

Tolstoy, Rousseau, and the Russian Estate: The Search for Paradise in *Landowner's Morning*

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When in 1856 Tolstoy came home to his Yasnaya Polyana, he began a series of returns to the country estate, to be played out in both reality and in fiction. Read here as symbolic retreats to an Edenic space, together these homecomings constitute an effort to renovate the nineteenth-century aristocratic estate as a Rousseauian oasis. While it is generally accepted that the influence of Rousseau pervades all aspects of Tolstoy's life and work, the degree to which Rousseau shaped Tolstoy's understanding of estate life and the aristocratic household is consistently left out of comparative analyses. In what follows, I will show the seminal importance of Rousseau, especially his *Julie, or The New Heloise* (*Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse*, 1761), to one of Tolstoy's early explorations—*Landowner's Morning* (*Упомянутого*, 1856)—of life on the Russian estate that emerges as the promised land of his fiction. Like Tolstoy, Nekhliudov (of *Landowner's Morning*)

returns to his childhood estate in search of protection, security, and most importantly, answers to questions of happiness, love, family and virtue: of what they consist and where they can be found. Seeking a lost paradise, Tolstoy and Nekhliudov both wonder whether enacting a modern paradise on the Russian estate is possible.

Readers of *Landowner's Morning* are most likely to answer this inquiry in the negative. Nekhliudov's search for truth and happiness ends in disillusionment when he learns that his utopian vision, his estate venture, is nothing more than a fantasy. And yet, while *Landowner's Morning* ends unhappily, Tolstoy's search for the rural ideal did not end there. *Landowner's Morning* is only the beginning of an investigation into the relationship between the human condition and the rural estate that Tolstoy carries out for two decades, ultimately surrendering the fantasy in *Anna Karenina*. What, then, are the lessons about estate life gleaned from

this piece of early fiction? And, most importantly for the investigation at hand, which of these lessons may be understood as responses to the moral and philosophical teachings of Rousseau?

Landowner's Morning was originally a part of a larger project, entitled *Novel about a Russian Landowner*. When he first envisioned it in 1852, Tolstoy hoped this literary endeavor would be his great contribution to aristocratic reform in the countryside. "In my novel," he professes in his August 3, 1852 journal entry, "I shall give an account of the evil of [the Russian?] government and if I find this satisfactory, then I shall devote the remainder of my life to the working out of a plan for an aristocratic, electoral system of government joined with a monarchic system, on the basis of existing alternatives. Here is an aim for a virtuous life" (PSS 46: 137; trans. Feuer 25). Tolstoy returned to Yasnaya Polyana in 1856 to make his literary project a reality.

At this time, the political climate in Russia was alive with the topic of peasant emancipation, especially among liberal Slavophiles seeking social reform in support of the people, the *narod*; specifically, a modified aristocracy that would fuse the government's intentions with popular interest. Tolstoy initially welcomed plans for reform and signed a declaration in support of emancipating the peasants with land. In all likelihood, Tolstoy was drawn to efforts to secure power in the countryside, particularly in the hands of the gentry who, in light of their intellectual background and proximity to the peasant class, were the most appropriate middlemen between the administration and the *narod*, and could best serve as local legislators in the countryside. Inspired by these liberal reform programs, Tolstoy proposed his own plan whereby his peasants could purchase a share of his estate. However, believing that land would soon be allotted to them at no cost, the peasants met his plan with great opposition. As a result, Tolstoy became disenchanted with his estate-bound project

and ultimately abandoned his *Novel about a Russian Landowner*.

As he attempted to come to terms with his failure with the serfs, Tolstoy turned to fiction and composed *Landowner's Morning* as one response to his attempted rural reform. True to Tolstoy's own experience, Nekhliudov returns to his childhood estate with plans to renovate it as a political community—to morally liberate his peasants while keeping them attached to the land—and to thereby find solace away from university life in the countryside. The good that comes from being a university student, Nekhliudov insists, is secondary to the good reaped from tending to one's estate. The "pathetic poverty of the peasants," witnessed during his brief summer stay on the estate, above all inspires Nekhliudov's homecoming. To return permanently for him is not a choice but a "sacred duty" that he is born to fulfill (PSS 4: 123–124; trans. FitzLyon 7).¹ He must deliver his peasants from poverty and transform his estate into a viable agricultural enterprise. Unlike the plans of a university student, which satisfy selfish pleasures, Nekhliudov's plan for restructuring the estate is advantageous to all. By regenerating the peasants' lives, Nekhliudov will make his own life meaningful.

