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LEV TOLSTOY and the concept of brotherhood

Proceedings of a conference held at the University of Ottawa 22–24 February 1996

Edited by Andrew Donskov and John Woodsworth



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TOLSTOY AND PATRIOTISM

Но каким образом тогда этот старый человек [Кутузов] один, в противность мнения всех, мог угадать, так верно угадал тогда значение народного смысла события, что ни разу во всю свою деятельность не изменил ему?

Источник этой необычайной силы прозрения в смысл совершающихся явлений лежал в том народном чувстве, которое он носил в себе во всей чистоте и силе его.

«Война и мир», т. 4, кн. 4, гл. 5*

Zapiski blokadnogo cheloveka [Blockade diary] Lidija Ginzburg's fictionalized memoirs of life during the siege of Leningrad, opens with a tribute to Vojna i mir [War and peace]. According to Ginzburg, people trapped in the city read the novel, not to check its reality against theirs, but their own reality against its. "И читающий говорил себе: так, значит, это а чувствую правильно" [And the reader would say to himself: uh-huh, that's it, I've got the right feeling about that]. Even in those extreme conditions, Vojna i mir turned out to be the ultimate word "о мужестве, о человеке, делающим общее дело народной войны" [on courage, on man engaged in the common endeavour of a people's war].¹ Ginzburg's memoirs appeared in print only in 1984 (in the journal Neva), but a scholarly

[[]But how did it happen that this old man [Kutuzov], alone, in opposition to the opinion of everyone else, could discern, how could he so truly discern the national meaning of the event that not once in all his activity was he untrue to it? **1** The source of this extraordinary power of penetration into the meaning of what was happening lay in that national feeling which he carried within himself in all its purity and strength.] — *War and peace*, Vol. 4, Bk 4, Ch. 5.

¹In L. Ja. Ginzburg, *Chelovek za pis'mennym stolom* (Leningrad, 1989): 517. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations in this essay are mine.

and patriotic companion piece was publis issue of the Red Army journal Zvezda [Star]. "O romane L'va Tolstogo «Vojna i mir»" [On Tolstoy's novel War and peace] ends with both a call to arms and a direct reference to the special viewpoint of contemporary Soviet readers of Vojna i mir.

Быть может, у великого романа не было и не будет лучших читателей, чем советские люди эпохи Отечественной войны, чем люди, которые путем неимоверного героизма, неимоверной самоотверженности пришли к пониманию идей: всенародная воля к победе, всенародная ненависть к врагу, утверждение и защита общей жизни.

[Perhaps there have never been and will never be better readers of the great novel than Soviet people from the epoch of the war of the fatherland, people who, by way of unbelievable heroism, unbelievable self-sacrifice, came to understand the ideas of the will of all for victory, the hatred of all for the enemy, the confirmation and defence of life in general.]²

The soldier who sacrifices himself for his country, according to Tolstoy, does so "не потому, что в нем нет себялюбия, но вопреки своему себялюбию" [not because he lacks self-love, but in spite of his self-love],³ in the name of what Ginzburg called "общая жизнь" [life in general].⁴ This "общая жизнь", first discovered by Tolstoy, unites individuals in a common humanity without denying their individuality. The mature Tolstoy depicted "бесконечно многообразные человеческие сознания как носители общего бытия" [infinitely varied human consciousnesses as carriers of a common existence].⁵ He was therefore especially important for Soviet literature, which had to portray "огромные массовые движения ... психологию народной войны и сознание нового, преодолевшего индивидуализм человеka" [enormous mass movements ... the psychology of a people's war and the consciousness of the new man, who has overcome individualism].⁶ Soviet culture, according to Ginzburg, represented the realization of "общая жизнь", which she equated with Russian national life, the "народная жизнь" depicted in Vojna i mir. In "O romane Tolstogo «Vojna i mir»", she embraced it all, even the mystical nationalism expressed in Natasha's instinctive ability to perform peasant dances that she had not been taught.

