

have felt *just that same* guilt weighing so heavily on Pierre after a night of carousing, we have felt *just that same* frustration Andrei Bolkonski has when dealing with his aging father. The greatest part of Tolstoy's magic in creating *life* resides in his uncommon ability to see so deeply into what lies within us all, what unites us universally as living, breathing persons in the most fundamental ways. But part of the magic resides, too, in his subtle but profoundly effective rhetorical encouragement of our identification with even such unattractive characters as Ivan Ilich. There is more to his method, certainly, but the encouragement to identify closely with his characters is effected in no small part through Tolstoy's frequent habit of saying simply and with unshakable confidence, "this is how it is for us all," как всегда, "as always."

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Notes

1. Quotations from *Death of Ivan Ilich* are from the Maudes' translation; references to the Russian are taken from the *Complete Collected Works* (Полное собрание сочинений, PSS).

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Tolstoy's Hieromonk

(Editor's note: This research note will be further developed in an article, "Terror Un-sublimated: Hieromonks, Revolution and Tolstoy Last Master Plots," forthcoming in *Tolstoy Studies Journal* Volume XXII (2010). See Hugh McLean's translation of "Hieromonk Iliodor" immediately following this note, in "The Whole World of Tolstoy.")

The Later Tolstoy's Plans, Fragments and Plots: a Problem

When Tolstoy died November 7, 1910 (November 20, new style) at Astapovo, he had published ten editions of his collected works in Russia with new ones in preparation. Dozens of editions had been published abroad in European languages, including his work forbidden in Russia. Within a few years of his passing, his diaries, letters and other artistic works banned in Russia during his lifetime finally saw the light of day, including unpublished masterpieces such as *Khadzhi Murad*. In these first years after Tolstoy's death the first generation

of manuscript editors and publishers—V. G. Chertkov, P. I. Biriukov, A. L. Tolstaya and the rest—often focused on disseminating his personal genres and propagandistic writing. Nevertheless, it would soon become apparent that the master was far from finished with publishing fiction.

In addition to the host of short pamphlets and opinion pieces that he completed and, in some cases, published between 1908 and 1910, there were found amongst his papers dozens of new plans and variants in all major genres of imaginative literature excluding poetry, particularly of prose and drama. According to the memoir of A. P. Sergeenko, in spite of the first obvious symptoms of pneumonia that would kill him a few days later, during his flight towards Astapovo Tolstoy kept sketching plans for at least four new plots, one of them concerning a priest: Sergeenko caught up with Tolstoy the following day at his hotel lodgings at Optina Pustyn. The list of things that Tolstoy requested that Sergeenko fetch (“soap, nail brush and a block-note” and later “coffee and a sponge”) was followed by plans for new stories:

- 1) Feodorit and the horse that had died; 2) the priest who was converted by the one he had tried to convert; 3) Strakhov’s love affair. Grushen’ka-his house-maid. 4) The hunt; the duel and the shaven conscripts.

Sergeenko identified the priest plot as one centered on Tolstoy’s friendship with a Tula priest Troitskii, who in a score of admonishing letters written over a course of a dozen years had tried to revert Tolstoy and return him in the bosom of Orthodoxy. Sergeenko notes another entry made in Tolstoy’s diary four days prior to his flight from Yasnaya Polyana: “I imagined vividly a story about a priest who is trying to convert a free religious man and then converts to his faith. A good plot” (Сергеенко 288). Some of these plots from Tolstoy’s final years remained no more than a few lines, scribbled on note-pads and odd scraps; others bore tentative titles that stood for a

whole plan, while still others—like the “Pavel Kudriash” project (1908-1909)—consisted of pages and pages of drafts and variants.

In his final years, Tolstoy lived with God and revolution on his mind. On June 3, 1908 he recorded in his diary: “I thirst for the artistic—revolution” (PSS 56:144). The focus of this research note is one of these unfinished pieces, Tolstoy’s mysterious plan for a story about the hieromonk, one that may conceal Tolstoy’s most unusual (and most recent) interpretation of an old passion for rebellious monks, human and divine love, and revolution.