Nekhliudov approaches his task systematically, relying heavily on theory. For practical knowledge of farming, he regularly reads chapters from *La Maison rustique du XIXe siècle*, a multi-volume, encyclopedic reference that began publication in 1830. From this manual exclusively, Nekhliudov gathers the technical information he believes is necessary for carrying out his farming duties. Each volume centers on a particular area of husbandry—domestic animals, horticulture and forestry, domestic industry, and vegetation—and provides cultivation techniques dating from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. Since it offers a comprehensive guide to land restoration—"here is quite a powerful system of civilization for the countryside," boasts its editors (Bixio 2; my

translation)—*La Maison rustique* appears to be the perfect textual companion for a novice such as Nekhliudov.

Beneath the large body of statistical evidence in *La Maison rustique* lies a moral project. Its group of sixty authors, a mix of scientists, historians, and proprietors, celebrate the estate as a site of intelligent activity, believing they can bring about a better world by promoting the right kind of rural living. A life “in harmony with the traditional life of the people of the countryside,” they propose, encourages individuals to replace sinful, urban activities with those that support the cultivation of their inner life—to replace the “cabaret” with the “garden” (Bixio 1). As a project, *La Maison rustique* was most influenced by a movement of humanist agronomists who saw *mesnagement*, a system of proper land cultivation, as a means of returning to Eden. Whereas man initially lived in Eden in a state of blissful ignorance, informed agricultural practices, like *mesnagement*, would allow fallen man to use knowledge and intelligence to restore land to its Edenic state. The estate thus becomes a hybrid space—a nature engineered to be more natural, a place where man could reawaken its fundamental, generative power.

To a large extent, Rousseau’s political corpus depends on the same classical humanist principles of the *La Maison rustique* tradition. Beginning with the *Second Discourse* (*Discours sur l’origine et les fondements de l’inégalité parmi les hommes*, 1755), Rousseau deems physical labor a primary means of moral and intellectual development. The daily use of the body reminds civilized man of his savage beginnings, “since his body is the only tool which savage man knows,” and thus helps him maintain a healthy balance between what Rousseau terms the “state of Nature” and the “state of society” (135; 3: 135–136).² Building on the ideas set forth in the *Second Discourse*, Rousseau in *Émile* (*Émile, ou de l’éducation*, 1762) recommends physical labor as a means of carrying out one’s moral and civic education. Guided by his tutor, Émile performs

exercises in physical labor that make him morally strong and keep him from indulging in destructive vices. In *Constitutional Project for Corsica* (*La Constitution pour la Corse*, 1765), Rousseau applies the same protocols to “the body of the nation.” If, for the individual, land cultivation helps secure his independence, then, for the nation, “agriculture is the only means of maintaining the external independence of the state” (282–283; 3: 904–905).

Nekhliudov’s strategic approach to farming betrays a conscious effort to imitate the notion that moral regeneration comes not only from labor but, most importantly, from proper estate management, and that ensuring the productivity of one’s rural enterprise naturally guarantees one’s moral growth. Although Tolstoy may have had other, personal reasons for regarding the estate as a haven, here he shows himself to be aligned with Rousseau and a movement inspired by agrarian humanists who set forth the return to rural life as the answer to the ills of modernity. Nekhliudov even pays tribute to his French inspiration by naming his own project his “peasant farm” (крестьянская ферма), engaging both the lexicon of *La Maison rustique*—translated into Russian as *Ферма XIX столетия*—and its philosophical schema. Important is the use of the term “ферма,” a cognate of the French “ferme,” a derivative of the verb “fermer,” which means both “to farm” and “to strengthen, to fortify.” The term emphasizes the link between land and moral development, while also suggesting a symbiotic relationship between land and individual as is glorified by the *La Maison rustique* tradition.

