

# News of the Profession

## Tolstoy and World Literature, Yasnaya Polyana

The fifth “Tolstoy and World Literature” conference, organized by Vladimir Tolstoy and Galina Alekseeva, both of the Yasnaya Polyana Museum-Estate, in conjunction with Donna Orwin (University of Toronto) and Andrew Donskov (University of Ottawa), took place this past August. For some, it was a welcome respite, if only for a few days, from the oppressive heat of August in Moscow. For others, it was an opportunity to pay homage to Tolstoy’s grave, “на месте зеленой палочки,” for the first time.



*Marsha Silberman*

Undoubtedly, though, the conference was, for all, a time of lively debate, friendly conversation, and intellectual rejuvenation. Nearly fifty scholars, half from Russia and the others from the United States, Canada, Israel, Japan, Ukraine, France, and Brazil, descended on Cafe Preshpekt on the first evening for what would be one of many group meals. Indeed, it is the conference’s very likeness to a retreat—with

its family-style meals and shared hotel, treks through potato fields and impromptu evening gatherings—that makes it such a successful event, encouraging dialogue across disciplinary, national, and generational boundaries.

The fruits of this dialogue were, of course, most evident in the presentations that spanned the following four days. We discussed Tolstoy’s relation to Kant and Rousseau. Darwin and Tyndall were in attendance, as were Mrs. Henry Wood, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Thornton Wilder. We spoke of holiday celebrations, gardens, and the family, all against the backdrop of the neighing of horses and bleating of goats just outside the open window of the Volkonsky House. Notes from the archives of the State Tolstoy Museum were examined, while a walking stick, once given by Tolstoy as a gift, was uncovered in, of all places, the manuscript division of a Japanese university. The attendees worked together to find new ways to bridge the “big” questions of Tolstoy, questions that have served as the foundation of Tolstoy studies throughout the years—questions of spirituality, of good and evil, of humanity—with contemporary theoretical problems and recent textological discoveries.

While the presentations were as varied as one might expect from the broad title of the conference, the interactions among participants generated a handful of concerns that acted as leitmotifs, tying together seemingly disparate projects and points of view. Not surprisingly, one such leitmotif was Tolstoy’s stance toward war, whether Tolstoy was a pacifist, and how we might consider this question through the lens of philosophy and through that of literature. Another recurring concern was that of Tolstoy’s many identities and when he is called upon to assume one role over another. When is he a thinker and when an artist? When a man, and when a historical

entity? It seems only natural, though, that the most deliberated question at this international conference was that of translation. More specifically, what of Tolstoy is either lost or gained as a result of his translation into other languages and other cultures? We learned of the representation of Tolstoy's death in the Brazilian press, of Spanish translations of *The Kreutzer Sonata*, of the world premiere of *The Power of Darkness* in Paris, and of the reception of Tolstoy fifty years after his death by French authors. And, at what very well might have been the peak of the conference, we were treated by one of our own (Itokava) to a spontaneous and truly inspired performance of a Japanese version of the song "Katiusha."

In addition to the panels, the participants enjoyed a piano concert and a performance of romances, as well as a guided tour around the Tolstoy house and an excursion to the Tolstoy family graveyard at the Nikol'skaia church, a protected architectural monument. During the final session of the conference, which was devoted to the latest publications on Tolstoy, information was distributed about the progress of IMLI's 100 volume collected works of Tolstoy and the latest on-line resource for Tolstoy scholarship ([www.tolstoy-nasledie.ru](http://www.tolstoy-nasledie.ru)). Past participants were also presented with their copies of the published proceedings from the 2005 conference. In a manner befitting the spirit of the event, the conference concluded that evening with a celebratory dinner under a canopy in the apple orchard, where the *tolstovedy* were able to toast to the field, to collegiality, and to future gatherings.

**Program of the Fifth International Academic Conference "Leo Tolstoy and World Literature," Yasnaya Polyana, August 12-16, 2007**

**AUGUST 12, 2007**

***Opening remarks***

Vladimir Tolstoy (Director, Yasnaya Polyana)

***First Session***

Marina Shcherbakova (Moscow). L. N. Tolstoy's "Fantastic Story" and Its Real Basis (from the experience of preparing the *Complete Collected Works of L.N. Tolstoy in 100 Volumes*) («Фантастический рассказ» Л. Н. Толстого и его реальная основа. (Из опыта подготовки Полного собрания сочинений Л. Н. Толстого в ста томах)).

Vladimir Papernyi (Israel). Lev Tolstoy and Russian Popular Religiosity (Лев Толстой и русская народная религиозность).