As I have argued elsewhere, the hieromonk plot developed by Tolstoy in January 1909 and known throughout its publication history by its conventional title, “Hieromonk Iliodor” and by its alias, “Hieromonk Isidor.” This pair appears to be closely related to other drafts of the same period, in particular to those that deal with multi-genre explorations of revolutionary terrorism centered around the character of Pavel Kudriash (or his other assumed names) and left unrealized at Tolstoy’s death.¹ Four fragments composed during the end of 1908 and beginning of 1909 related to the “Pavel Kudriash” plot proper (“Убийцы,” “Кто убийцы. Павел Кудряш” and “Нет в мире виноватых”); they feature the progress of a working-class youth and former peasant, Pavel, who gets involved with socialist propagandists and falls under the sway of extremist rhetoric within the Socialist Revolutionary combat organization. He joins their expropriation unit, only to become disenchanted with violent means and later to embrace a religious path.

In a seemingly unrelated plot, Tolstoy was simultaneously developing a story-line that concerned a celibate monk who leaves the Church to join the revolution: I have described this plot elsewhere as follows:

The priest loses faith during the Eucharist, leaves the church, joins the revolution, assumes guilt for a high-profile assassination—a

likely regicide—goes to prison, and dies on the cross flanked by two “robbers” or revolutionary brethren executed next to him (*PSS* 37: 380). Such a scandalous conclusion of the story and of Tolstoy’s literary career that has all but escaped the attention of commentators is only a typical reflection of Tolstoy’s creative throes in embracing terror. (506)

I still support this claim about the conflation of artistic and religious-political terror in Tolstoy’s mind, which was paradoxically greatly enhanced by Tolstoy’s rejection of violence. However, on recent, closer examination of Tolstoy’s drafts and manuscripts, I would like to offer a more nuanced explanation of the conclusion of the priest’s martyred path.

We do not know what might have become of these fragments about a celibate priest, the former Prince Ivan Tverskoy, who in the eighth year of his ministry becomes disillusioned in his calling and is shown stooped, powerless, bewildered, in agonizing doubt as he walks out to the parishioners to administer Holy Communion. He manages to conclude the ceremony, and is so beloved by the parishioners that his confusion is mistaken for religious ecstasy. This is the extent of the opening chapter of the surviving drafts. In the two other, shorter chapters—all that remains of the story—we learn the scant prehistory of Tverskoy’s “lapse into religion.” Clearly, along with his lapse out of it, this is what motivates Tolstoy’s interest in his priest. The story concludes with a fragment the size of an aphorism by Kafka and Cioran, possessed of the same nihilistic energy and spiritualist élan.

Tolstoy’s Hieromonk: Description and Notes on the Text of the Drafts, Manuscript Versions, and Publication History

In manuscript, Tolstoy’s work about the celibate priest consists of three variants, one containing a plan for the story as summed up above, and of the two partial write-ups of the beginning three

chapters, of which the former is a manuscript, and the latter is a typed and cleaner version of the same, with Tolstoy’s numerous corrections of the typed text entered by hand. In Hugh McLean’s translation of the cleaner version of these beginnings from the Jubilee edition (see “The Whole World of Tolstoy”), the first three existing chapters of the hieromonk story are of vastly unequal length. Their sketchiness does not prevent the fragments from radiating an intense power and energy even though they are suggestive of several possibilities for plot progression.

Tolstoy’s “unpublished, unfinished, and in progress” work, followed by a separate category, “plans and variants,” have their appointed place in the complex structure of the *Complete Collected Works in Ninety Volumes, Academic Jubilee Edition* (*Полное собрание сочинений в 90 томах академическое юбилейное издание*). Aside from the three long novels which reserve an extra volume or more for variants and the miscellanea, these two categories of such material are located at the back of almost every volume of the Jubilee, preceding the commentary section. Volumes seventeen and thirty-six, both released in 1936, one right before and the other right after Chertkov’s death, belong to a special class. These two volumes contain predominantly “unpublished, unfinished, and in progress” materials. The story bearing the provisional title, “Hieromonk Iliodor,” drafted by Tolstoy no later than January 1909, appears in the adjacent volume thirty-seven, which was published only in 1956. An extensive examination of the Jubilee archives leads me to believe that this volume (thirty-seven) was assembled alongside volumes seventeen and thirty-six in the late 1920s and certainly before 1937-38.