While *La Maison rustique* provides the praxis for Nekhliudov’s project, Rousseau provides the theory. In *Julie*, specifically, Rousseau explores the political dimension of the rural estate through Wolmar and Julie’s famed estate Clarens, where masters and servants work in concert for the benefit of their shared domestic economy. Serving as patriarch, Wolmar is the sole magistrate, and under his authority the estate functions as an independent political stronghold. Clarens is a

cogent example of what Eileen Hunt Botting, in her book *Family Feuds*, refers to as Rousseau's "rural republic," where patriarch and matriarch fulfill a moral and civic duty in educating their servants, and where all inhabitants delight in and benefit from a universal moral code.

A Rousseauian position on the rural estate as the site of moral and civic activity is the cornerstone of Nekhliudov's own project. Nekhliudov honors the estate as a wellspring of truth and happiness where, by way of manual labor, he can complete his moral task. For Nekhliudov, the search for truth and happiness demands more than the methods of property improvement proposed by *La Maison rustique*. The estate must also serve as a site of outreach to the wider community. Nekhliudov's personal development hinges on the moral education of his peasants and the estate as the enclosed, socially isolated space where he can enact this progress. His motives are as much moral as they are political, and his plan to revitalize the estate becomes a program for building a "rural republic," a cohesive estate-state, the success of which depends mainly on the moral development of its citizens.

Nekhliudov's political vision presupposes a moral solidarity much like the one shared by the inhabitants of Rousseau's Clarens. To guarantee the indissolubility of his estate, Nekhliudov attempts to foster an ethic of popular sovereignty by proposing a plan whereby his peasants can purchase and manage a share of his property. Nekhliudov resists quit-rent (оброк) because it replaces money for services, allowing the peasant to dispose of tenured land as he sees fit. Consequently, quit-rent undercuts the philosophical message behind *La Maison rustique* and compromises the moral integrity of Nekhliudov's "peasant farm." When the peasant Dutlov requests that his sons be allowed to pay quit-rent so that they may be carriers by trade, presumably a more lucrative employment,

Nekhliudov responds in favor of preserving the collective whole:

There's no harm in doing an honest job of work whatever it is... but I do think they could find another occupation. And besides the work is such that a young lad goes anywhere, sees all kinds of people, can get spoilt... There's plenty of other work you could do at home—crops, meadows... (51–52; 4: 162).

Initially a source of inspiration, Nekhliudov's political fantasy soon devolves into a delusion. His lofty goal to unify and reform the peasants is met with opposition, laughter, confusion, and, in some cases, suspicion. To the poorer peasants he offers the means to improve their lot so that they may become more viable contributors to the whole. To the more affluent peasants he suggests circulating their wealth to better benefit the collective, so that the success of one may blossom into the success of many. Regardless of Nekhliudov's audience, his visits end in failure, and by the close of the narrative he realizes that his vision cannot be reconciled with reality.

Although Nekhliudov finds encouragement in *La Maison rustique*, the ultimate failure of his project suggests that the practical program the work sets forth, designed for Western models, is inadequate for the Russian reality. The statistical evidence provided by *La Maison rustique*, compiled strictly from Western European farms, proves useless when applied to Russian soil. Thus, Nekhliudov's preparatory reading from *La Maison rustique* does not help him in any practical way—he repeatedly fails in his attempts at basic farming activities. Moreover, *La Maison rustique* offers no guidance for dealing with the Russian peasantry, whose complex political reality in the 1850s cannot be treated solely with foreign models. By the end of the narrative, Nekhliudov learns that "peasant farm," the very Russian "крестьянская ферма," is a contradiction in terms.

In bringing his protagonist to such a state of disillusionment, Tolstoy effectively illustrates the delicacy of the Russian situation and the ineffectiveness of Western programs. Tolstoy does not, however, discount Western models so much as he criticizes the cavalier execution of these models. Tolstoy's willingness to accept the underlying moral message, but not the practical application of Western strategies, shows that Tolstoy took to heart not only Rousseau's politics, but also his warnings on this particular front. Tolstoy avoids the mistakes that, according to Rousseau, Peter the Great made in his incautious westernization of Russia in the early eighteenth century. In *The Social Contract* (*Du Contrat social, ou Principes du droit politique*, 1762), Rousseau faults Peter for attempting to make Western Europeans out of Russians. In so doing, claims Rousseau, "he prevented his subjects from ever becoming what they could be by persuading them that they are what they are not" (73; 3: 386). In the early stages of reform, in "Notes on the Gentry" ("Записка о дворянстве," 1858; *PSS* 5: 267–271), Tolstoy similarly accuses many of his contemporaries of misappropriating Western ideals and of attempting to mold the peasantry according to liberal models rather than adapting the liberal models to fit the Russian situation. Rousseau accuses Peter the Great of the same misappropriation:

Peter had the genius of imitation. He did not have true genius, the kind that creates and makes everything from nothing... "The wise institutor does not begin by drawing up laws good in themselves, but first examines whether the people for whom he intends them is fit to bear them... Peter's genius was imitative; he did not have true genius, the kind that creates and makes everything out of nothing" (72–73; 3: 384–386).

Both Rousseau and Tolstoy seek a form of authority that embodies the "true genius" that will best match the needs of the people.

Even though, as Judith Shklar maintains, authority for Rousseau "was exercised only to maintain a destructive and false order" (159), he was also convinced that without authority, without "true genius," society would fall victim to the irreconcilable selfish desires of man. With respect to the balance between authority and natural rights, Tolstoy shares with Rousseau a common perspective. Throughout their careers, both struggled with the basic tension between freedom and control, between the desire to liberate the people and the belief that this cannot be done without some form of authority. Most notably in *The Social Contract*, Rousseau ultimately concludes that in order to guarantee "public felicity" the subjugation of a certain segment of the population is a necessary evil. As a result, Rousseau sought ways to best balance public will with authority. He strikes this balance with what he calls an "elective aristocracy," his happy medium between a government of nobles and the sovereignty of "the general will," the unified voice of the body politic. Rousseau supports the aristocracy as the main governing body for the same reason Tolstoy, in the beginning stages of emancipation in 1856, believed that the landed gentry ought to reform the peasant class: For everyone to enjoy or even come to know his given rights, an elect group of individuals needs to lead the people in enlightenment; or, in Rousseau's words, "the best and most natural order is to have the wisest govern the multitude" (93; 3: 407). Trusting in the goodness of such an authority that subjugates in order to liberate, the individual is more willing to submit and, in Rousseau's words, "[to] freely obey the yoke of public felicity, and bear it with docility" (71; 3: 383).

The "aristocratic electoral system of government joined with the a monarchic system," which Tolstoy proposed in 1852 at the outset of his *Novel about a Russian Landowner* project, recalls Rousseau's "elective" aristocratic government.³ In *Landowner's Morning*, the only segment of the original *Novel* project to be published, Nekhliudov

represents microcosmically the aristocratic electoral union as he strives to find his own happy medium between his personal understanding of righteous authority and the popular freedom of the peasants. Nekhliudov's efforts show that, like Rousseau, Tolstoy is concerned with preserving the rights of the peasants, whose organic lifestyle he celebrates in *Landowner's Morning*. Consistent with Rousseau, however, Tolstoy holds fast to authority. Nekhliudov's political program, his "peasant farm," betrays Tolstoy's competing allegiances to aristocratic power and to the peasant lifestyle. While Nekhliudov venerates the peasant life as morally fertile, he also insists on overseeing the peasant's education.

Tolstoy thus uses Nekhliudov's failure to demonstrate, firstly, that concrete Western models never quite work because they fail to take into account what is innately Russian; and, secondly, that only an authority which transcends practical theory can bring about social change. For these reasons, some but not all of the peasants support Nekhliudov's political motives—Dutlov, the most well-to-do of the peasants, is particularly suspicious of Nekhliudov's intentions and declines his offer to share in the estate venture. In refusing to conform to the initiative, Dutlov challenges Nekhliudov's original understanding of the peasants as a "simple, receptive, and [uncorrupted] class of people" (55; 4: 165). The task of educating and reforming the peasants proves more difficult than the young landowner had imagined. He cannot simply transpose his will (inspired by Western theory) onto the will of the peasants.