²Ginzburg, "O romane L'va Tolstogo «Vojna i mir»", Zvezda, Vol. 1, No 1 (1944): 138.

³Ginzburg, "O romane «Vojna i mir», 137.

⁴I am using Judson Rosengrant's translation of this phrase from *On Psychological prose* (Princeton, New Jersey, USA, 1991).

⁵Ginzburg, "O romane «Vojna i mir», 126,

⁶Ginzburg, "O romane «Vojna i mir», 128.

Like Ginzburg in 1944, the Tolstoy of Vojna i mir wore his love of country on his sleeve. He would not always find it so easy, however, to justify such patriotism. In the epilogue to Anna Karenina (Book 8), at the apiary, Levin criticizes Russian involvement in the Serbo-Turkish War.

«Да моя теория та: война, с одной стороны, есть такое животное, жестокое и ужасное дело, что ни один человек, не говорю уже христианин, не может лично взять на свою ответственность начало войны, а может только правительство, которое призвано к этому и приводится к войне неизбежно. С другой стороны, и по науке и по здравому смыслу, в государственных делах, в особенности в деле войны, граждане отрекаются от своей личной воли».

[Well, my theory is this: war, on the one hand, is such a bestial, cruel and horrible business that not one person, let alone a Christian, could personally take on the responsibility for starting a war. Only the government, which is called into being for this very purpose, and which is inescapably led to war, can do this. On the other hand, according to science and to common sense, in government matters, especially in the matter of war, citizens abdicate their personal will.] (Chapter 15)⁷

Он говорил вместе с Михайлычем и народом, выразившим свою мысль в предании о призвании варягов: «Княжите и владейте нами. Мы радостно обещаем полную покорность. Весь труд, все унижения, все жертвы мы берем на себя; но не мы судим и решаем». А теперь народ, по словам Сергей Иванычей, отрекался от этого, купленного такой дорогой ценой, права.

[He spoke together with Mikhailich [the beekeeper] and the folk, who had expressed their thought in the legend of the summoning of the Varangians: "Reign over us and command us. We happily pledge complete obedience. All the labour, all the humiliations, all the sacrifices we will take on ourselves; but it will not be we who judge and decide." And now the folk, according to the Sergej Ivanyches, would renounce this right, bought at such a dear price.] (Chapter 16)

In abbreviated form, Levin is repeating arguments from Vojna i mir, perhaps borrowed from W. H. Riehl and also from conversations with the Aksakov brothers in the mid-fifties, that rulers exist to keep the people from soiling itself with politics.⁸ He even refers elliptically to theories from the earlier novel about the mysterious and inevitable movements of peoples for which governments exist to take responsibility. What is most striking about this reprise, how-

⁷Where I quote from well-known works of Tolstoy, I will use chapter numbers or, in the case of the shorter works, leave it to the reader to find the passage. All other references to Tolstoy's writings will be to the 90-volume *Jubilee edition* of Tolstoy's works (Moscow, 1928–1958), subsequently identified by *JE* in the text, followed by volume and page number.

⁸See Donna Orwin, Tolstoy's art and thought, 1847–1880 (Princeton, New Jersey, USA, 1993): 233–34.

ever, is what Tolstoy chooses to leave out. Here no spark ignites the people to defend their brother Slavs; Levin states that nothing can make the *narod*, as *narod*, kill.

«Народ жертвует и готов жертвовать для своей души, а не для убийства», — прибавил он.

["The *narod* sacrifices and will sacrifice for its soul, but not for murder", he added.] (Chapter 16)

Tolstoy does not address himself, as he did in Vojna i mir, to the question of why individuals and whole peoples run amok. The Russian people are praised rather for insulating themselves from the bestial horrors of war. In Anna Karenina Tolstoy puts his explanations for mass upheavals in the mouth of the Slavophil intellectual Sergej Ivanovich. Sergej Ivanych says that "arithmetic" cannot ascertain the "дух народа" [spirit of the people].