The timing of the volume assemblage and publication is important in sorting out Tolstoy’s monk story. Volume thirty-seven was among the last of the pre-war volumes whose drafts had been

completed while V. G. Chertkov was still around the editorial office and, despite a series of incapacitating strokes, at least nominally supervising the edition. It is logical to suppose that Chertkov was at least partially involved in the compilation of this volume. His personal stake in overseeing the de-facto employment of the enigmatic priest in the authoritative Jubilee edition was strong.

Chertkov included "Hieromonk" on the short list of Tolstoy's unfinished short fiction for the third volume of his and A. L. Tolstaya's "joint custody" edition of Tolstoy's posthumous works (1911-1912). The edition of *Lev Tolstoy's Posthumous Artistic Works* (*Посмертные художественные произведения Льва Николаевича Толстого*) appeared simultaneously in Moscow, Berlin, and New York. Each edition contained the same three volumes, and each volume contained identically titled material. All published the story under the title *Иеромонахъ Исидоръ* [Hieromonk Isidor].

But there were important differences among these editions. The title pages of each volume in the Berlin and New York edition dropped the name of A. L. Tolstaya as the edition's sole authorized publisher. "V. G. Chertkov" was listed as editor of the New York edition, and A. K. Chertkova was added, along with her husband, as the two-member editorial panel of *Free Press* (*Свободное слово*) for the Berlin edition. Publishing Tolstoy's posthumous works as though they were part of the Chertkovs' not-for-profit *Free Press* indicates the struggle over Tolstoy's previously unpublished or bowdlerized oeuvre, and it also reveals the important political weight that Chertkov sought for works like Tolstoy's hieromonk; in 1911-1912 Alexandra L'vovna did not share this view.

The three volumes in the Moscow edition were inevitably and heavily censored, suffering the fate typical of all of Tolstoy's work starting with volume eight of *Anna Karenina*. The Moscow edition published by I. D. Sytin underwent

the usual excisions imposed by the old regime on every piece of Tolstoy's prose smacking of religious and political anarchism. These excisions include episodes describing Isidor's tortuous doubts before service at the Royal Doors at the end of the more or less finished chapter one, a few lines of Isidor's fictional diary from "15 September 1902" in chapter three, and his despair over his lost (or never existing) faith in God.

The foreign editions of Tolstoy's posthumous works (Berlin and New York) published these missing sections as integral parts of the Isidor narrative. (Other works in these foreign editions with censorial changes had the changes meticulously restored, but catalogued in addenda as "Restored Plans" and not as part of the story proper.) This detail is meaningful: Those who knew Tolstoy's plans considered it essential for the story to reflect the surviving drafts—an integral work.

Immediately after the final line of the first three chapters (in McLean's translation, "He is not; he does not exist"), the German and American editions of *Posthumous Artistic Works* included a chapter outline for the planned story beneath a horizontal line and the prefatory text, "The synopsis of this unfinished story survived in the author's papers":

1. The Mass. Doubts.
2. Conversation with elders. [His] comprehension of the insufficiency for himself of what is sufficient for them.
3. Solitude again. The Diary.
4. The muzhiks live. Ivan appears. He is being snatched.
5. Prison and the politicals. Sermons. His sister posts bail.
6. He vociferates at his sister's.
7. To the revolutionists.
8. To his friend, a boss.
9. Abroad.
10. To Sire.
11. Assumes responsibility.