The landlord-serf relationship above all impedes the possibility of mutual acceptance and understanding. If Rousseau is correct, only an authority that at once observes the natural rights of the people while demonstrating the ruling capacity of the aristocracy can ease the strained relationship between landlord and peasant; in both respects, Nekhliudov falls short. He is a university student, not a farmer, and his intellectual enthusiasm does

not inspire respect among the peasants. Moreover, he often retreats when called upon to act as an authority figure. For this reason, those seeking leadership do not find it in Nekhliudov, and those resisting leadership (Dutlov) do not submit to him. He is young and inexperienced and his adolescent convictions are not enough to bring his ambitious plan to fruition. In light of these failures, one may wonder what brand of authority would suffice to establish that missing link between Nekhliudov and the peasantry.

Rousseau's Wolmar provides a possible model for what Nekhliudov tries but fails to become. As individuals and proprietors, Nekhliudov and Wolmar share a number of traits. Wolmar is presumably Eastern European. Both are members of the nobility who escape their metropolitan lives—Nekhliudov was a university student, Wolmar was in the civil service—and return to the rural estate. Both have a mission in mind: Nekhliudov will seek out truth and happiness, while Wolmar will "acquire a new taste for the good through the pleasure of contributing to it" (404; 2: 492). The personal edification of each depends on his ability to transform the lives of others, and thus their goal in returning to the estate is to remodel it from a site of idle living to one of social action. But why does Wolmar succeed in his rural venture whereas Nekhliudov fails? Or, to put it another way, what are the strategies inherent in Wolmar's program that guarantee his success?

Whereas Nekhliudov lacks the proper authority to earn the respect of his peasants, Wolmar gains that respect using the gentle authority of a patriarch. Shklar reads Wolmar as Rousseau's "most perfectly realized figure of authority" (161), superior even to God: "[I]t is only in a human image that the goodness ascribed to God can really be made manifest" (156). Wolmar not only embodies goodness—"to know him is to become aware of morality" (156)—but also inspires goodness by establishing a paternal connection between him and those who serve him. For the

moral and economic benefit of everyone in residence at Clarens, Wolmar maintains this essentially paternal dynamic using an undetectable force. According to Saint-Preux, Wolmar's servants, his "children of the house," "continue to work as they did in [their] paternal household; they have, in a manner of speaking, merely changed father and mother... In all, I have never seen a household where each performed his service better, and thought of it less as a service" (367; 2: 445). Paternal authority hides from view the inequality between master and servant. Understanding that they hold partial claim over the domestic economy, the peasants work for what they understand as their mutual satisfaction. For Rousseau, this result is what sets the patriarch apart from the despot whose rule is "ferocious" and lacks the "gentleness" of a paternal authority. This authority "looks more to the advantage of the one who obeys than to the utility of the one who commands" (*Second Discourse* 177; 3: 182;).

However, for even a God-like figure like Wolmar, manipulating this relationship is not enough to guarantee success. He needs his Julie. While Wolmar is the sole arbiter in matters concerning the philosophical and methodological design of Clarens, he shares with Julie the practical responsibilities of the estate; they "act in concert without performing the same acts... both work towards mutual happiness by different means, and this division of labors and duties is their union's strongest tie" (370; 2: 450). Wolmar is the master architect of the estate and is responsible for establishing its moral guidelines. Fulfilling her role as *materfamilias*, Julie cares primarily for her children and her servants (her "children of the house"), nurturing and educating them according to Wolmar's standards and judgments. Although Julie does not participate directly in the politics of the rural republic, she plays an equally significant role in perpetuating the appearance of equality that makes Clarens a modern paradise.

Nekhliudov is unable to build his own paradise on earth not only because he is naïve and inexperienced, but also, to put it plainly, because he is a bachelor. Tolstoy's early ideas for his *Novel about a Russian Landowner* project show that he and Rousseau placed equal emphasis on the family for its role in rural reform. In 1852, a few months after beginning the *Novel* project, Tolstoy returned to his diary to add the following afterthought:

The hero seeks in rural life the realization of his ideas of happiness and justice. Not finding it, and being disillusioned, he wishes to seek it in family life. His friend, a woman, suggests to him that happiness lies not in an ideal, but in regular, life-long work, the aim of which is the happiness of others. (PSS 46: 146; trans. Christian, 19 October 1852)

As he began *Novel about a Russian Landowner*, soon to be *Landowner's Morning*, Tolstoy already anticipated Nekhliudov's failure, and possibly even his own. He designed Nekhliudov's project specifically to disappoint if only to call attention to the central role the rural couple plays in establishing and maintaining a beneficial relationship between peasant and proprietor.