«Это чувствуется в воздухе, это чувствуется сердцем. Не говорю уже о тех подводных течениях, которые двинулись в стоячем море народа и которые ясны для всякого непредубежденного человека; взгляни на общество в тесном смысле».

[It can be felt in the air, it can be felt by the heart. I'm not even talking about those submerged currents which have stirred in the becalmed sea of the *narod* and which are clear to every unprejudiced person; look at society in the narrow sense.] (Chapter 16)

The metaphysical argument advanced in the first four chapters of the first epilogue of *Vojna i mir* is founded on just such a comparison of peoples and historical forces to oceans. It begins with and then extensively develops the very image employed by Sergej Ivanych of a seemingly calm ocean with submerged currents.

Прошло семь лет после 12-го года. Взволнованное историческое море Европы улеглось в свои берега. Оно казалось затихшим; но таинственные силы, двигающие человечество (таинственные потому, что законы, определяющие их движение, неизвестны нам), продолжали свое действие.

Несмотря на то, что поверхность исторического моря казалась неподвижною, так же непрерывно, как движение времени, двигалось человечество. Слагались, разлагались различные группы людских сцеплений; подготовлялись причины образования и разложения государств, перемещений народов.

[Seven years passed after 1812. The agitated historical ocean of Europe settled back in its banks. It seemed calm; but secret forces moving humanity (secret, because the laws that govern their movement are unknown to us) continued their activity.

Despite the fact that the surface of the historical ocean seemed motionless, just as unceasingly as the motion of time, humanity went on moving. Various groups of people formed and disintegrated; the reasons for the formation and the disintegration of states, for the displacement of peoples were in the process of being prepared.] (Chapter 1) In Anna Karenina Levin attributes this kind of metaphysical speculation about historical forces to "та самая гордость ума, которая чуть не погубила его" [the very pride of mind that had nearly killed him] (Chapter 16). Levin, and Tolstoy with him, objects to the hubris that leads Sergej Ivanych to suppose he and others, however "unprejudiced", could fathom the intentions of Providence. The telling, and killing, word in Sergej Ivanych's speech is "ясны" [clear] — as if God's intentions could ever be clear to mankind.

A few years later, speaking in his own voice in *Ispoved'* [A Confession], Tolstoy rejected his former belief in "ideals" that guided humanity as a whole. Theories about the activities of "человечество" [humanity] could not explain the meaning of the life of each individual:

Для того, чтобы понять, что он такое, человек должен прежде понять, что такое все это таинственное человечество, состоящее из таких же людей, как и он сам, не понимающих самих себя.

Должен сознаться, что было время, когда я верил этому. Это было то время, когда у меня были свои налюбленные идеалы, оправдывавшие мои прихоти, и я старался придумать такую теорию, по которой я мог бы смотреть на свои прихоти как на закон человечества.

[In order to understand what he was himself, a person had beforehand to understand this mysterious humanity, made up of people like himself, who did not understand themselves.

I have to admit that there was a time when I believed this. This was the time when I had my own beloved ideals, which justified my whims, and I was trying to think up a theory according to which I would be able to regard my whims as a law of mankind.] (Chapter 5)

The "theory" which Tolstoy belittles in *Ispoved'* had led to the creation of *Vojna i mir*, with its Gœthean tolerance of everything human, including even war. In a letter to A. A. Tolstaja in the early 1870s (*JE*, 62:9), Tolstoy characterizes *Vojna i mir* as a gigantic orgy, an intoxication which had only temporarily distracted him from his quest for the real meaning of life. In it, natural-historical forces justify even savage behaviour in wartime, and these same forces would seem to give rise to a nationalism, what Tolstoy called "swarm-life", that he either ceased to believe in or at least never again explicitly depicted after *Vojna i mir*. Contrary to what Ginzburg suggests in her article, therefore, "national life", the "HapogHaa Mgea" as Tolstoy defined it in *Vojna i mir*, was not his final solution to the problems of individualism. In later works, in fact, nationalism is shown to interfere with *obshchaja zhizn'*, which does not distinguish one people from another.