Aleksei Kruglov (Moscow). L. N. Tolstoy as a Reader of I. Kant (Л. Н. Толстой—читатель И. Канта).

Vitalii Remizov (Moscow). Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone. L. Tolstoy and I. Kant (Религия в пределах только разума. Л. Толстой и И. Кант).

Kazbek Sultanov (Moscow). From "The Raid" to "Hadji Murat." The Caucasian Theme in the Context of L. N. Tolstoy's Spiritual Quest (От «Набега» до «Хаджи-Мурата.» Кавказская тема в контексте духовных исканий Л. Н. Толстого).

Koiti Itokava (Japan). The Eastern Question in the Reception of L. N. Tolstoy and F. M. Dostoevsky (Восточный вопрос в восприятии Л. Н. Толстого и Федора Михайловича Достоевского).

***Second Session***

Irina Sizova (Moscow). L. N. Tolstoy's *An Infected Family*: Toward the Problem of Dating the Comedy («Зараженное семейство» Л. Н. Толстого: к проблеме датировки комедии).

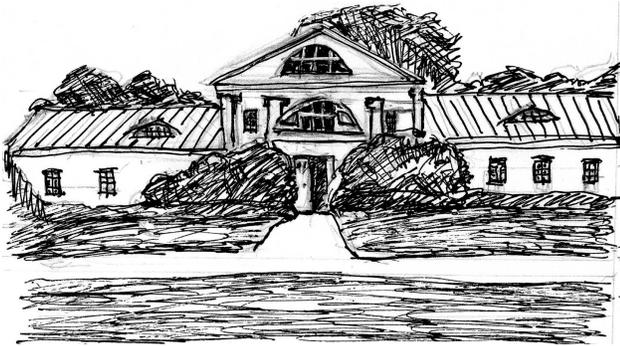
Leslie O'Bell (USA). "After the Ball"—Tolstoy's Thoughts on *Childhood* («После бала»—Толстой в раздумьях над «Детством»).

Galina Alekseeva (Yasnaya Polyana). The Elements of the Holiday in L. N. Tolstoy's *The Cossacks* (Стихия праздника в повести Л. Н. Толстого «Казачество»).

Tat'iana Arkhangel'skaia (Yasnaya Polyana). Leont'evian "Trends" in the Pages of L. N. Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (Леонтьевские «веяния» на страницах романа Л. Н. Толстого «Анна Каренина»).

Tat'iana Nikiforova (Moscow). The 1892 Notes of M. P. Behrs in the Manuscript Division of the L. N. Tolstoy State Museum (Записки М. П. Берса 1892 года в отделе рукописей ГМТ).

Rick McPeak (USA). Tolstoy: A Soldier for Peace  
(Толстой: боец за мир).



Marsha Silberman

**AUGUST 13, 2007**

**Third Session**

Donna Orwin (Canada). Why Levin Reads Tyndall  
(Почему Левин читает Тиндалля).

Nina Nikitina (Yasnaya Polyana). Eternal  
Everydayness, or the Transgression of Yasnaya  
Polyana Reality (Вечная повседневность, или  
трансгрессия яснополянской реальности).

Tom Newlin (USA). Harmony in Nature and the  
Struggle for Existence in the 1860s: The Shadow of  
Darwin in the Apiary of Tolstoy (Гармония в  
природе и борьба за существование в 1860-е  
годы: тень Дарвина на пчельнике Толстого).

Molly Brunson (USA). Pierre's Panorama: Optical and  
Novelistic Illusion in *War and Peace* (Панорама  
Пьера: оптическая иллюзия и иллюзия романа в  
«Войне и мире»).

Nadya Clayton (USA). The Device of Significant  
Repetition and Problems of Freedom and Necessity  
in L. N. Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (Прием  
значимого повторения и проблемы свободы и  
необходимости в «Войне и мире» Л. Н.  
Толстого).

Karin Beck (USA). Language as Device. The Semiotics  
of the Speech Act in *War and Peace* (Язык как  
прием. Семиотика речевого акта в романе  
«Война и мир»).

E. D. Tolstaia (Israel, as delivered by Vladimir Paper-  
nyi). Rare Repetitions, Suggestion, Riddle, Hypno-  
sis: Experimental Devices in *War and Peace*  
(Редкие повторы, суггестия, загадка, гипноз:  
экспериментальные приемы в «Войне и мире»).

**Fourth Session**

Iraida Gryzlova (Yasnaya Polyana). "Manuscript of the  
Year 1812" in the Creative Laboratory of L. N.  
Tolstoy («Манускрипт 1812 года» в творческой  
лаборатории Л. Н. Толстого).