In accordance with Tolstoy's narrative design, Nekhliudov's political fantasy—"to influence this simple, receptive, [uncorrupted] class of people"—gives way to a romantic fantasy, a vision of conjugal happiness that has at its root social outreach:

I and my wife, whom I love as no one has ever loved anyone in this world, we both always live in the country, amid this peaceful, romantic nature, with our children, and our old aunt; we have our mutual love and our love for the children, and we both know that our purpose is to do good. We help each other to advance towards this goal. I issue general instructions, give general and just assistance, set up farms, savings banks, workshops; and she, with her pretty little head, wearing a simple white dress,

which she lifts over her dainty little foot, walks through the mud to the peasant school, to the infirmary, to an unfortunate peasant who, in all fairness, does not deserve assistance, and everywhere she brings comfort and help... (56; PSS 4: 165)

Domestic bliss, according to Nekhliudov, presupposes a “mutual love” that binds man and woman, each assuming their respective roles to ensure the success of their “peasant farm”: he will see to the financial duties while she monitors the estate’s commitment to the greater society by overseeing the education of the peasantry and administering their physical care.

The Rousseauian model of married life is most explicitly outlined in the second preface of *Julie*, where Rousseau summarizes for his reader the moral objective behind his epistolary drama:

I like to picture a husband and wife reading this collection [*Julie*] together, finding in it a source of renewed courage to bear their common labors, and perhaps new perspectives to make them useful. How could they behold this tableau of a happy couple without wanting to imitate such an attractive model? How will they be stirred by the charm of conjugal union, even in the absence of love’s charm, without their own union being reconfirmed and strengthened? When they are through reading, they will be neither saddened by their estate nor repelled by their chores... They will fulfill the same functions; but they will fulfill them with a changed soul, and will do as genuine Patriarchs what they had been doing as peasants. (16–17; 2: 23)

The portrait of pastoral utopia painted by Rousseau resembles that imagined by Nekhliudov, making Tolstoy’s hero the philosopher’s ideal reader. Milan Markovitch rightfully compares Nekhliudov and Wolmar for their common belief in the rural family as the root of all happiness (262). However, while Nekhliudov and Wolmar

share an enthusiasm for the rural home, their ideas of married life are entirely in conflict. For Nekhliudov, marriage is foremost a union of two lovers whose affections are the foundation for social outreach. The commitment to virtue, to “the good,” does not come at the cost of love, but rather their “mutual love” facilitates this commitment. By contrast, the marriage of Julie and Wolmar is made “in the absence of love’s charm”; de-romanticized, marriage is an order and a contract “to fulfill conjointly the duties of civil life, govern the household prudently, [and] raise one’s children well” (306; 2: 372). Marriage in *Julie* is conceived according to the Rousseauian worldview that made property—specifically, the rural estate—the central link between married individuals. The exchange of passion for property is not regrettable but rather necessary for attaining what for Rousseau may be an even greater happiness.

While Tolstoy shares Rousseau’s commitment to the aristocratic household, Nekhliudov’s dream of estate happiness reveals a conviction that a constructive, socially minded marriage must not be divorced from love. *Landowner’s Morning*, however, stops short of these matters. All the reader is allowed to envision? is Nekhliudov’s brief projection as to what he would like to see happen, not what is realistically possible. Arguably, Tolstoy returns to this matter first in *Family Happiness* (*Семейное счастье*, 1859). If in *Landowner’s Morning* the farmer did not have a wife to order existence on the Russian estate, in *Family Happiness* the farmer finally finds his bride. In this “New, New Heloise,” Tolstoy resolves to enact what Julie could never obtain: a happy, lasting marriage that is committed to both love *and* social outreach. Whereas in *Julie* Rousseau compartmentalizes, separating love from estate life, Tolstoy shows Masha and Sergei trying to have it all, and, in so doing, attempts to bring together the evil and good in man—a union that Rousseau took to be impossible.