But so what? As the reaction of the beleaguered inhabitants of Leningrad to Vojna i mir proves, even an author as critic of his own works cannot take back words once spoken. Ginzburg is certainly right that the "общая жизнь" of Vojna i mir includes the patriotism activated by the French invasion and destruction of Russia. In the rest of this paper I shall look at a possible theoretical justification of the patriotism that was essential to the novel but rejected in the decade after Tolstoy finished it.

In *Ispoved'*, Tolstoy says that "COBEPILENCTBOBAHNE" [pursuit of perfection], was the goal of his life until he moved to St Petersburg in 1855. He then took a wrong turn, and over the next 25 years, during which he wrote both *Vojna i mir* and *Anna Karenina*, he travelled a dead-end road. *Ispoved'* itself recounts his return to the "HPABCTBEH-HOE COBEPILENCTBOBAHNE" [pursuit of moral perfection] of his youth after his spiritual and intellectual crisis in the late 1870s. It also explains, in general terms and without naming names, how he lost his way in 1855. This happened when he arrived in the capital straight from the front in Sevastopol and met writers and intellectuals who introduced him to new ideas.

Взгляд на жизнь этих людей, моих сотоварищей по писанию, состоял в том, что жизнь вообще идет развиваясь и что в этом развитии главное участие принимаем мы, люди мысли, а из людей мысли главное влияние имеем мы — художники, поэты. Наше призвание — учить людей... Вера эта в значение поэзии и в развитие жизни была вера, и я был одним из жрецов ее.

[The attitude toward life of these people, my writer colleagues, was that life is always developing and that in this development we, thinking people, play the main part, and that among thinking people we — artists and poets — have the major influence. Our role was to teach people.... This belief in the meaning of poetry and in the development of life was a belief, and I was one of its priests.] (Chapter 2)

This polemical summary of the bare facts of the German philosophy that Tolstoy encountered in the mid-1850s bears as much relationship to it as the summary of *King Lear* in *Chto takoe iskusstvo?* [*What is art?*] bears to Shakespeare's play. What seemed inadequate to Tolstoy in the 1880s originally attracted him not as flattery but as a solution to certain problems. In Sevastopol he had witnessed the lows and highs of war and responded to them in various ways. On the one hand, as satirist and reformer he had written memos exposing the corruption of the Russian army and its soldiers.⁹ On the other, he had written the patriotic *Sevastopol' v dekabre mesjatse* [*Sevastopol in December*]. On the one hand, he had gambled so recklessly that, in January, he had lost his house at Jasnaja Poljana. On the other, serving on the fourth bastion, he had felt so spiritually exalted that he contemplated devoting the rest of his life to found-

⁹It is most interesting to read the longest of these, the so-called "Zapiska ob otritsatel'nykh storonakh russkogo soldata i ofitsera" (*JE*, 4:285–394). Intended as part of a recommendation for army reform to be submitted to one of the sons of Nicholas I, it supplies a typology of the Russian soldier that mirrors the one in *Rubka lesa* [*The Woodfelling*] but is brutally negative.

ing a new religion. In battle he had seen the strength of natural selflove and unnatural vanity and acts of genuine self-sacrifice. In all his war stories before his arrival in Petersburg, these contradictions coalesce around the issue of courage. Each of these stories debunks romantic notions of courage while attempting a new realistic definition of it. But none of them entirely succeeds at this second goal. None, to use Ginzburg's terms, satisfactorily explains how a soldier, once he truly understands the dangers facing him, overcomes his selflove sufficiently to sacrifice himself on the battlefield. None supplies a justification for patriotism.

In the first story, Nabeg [The Raid], written in the Caucasus and published in Sovremennik in 1853, Captain Khlopov serves out of duty, because "Hago we CЛУЖИТЬ" [you have to serve]. In addition to a sense of duty, which is shown in action but which is never explained psychologically, there are references in Nabeg to one, and possibly two other sources of courage in battle. I refer to the high spirits of Ensign Alanin, whose death anticipates that of Petja Rostov, and to an unelaborated assertion in Chapter 10 of the strength to perform great deeds resident in the Russian soul.