Iuliia Krasnosel'skaia (Moscow). Revelation as Illness  
(A. Chekhov's Polemic with L. Tolstoy in "The  
Black Monk") (Откровение как болезнь  
(полемика с Л. Толстым в рассказе А. Чехова  
"Черный монах")).

Lada Panova (Moscow). The Hidden Tolstoy in the  
Prose of Mikhail Kuzmin (Потаенный Толстой в  
прозе Михаила Кузмина).

Michael Denner (USA). "Be not afraid of greatness!"  
Tolstoy, Fame, and Scandal Regarding Bunin's  
Painting *Fishing* («Да не утрашит тебя  
величие!» Толстой, знаменитость и скандал по  
поводу картины «Рыбная ловля» Бунина).

Aleksandr Volkovinskii (Ukraine). The Macro-image of  
the Garden in the Works of Lev Tolstoy and Taras  
Shevchenko (Макро-образ сада в произведениях  
Льва Толстого и Тараса Шевченко).

Ani Kokobobo (USA). The Portrait of Christ in Tols-  
toy's *A Harmony and Translation of the Four Gos-  
pels* (Портрет Христа в книге Толстого  
«Соединение и перевод четырех Евангелий»).

Irina Mel'nikova (Japan). The Image of Katiusha Mas-  
lova on Japanese Stage and Screen during the Be-  
ginning of the Twentieth Century (Образ Катюши  
Масловой на сцене и на экране Японии начала  
XX века).

**AUGUST 14, 2007**

**Fifth Session**

Edwina Cruise (USA). L. N. Tolstoy and the English  
Novel: The "Miraculous" Mrs. Henry Wood (Л. Н.  
Толстой и английский роман: "Чудесная"  
миссис Хенри Вуд).

Irina Gniusova (Tomsk). The Motif of the Escape as  
Vital for the Plot and Poetics of the Family Novel  
(L. N. Tolstoy and the English Novel) (Мотив  
побега как ключевой для сюжета и поэтики  
семейного романа (Л. Н. Толстой и английский  
роман)).

Ol'ga Stushebrukova (USA). Tolstoy's *Family Happiness* and Dickens's *Bleak House* («Семейное счастье» Толстого и «Холодный дом» Диккенса).

Aida Suleimenova (Vladivostok). The Reception of Tolstoyan Ideas in Twentieth Century Japanese Poetry and Culture (Восприятие толстовских идей в японской поэзии и культуре XX века).

Alla Polosina (Yasnaya Polyana). Tolstoy and the Encyclopedists (Толстой и энциклопедисты).

### **Sixth Session**

Irina Luk'ianets (Saint Petersburg). Tolstoy and Rousseau—On the Borders of Understanding, the Problem of Expansion (Толстой и Руссо—о границах понимания, проблема расширения).

Ani Kostanian (France). The Influence of L. N. Tolstoy's Work on French Literature of the 1940s-60s (Влияние творчества Л. Н. Толстого на французскую литературу 40-60-х годов).

Ol'ga Slivitskaia (Saint Petersburg). The Evil in a Good Person (Tolstoy and Du Gard) (Зло в хорошем человеке (Толстой и дю Гар)).

Radha Balasubramanian (USA). Tolstoy and Indian Thought (Толстой и индийские размышления).

Bruno Barretto Gomide (Brazil). The Reception of L. N. Tolstoy's Work in Brazil (Восприятие творчества Л. Н. Толстого в Бразилии).

Marsha Silberman (USA). Tolstoy and American Women (Толстой и американские женщины).

El'vira Osipova (Saint Petersburg). The Ideas of Tolstoy in the Work of Thornton Wilder and John Gardner (Идеи Толстого в творчестве Торнтон Уайлдера и Джона Гарднера).

**AUGUST 15, 2007**

### **Seventh Session**

Irina Anosova (Saint Petersburg). Tolstoy and Emerson (Толстой и Эмерсон).

Ol'ga Svetlakova (Saint Petersburg). Two Spanish Translations of *The Kreutzer Sonata* (Два испанских перевода «Крейцеровой сонаты»).