12. Execution alongside the two robbers.²

The plan fits on one manuscript page and it was catalogued as “number one” in the three extant manuscript variants of the monk story.³ The variant assigned “number two” is a previously unpublished five-leaf manuscript teeming with corrections. Based on an agreement with the State Tolstoy Museum, I will discuss the plan and a cleaner, typeset version of this heavily edited second draft, which encompasses seven leaves (921/3 (or 29/3)) and bears Tolstoy’s manual corrections. The surviving clean text of the first three chapters, of which only chapter one appears complete and published in the Berlin and New York editions, coincides with the text that appears in volume thirty-seven of the Jubilee (*PSS* 288-90) and appears translated in this volume of the *Tolstoy Studies Journal*.

But there are serious differences between the manuscripts. To begin with, the Berlin and New York as well as the abbreviated Moscow text all cast the title character as Isidor (Исидоръ). The Jubilee edition insists that the name of the priest is “Iliodor” (Илиодор in the post-orthographic-reform spelling of the Jubilee). It is difficult to identify a clear preference between Isidor and Iliodor based on manuscript “number one” alone, since Tolstoy goes back to the former priest’s secular name in French: “Jean” for his family and in high society and “Ivan” when he goes to the people before being seized and thrown into jail.

The texts of the plan published in the Jubilee and that in the Berlin and New York versions are likewise not identical. Although Tolstoy did not leave a fair corrected copy of the plan of the story, the Berlin and New York editions assumed the right to streamline the plan, removing two short paragraphs (numbered four and five) that appear right beneath the synopsis of chapter two in the manuscript—a section that Tolstoy had lightly circled and then struck out with a clean vertical line: “Conversation with elders. [His] comprehension of the insufficiency for himself of what is

sufficient for them.” The crossed out sections following right below read:

4. Sister or mother. High society. Their horror at the revolution. Conversations about Jean and his *fredaines*.

5. Jean appears. He [*crossed out: listened and understood*] says what he thinks. He vociferates.³

The Jubilee edition in volume thirty-seven reproduces the whole text of the plan, including all of Tolstoy’s corrections. Several chapters therefore appear out of order, since the inserted notes four and five following two were left there to precede “3. Solitude again. The diary.”⁴ Unlike the plans appearing in the Berlin and New York versions, we find the following in the Jubilee:

1. The Mass. Doubts.

2. Conversation with elders. [His] comprehension of the insufficiency for himself of what is sufficient for them.

4 converted from 1: Sister or mother. High society. Their horror at the revolution. Conversation about Jean and his fredaines (French for pranks).

5 converted from 4: Jean appears. He [listens and understands], says what he thinks.⁵ He exposes.

3. Again alone. The Diary.

4. [He goes to the people]. The muzhiks live. Ivan appears. He is being snatched.

5. Prison and the politicals. Sermons. His sister posts bail.

6. At his sister’s. He vociferates...

7. To the revolutionists.

8. To his [sister], friend, a boss.

9. Abroad.

10. To Sire.

11. Assumes responsibility.

12. Execution with two robbers. (*PSS* 37: 379-80).

In 1912, the Moscow edition of volume three could obviously not print this plan. As if losing faith and reverting to militant atheism, agitating among peasants, and then resorting to revolutionary heresy after the imprisonment were not

sufficiently scandalous, Tolstoy's former monk was due to get involved with revolutionary radicals, assume guilt for one of their heroic capital crimes against the regime, and then, in the final chapter, be executed next to what might or might not be read as "robbers." The word in the manuscript is abbreviated down to what looks like "razb" (разб).

The word "execution" (казнь) in note twelve is indisputable, as is the phrase "assumes responsibility" (берет на себя) in the preceding note (eleven). Also legible are references to politicals in prison and Ivan's (i.e., Isidor's/Iliodor's) revolutionary involvements. The phrase "assumes responsibility" can only mean these two things, given the context and the connotations of the phrase in Russian: either that Ivan assumes responsibility (guilt) for another revolutionary's crime or that he assumes responsibility for carrying out the crime himself. Although interpreting Tolstoy's notoriously scrawled handwriting is always a difficult task, and these jottings were obviously done in haste and on the spur of the moment, in this case the manuscript is pretty clear; the plan has an obvious direction.