The next military tale to appear (in the June 1855 issue of Sovremennik) was Sevastopol in December [Sevastopol' v dekabre mesjatse]. Tolstoy finished it while serving on the fourth bastion, the most dangerous spot in Sevastopol, and it reflects those heightened spirits in resistance to danger which he loved to depict in his soldiers and which he had experienced himself. Even as he expresses these feelings in the ecstatic tone of the story, he analyses them, achieving a more concrete psychological realization of them than he had been able to do in Nabeg. We feel most alive when our lives are most threatened: this is why young soldiers seek out danger and even older ones find it seductive.¹⁰ This kind of courage, inspired by the

¹⁰ The narrator explains how "you" feel under fire. First you are afraid, but you hide your feelings out of vanity: "Но зато, когда снаряд пролетел, не задев вас, вы оживаете, и какое-то отрадное, невыразимо приятное чувство, но только на мгновение, овладевает вами, так что вы находите какую-то особенную прелесть в опасности, в этой игре жизнью и смертью; вам хочется, чтобы еще и еще поближе упали около вас ядро и бомба." [But then, when the missile has flown by without touching you, you revive, and a kind of joyful, inexpressibly pleasant feeling, but only for a moment, comes over you, so that you find a kind of special charm in danger, in this play of life and death; you want a bomb or a ball to fall near you again and closer.]

Gary Saul Morson points out the moral ambiguity of the reader as tourist wanting to experience this thrill at the expense of the possible death of soldiers. See "The Reader as voyeur: Tolstoy and the poetics of didactic fiction," in *Leo Tolstoy: Modern critical views*, edited by Harold Bloom (New York, 1986): 183. Morson's account, however, does not explain either the ec-

same life force that makes us love ourselves, is perfectly understandable, especially in the young, who do not sufficiently fear death. *Sevastopol' v dekabre mesjatse* also enlarges on the concept of duty introduced in *Nabeg*. A soldier in hospital who has just lost a leg advises the narrator that the soldier stays brave by not thinking. But this soldier does more than just stand firm on the battlefield. His wife relates that, though now crippled, he has asked to be sent back to the fifth bastion to teach if he cannot work there. To account for this, Tolstoy falls back on generalities such as those in Chapter 10 of *Nabeg*.

...вы молча склоняете перед этим молчаливым, бессознательным величием и твердостью духа, этой стыдливостью перед собственным достоинством.

[you bow without words before this taciturn, unconscious greatness and firmness of spirit, this bashfulness about one's own worth.]

Тоward the end of Sevastopol' v dekabre mesjatse, Tolstoy does venture one explanation for heroism; namely, "чувство злобы, мщения врагу, которое таится в душе каждого" [the feeling of anger, of vengeance toward the enemy, that hides in the soul of each]. Beyond that, however, he speaks, again vaguely, of a "consciousness of one's own dignity and of high thought and feeling" and, this for the first time, of "духом защитников Севастополя" [the spirit of the defenders of Sevastopol]. This last he locates in a feeling — "любовь к родине" [love of country] — "лежащее в глубине души каждого" [residing in the depths of each soul]. The hero of the Sevastopol "epic" is "народ русский" [the Russian people], which under no circumstances will give up the city. Reporting from the fourth bastion, a participant in fierce fighting, Tolstoy allows himself simply to assert the existence of patriotism without grounding it philosophically or psychologically.

The last two war stories to appear before Tolstoy's arrival in Petersburg were written in calmer circumstances.¹¹ In *Rubka lesa*, Tolstoy, now a seasoned warrior, dug deeper into the psychology of the battlefield, producing a typology of the soldier that was much admired by his contemporaries. In this story Tolstoy also unwittingly laid the groundwork for a new, non-psychological justification of military spirit [<code>дyx</code>] and patriotism. I am referring to the poetic tone and structure of the story, which, as Tolstoy himself acknowledged

static reaction of the wounded soldier or the final elevated mood of the reader as expressed in the story's penultimate chapter.