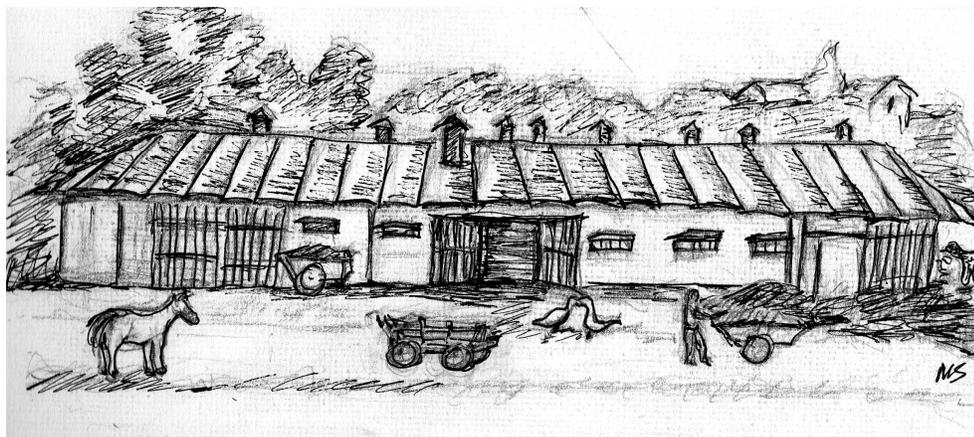
Jefferson Gatrall (Canada). A Russian *Muzhik* in Paris: Critical Reviews of the World Premiere of *The Power of Darkness* (Русский мужик в Париже: критические отзывы о мировой премьере «Власти тьмы»).

Anna Grodetkaia (Saint Petersburg). "What for?" The Fate of N. Strel'nikov's Opera *The Fugitive* (1933) in the Plot of a Tolstoyan Story («За что?». Расстрельная судьба оперы Н. Стрельникова «Беглец» (1933) на сюжет толстовского рассказа).

### **Eighth Session**

Presentation of new publications.

Molly Brunson  
University of California, Berkeley



## Forthcoming Publication: S. A. Tolstaya's *My Life*

The significance of my forty-two years of conjugal life with Lev Nikolaevich cannot be separated from his life.

- Tolstaya's Preface to *My Life* (unpublished)

Sof'ya Andreyevna Tolstaya began writing *My Life* in 1904, completing it in 1916, three years before her death. During this time, she was aware of the biography of her husband undertaken by one of his followers, Pavel Biriukov, but she felt it was too stylized and idealistic, almost icon-like, covering only the happier aspects of Tolstoy's life, whereas she wanted to bring out *the whole truth* of their relationship, including what she perceived as its negative aspects. In this she found support from her husband, who once remarked there was little point in writing only about the pleasant side of his life.

This attitude reflected in her writings is no doubt why this major work was largely ignored by Biriukov, Vladimir Chertkov, and other like-minded individuals who, while seeing fit to publish Sof'ya Tolstaya's diaries and correspondence (at least in part), saw no need for bringing any derogatory aspect of their mentor and idol to public attention. The other reason *My Life* was kept under wraps for so long was the blatant dismissal of details of Tolstoy's day-to-day life by Soviet ideology as too mundane—and often contradictory to the official view of Tolstoy—to warrant serious scholarly attention. Soviet scholars were, by and large, oblivious to the fact that it was precisely these everyday real-life details that were at the root of many of his literary portrayals, a fact that is only too evident from any serious study of Sof'ya Tolstaya's writings and her large epistolary legacy. Hence the only publication to date of *My Life* is limited to excerpts totaling some 200 pages at most, which first appeared in the journal *Новый мир* (1978), then in an abridged version in *Прометей*

(1980), and basically the same materials in still briefer form in *Октябрь* (1998).

It must be emphasized that Sof'ya Tolstaya's *My Life*, along with other published and unpublished documents in her archive, constitute some of the most important sources of knowledge about Leo Tolstoy's life and his relationship with both people close to him and various representatives of Russian society. Indeed it is *the* most important document for Tolstoy studies that still remains unpublished, inasmuch as it sets forth many facts concerning Tolstoy's life and work to which Sof'ya Tolstaya alone was privy. This is especially true during the early decades of their marriage—the 1860s and 1870s—when Tolstoy rarely made diary entries of his own and details of his day-to-day life were only scantily documented in other sources. Her description is all the more poignant in view both of Tolstoy's flourishing popularity as a novelist and the closeness of the family unit at Yasnaya Polyana during this period.

Sof'ya Tolstaya's work offers a broad and carefully considered perspective on her own life, as well as insights into Russian society of the period. It allowed her to show the interconnections among events of different eras, as well as to comment on her life as a whole. It provides significant new information that is not to be found in any of her other writings.