The initial editors of the plan (while Tolstoy was still alive) made an important and characteristic mistake, one Tolstoy could not have corrected. Unlike the three chapters of the story, the plan itself was not intended to be machine typed until the next number on the plan, standing for the next chapter, was conceived and composed during the drafting process. Tolstoy could not have had a chance to read and correct the text of the plan because it was not transferred to typeset.

Deciphering the last two words on the manuscript plan for the future chapter twelve is problematic. The lower bar for the digit two in the number twelve almost overruns the following text; the eye is drawn to the text and not the digits, and in the confusion of lines the reading "razb" (разб)—presumably an abbreviation for "thieves" (разбойники)—appears entirely plausi-

ble. The execution and the chapter's number (twelve) are furthermore rich in gospel symbolism (the number of vigils in repentance for the sins of the dead, etc.). Chertkov reasonably read the phrase as "execution with two robbers" [казнь с двумя разбойниками], a political reading typical of Chertkov.

This interpretation is repeated in the Berlin and New York editions of Tolstoy's posthumous work (*PSS* 3: 275 and 3: 308, respectively), and appears in the authoritative Jubilee edition (*PSS* 37: 380). The Jubilee editors in 1936 were drawn to the same conclusions as Chertkov's openly anti-establishment collective—the death of the recalcitrant Ivan amid militant revolutionary Christology proved predictably alluring, especially since it aligned with Tolstoy's ideas on ascetic martyrdom and Christ's sacrifice to humanity. Unlike volumes seventeen and thirty-six, which managed to get through the hoops of Stalin's censorship, volume thirty-seven could not be published in the morbid year 1937; it took almost twenty years for it to see the light of day.⁶

Published in 1955, *Descriptions of the Manuscripts of L. N. Tolstoy's Artistic Works* (*Описание рукописей художественных произведений Л.Н. Толстого*) was intended as a supplement to the almost-complete Jubilee edition; the editors simply entered the result of their new reading of note twelve, which looks puzzling at first: "execution and doors smashed" [казнь и двери разбил] (536-37). Interestingly, this volume of description appeared in print a year before the delayed publication of volume thirty-seven of the Jubilee (1956). The correction was *not* included in the Jubilee edition. Several plausible explanations may be offered. In the post-war Zhdanovite era, substantial cuts in the commentary sections of the Jubilee were made and token ideological correctives were introduced. (For instance, the preface to volumes published in the 1950s catered to the vigilant eye of Marxist-Leninist watchdogs.) The stupendous editorial work accomplished by the

first and second generation of the Jubilee editorial team could not be duplicated given the political realities. Volumes like thirty-seven that had lain unpublished for decades needed to be printed quickly as they stood to meet the new biographical milestone: 1958 would be Tolstoy's 130th birthday.

The second explanation has to do with the ideological and aesthetic convictions of V.S. Spiridonov, editor of the Hieromonk story for the Jubilee. Spiridonov, who was responsible for verification of the manuscripts and commentary, was an unparalleled specialist in interpreting Tolstoy's atypical genres and formats, such as *The ABCs* and *Russian Readers*. The volumes with Tolstoy's primers (twenty-one and twenty-two) supervised by him were also published only in 1957 already after his death. Fatefully, starting with volume twenty-one, each volume was supposed to be prefaced with an introduction drawn up in the Marxist-Leninist spirit according to a special Party Decree. The assignment of the story to Spiridonov in the 1920s was not surprising. He belonged to that generation of Tolstoy textologists skilled at making some of the most widespread of Tolstoy's ideas and probes appear as stimulating but ultimately harmless forms of ideological experiment. In assigning the story to Spiridonov, Chertkov must have hoped for an easy passage of this dangerous piece of dynamite.