Whether or not *Family Happiness* succeeds in providing the missing piece to Nekhliudov's modern paradise is debatable, as the conclusion of *Family Happiness* casts doubt on this family idyll as well as on the rural ideal overall. In the same way, *Landowner's Morning* ends ambiguously with Nekhliudov's estate reconstruction project hanging in the balance. Nekhliudov's closing fantasies reveal a possibly incurable anxiety that the estate, regardless of how it is governed, may never be the seat of truth and happiness Nekhliudov believed it could be.

The promising images of the landowner's life, with which he so enthusiastically began his project, are transformed into images of escape, a fantasy that stands in stark contrast to his initial hopes of rebuilding his estate. Nekhliudov dreams he is the peasant Il'ia, without land or family to claim him. He flies freely and easily on invisible wings over the world, from Kiev to Constantinople. Nekhliudov's fantasy unveils a latent desire to break the bonds of patriarchy and to become, surprisingly, not like Wolmar, but like Saint-Preux, who is not a citizen born of patriarchy, but a "citizen of the world," a lifestyle that is only later glorified by Rousseau in the unfinished sequel to *Émile*, entitled *Émile and Sophie* (*Émile et Sophie, ou les Solitaires* [published posthumously in 1782]). While in *Émile* Rousseau's rural hero is made a citizen by becoming a man of the house, in *Émile and Sophie* he is made a man "by ceasing to be a citizen," proclaiming: "I have renounced my patrimony and I am alive" (222–223; 4: 912–914). In search of self-preservation, Émile abandons his country home and sets off on a pilgrimage through foreign lands. He enacts what Nekhliudov, at the close of *Landowner's Morning*, dares only to imagine.

In the end, *Landowner's Morning* does not present a positive picture of estate life, but rather its internal contradictions. This suggests that both the idealist and the fatalist in Tolstoy are rooted in Rousseau. Neither of Rousseau's philosophical novels ends as it should: Julie dies, Wolmar is

widowed, Saint-Preux remains a wandering bachelor, Sophie is a downtrodden adulterer, and Émile ends as a captive of pirates (yet morally free!). In the case of Nekhliudov, the final result is equally devastating as his efforts towards recreating a modern Eden end pathetically. Thus, what Tolstoy takes from Rousseau, and what *Landowner's Morning* ultimately demonstrates, is that the estate is neither the source of man's misfortunes nor his refuge from his misfortunes; rather, it is something in-between, a double-edged sword.

If happiness is defined not as the satisfaction of personal desire but as a sentiment of social cooperation, then for Rousseau the estate is the best available means for achieving happiness by maintaining a balance between collective order and personal desire. It is the one site where this balancing act can take place; where one's natural desire for independence can be reconciled with one's need for authority. However, this may only be so in theory. Along with Rousseau's twin novels, Tolstoy's real-life and fictional attempts at estate reform prove that Rousseau's notions of "freely obey[ing]" and "the yoke of public felicity" amount to mere rhetorical reconciliations of competing ideas that are impossible to bring about in real life. Nekhliudov's project fails because he was so naïve as to believe that he could turn these idealistic intentions into reality. While there is some indication that the absence of the rural family, and with it the patriarchal political structure, is also to blame for Nekhliudov's failure, his final words—"Why am I not Il'ia?"—not only devalue the estate, but also allude to another paradise outside its walls, apart from the institution of marriage, and beyond the limits of a shared domestic economy.

Notes

1. Hereafter cited by page number, followed by volume and page number from *Jubilee*.
2. Rousseau will be cited by page number from the translation (with title, where necessary), followed by

volume and page number from the original (*Œuvres Complètes*).

3. According to Feuer, the “R—” found in the original diary entry may not refer to “Russian,” but rather to Rousseau (224n40). Feuer rightly notes that nationalities are never capitalized in Russian (although early drafts of *Anna Karenina* show that Tolstoy on several occasions capitalized “Russkii”), and that, in his diary, Tolstoy often referred to Rousseau with an abbreviated “R—.” It is possible that Tolstoy is taking issue specifically with the anti-monarchical aspects of Rousseau’s “social contract,” which explains why Tolstoy emphasizes, albeit obtusely, the need for a republic that honors monarchic rule. However, despite their opposing views on monarchy, there remain striking similarities between their projects in both lexicon and, most importantly, in their ideas on the role of the rural aristocracy in reforming society.

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