in the notion of progress (PSS 23, 8).

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