This plan failed not simply because both the plotter and the carrier died before the volume could move into print (Chertkov in 1936 and Spiridonov in 1952), but because beginning in August 1939 each volume underwent severe ideological monitoring. (As mentioned, Spiridonov's own volume twenty-one served the party as its first pilot project in this regard.) How did the ideological sector of the Communist Party alter the story's shape in print? With the exception of the priest's name, the essential blueprint of the first editors was kept: Chertkov's "Isidor" became Spiridonov's "Iliodor." Regardless of his priestly

appellation, all that mattered was the monk's fate following the defrocking. The Chertkov-Spiridonov reading agreed on the essential gospel-inspired detail: the monk had to die on the cross alongside two robbers. This outcome had to be expected because there is evidence suggesting that Spiridonov worked steadfastly on popular legends dealing with robbers during his supervision of volume 21, at least as late as August 1949.

Having carefully examined the manuscripts, I have to agree with the editors of *Descriptions of the Manuscripts*: Once one realizes the problem with the digit "two" in the note number, "and doors smashed" becomes the obvious reading. But that begs the questions: What doors is he talking about? And why are they smashed? The phrase starts making sense only once we remember the priest's confrontation with faith a few steps away from the Royal Doors or Gates into Heaven (Царские двери or Царские врата), the central doors of the iconostasis in an Orthodox church. In Russian liturgical practice, the icon picturing Christ giving communion to the apostles is located above these doors of the iconostasis; the sacrament of Holy Communion is performed here. Let us recall that at the beginning of the story, the hieromonk experiences doubts while exiting through the doors to face his parish and feels the heavy burden of his role imitating the protopriest. In other words, his doubts about the sanctity of the Eucharist, which begin with his own symbolic passage towards the faithful through the Doors, are also doubts about the institution of faith: "He had been assailed by doubt. And doubting, he understood that in this matter there was no middle ground: either it was really a great mystery or it was a terrible, disgusting fraud" (McLean translation).⁷

With the smashing of the doors, I believe that Tolstoy meant to depict how, at the moment of dying as a revolutionary martyr, the former priest smashes the metaphorical doors of the heavenly vault separating him from the Father. He smashes

his doubts and temptations; while dying he breaks through the doors that now appear to him as an obstacle, a facade obscuring the true nature of autocracy and theocracy. The detailed reading of doors and associated imagery (robbers and priest characters) will receive further development in the companion essay to this note, "Terror Unsublimated: Hieromonks, Revolution and Tolstoy Last Master Plots," forthcoming in *Tolstoy Studies Journal Volume XXII (2010)*. Along with the investigation of other priest plots of Tolstoy's final years and of their historical and literary sources, the essay will further consider the role of politics in shaping the fates of Tolstoy's Hieromonk.

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Notes

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1. See my essay, "Tolstoy's Response to Terror and Revolutionary Violence," forthcoming in expanded and revised version in the Russian translation by the author in *Яснополянский сборник*, 2010 and 2012 as "Ответ Толстого на революционный террор и насилие."

2. "Геромонахъ Исидоръ." Л.Н. Толстой. *Посмертныя художественныя произведения*. Berlin: J. Ladyshnikow Verlag G. M.b.H 1911-1912 (3: 275). "Геромонахъ Исидоръ." *Посмертныя*

художественныя произведения Льва Николаевича Толстого. Нью-Йорк: Русское литературное издательство (3: 308).

3. This plan bears numbers coded 29/1 or 981/1 in the photo-imaging versions of Tolstoy manuscripts at State Tolstoy Museum in Moscow (OR GMT 981/1 or 29/1).

4. Manuscript division of GMT 981/1 [29/1] 1 op. 1/1 leaf.

5. Manuscript division of GMT 981/1 [29/1] 1 op. 1/1 leaf

6. My reading of the crossed out verbs differs from the Jubilee since I believe Tolstoy used them in the past rather than present tense.

7. The whole history and process of the Jubilee is dealt with in detail in my book, *Tolstoy's Fate in the Twentieth Century: Documents, Memoirs, and Archival Stories* (forthcoming, under contract with Princeton University Press).

8. Manuscript 29.3 leaf 5 of 7.

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