Her role as a biographer has been consistently overlooked. However, equally little attention has been paid to Sof'ya Tolstaya's role as editor and "co-writer" in a number of pages of her husband's well-known works. (Her role as a copyist has long been known.) It was only a few years ago, for example, that Western scholars discovered that several of the early versions of Tolstoy's children's classic, *Азбука* (Primer), were originally written by Tolstaya. This was also true of a number of passages in *Anna Karenina*—for example, when Tolstoy was at pains to flesh out a description of Betsy Tverskaya's costume, he wrote in the margin: "Sonia, you dress her." Neither Tolstaya's literary collaboration with

her husband nor her unique personal approach to Tolstoy's ideas have been explored to a satisfactory extent in existing scientific literature—a lacuna that begs to be addressed.

Her independent role as editor and publisher of Tolstoy's works cannot be underestimated. In 1883 her husband gave her complete control over the publishing of virtually all his works written before this date. Beginning in 1885, she published altogether eight editions of his collected writings to date, along with fifteen other volumes of individual works. Added to this was her activity as archivist and documentary historian—it is in good measure thanks to Tolstaya that so many materials (including manuscripts, letters, and diaries and a catalogue of her husband's library holdings at Yasnaya Polyana) have been preserved for future generations of scholars. According to senior museum researcher Tatiana Nikiforova, the S. A. Tolstaya archive in the State L. N. Tolstoy Museum in Moscow numbers 22,000 items, including some ten-thousand letters written by or addressed to her. Her correspondents included many prominent contemporary writers, artists, critics, philosophers, theatre people, lawyers, and politicians.

The project will also examine Tolstaya's activity as a translator and an author in her own right—of a number of short stories, poems, narratives, and articles—as well as a talented amateur artist, musician, and photographer.

A study of Sof'ya Tolstaya's own life-work will not only shed new light on the process of creation of Tolstoy's masterpieces but also provide a corrective for a number of biographical details of her husband's life—both in his writing career and in his own inner spiritual development. For example, contemporary Tolstoy researchers will now be obliged to revise their views on the chronology of Tolstoy's so-called 'spiritual crisis' of the early 1880s, concluding that it began as early as 1875, instead of the end of the 1870s, as previously thought. The correctness of the revised conclusion is supported by documentary evi-

dence in Sof'ya Tolstaya's manuscripts and unpublished letters.

The project will consist of three volumes, to be published in 2009:

**Volume 1:** A comprehensive critical study (in English) of Sof'ya Andreevna Tolstaya and her multi-faceted relationship with the Russian writer Leo Tolstoy—as a collaborator, co-writer (to some extent, at least), and editing and publishing associate, against the backdrop of her independent role as social activist and an author herself, all of which placed her at the very center of contemporary life during the last several decades of nineteenth-century Russian society.

**Volumes 2 & 3:** The making available, in English translation, of Sof'ya Tolstaya's seminal work *Моя жизнь* (*My Life*) with our own commentaries.

The Slavic Research Group has been granted by the Tolstoy Museum in Moscow exclusive rights to the English translation and publication of *Моя жизнь* (*My Life*). This work is already in progress.

Andrew Donskov, F.R.S.C.

Slavic Research Group, University of Ottawa



### Participate in Compiling the new *Complete Collected Works of Tolstoy in One-Hundred Volumes*

The Gorky Institute of World Literature, part of the Russian Academy of Sciences (ИМЛИ-РАН), invites scholars from around the world to participate in compiling the academic edition of Tolstoy's *Complete Collected Works in 100 Volumes*. In particular, the Institute welcomes research manuscripts that explore Tolstoy's personal and literary influence abroad. Tolstoy entered into correspondence with an extraordinarily broad circle of foreign contemporaries. Until now, this material has

been published in fragments. For the present *Complete Collected Works*, a more careful preparation and full inventory is necessary: We need to know, for instance, pertinent information about his foreign correspondents, their fates and creative paths.

Along with research on literary and philosophical connections between Tolstoy's creative heritage and world culture, attention ought to be paid to the reactions abroad to Tolstoy and his creative works during his life; for instance, first publications of his works in foreign languages and information about his translators.

The sheer breadth of this program allows us to invite not only established scholars in the field, but also young specialists, graduate students, and university students. If necessary,

IMLI-RAN can support these researchers with special lecture courses and individualized tutorials.

We hope that the proposed program will interest our colleagues abroad and that the cooperation will become a substantial addition to the academic project of the *Complete Collected Works of L. N. Tolstoy*, a unique cultural project of the twenty-first century. More detailed information can be obtained from Marina Ivanovna Shcherbakova, director of the Department of Classical Russian Literature at the Institute of World Literature: m-shcherbakova@mail.ru.

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