¹¹*Rubka lesa* had been begun in the Caucasus in 1853, but was finished in Sevastopol on June 18, 1855, only a day before Tolstoy launched into his second Sevastopol sketch, *Sevastopol'* v mae, which he wrote at white heat in only eight days. He was stationed at the time twenty versts from Sevastopol, near the Bel'bek river.

in dedicating it to Turgenev, owe much to Zapiski okhotnika [A Sportsman's sketches].¹² Without realizing the full significance of this change, Tolstoy, by imitating Turgenev, went beyond his early determination to describe nature *un*poetically, that is, concretely, through the senses of an observer placed in the scene.¹³ For the first time, nature creates or contributes to a *mood* which unites all the soldiers sitting around the fire. This mood is seconded or echoed by Antonov's song "Berezushka". Through Turgenev, Tolstoy was already tapping into an idealism, or romanticism, that he would soon consciously embrace. As this story was being completed, in fact, Vasilij Botkin was plotting a romantic realism which would counter Nikolaj Chernyshevskij's idea of art as merely "a surrogate for reality". Chernyshevskij's realism would only copy nature in its external details. True poetry does not disdain nature, as Botkin wrote Turgenev on July 10, 1855, but penetrates to its deeper meaning:

...поэзия ... прозрение в сокровеннейшую сущность вещей... т. е. действительность. Карлейль где-то говорит: «сердце природы — есть всюду музыка — достаньте только до него».

[poetry is insight into the innermost essence of things, that is, into reality. Carlyle says somewhere, "nature's heart is everywhere music — you need only reach it".]¹⁴

Botkin especially admired Turgenev's *Pevtsy* [*The Singers*] from *Zapiski okhotnika*,¹⁵ because of its lyric realism; and critics agree that *Pevtsy* was the sketch that most influenced *Rubka lesa*. In the one, country bumpkins, in the other, peasant soldiers combine realism with poetry by singing. Nature speaks through song, and unites individuals in a common mood.¹⁶ This mood bespeaks an underlying nat-

¹²On this subject, see Boris Eikhenbaum, The Young Tolstoy (Ann Arbor, 1972): 85–87; Eikhenbaum, Lev Tolstoj, Vol. 1 (Munich, 1968): 166–67; R. F. Christian, Tolstoy: A Critical Introduction (Cambridge, 1969): 56–58.

¹³As E. N. Kuprejanova points out, however, already in *Nabeg* the observer does synthesize different sense perceptions into one overall impression, in this case, an "образ ночной тишины" that was completely new in Russian literature. Kuprejanova understands this new type of landscape as an expression of the interaction between subjective and objective, the so-called "dialectic of the soul." See *Estetika L.N. Tolstogo* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1966): 138–39.

¹⁴V. P. Botkin i I. S. Turgenev: neizdannaja perepiska, 1851–1869 (Moscow--Leningrad, 1930): 62.

¹⁵See the unpublished Ph.D. dissertation of George Raymond Motolanez, Botkin as literary critic (New York University, 1970): 130.

¹⁶Later, in his essay on Fet acclaimed by Tolstoy, Botkin makes this all explicit. Human beings are themselves nature, "but animated and conscious of ourselves. The dumb poetry of nature is our conscious poetry: it is given to us to

ural unity of human souls that becomes the basis of patriotism as Tolstoy conceived it.

Sevastopol' v mae, which appeared as the lead story in the same September Sovremennik as Rubka lesa, is even darker in mood than the Caucasian tale. This may be because it mainly concerns, not ordinary soldiers, but commissioned officers. The story begins with the omniscient narrator asking how the carnage at Sevastopol could continue for so long. He answers his own question at least in part in Chapter 3 with his digression on "тщеславие" [vanity], the "характеристическая черта и особенная болезнь нашего века" [the characteristic feature and special disease of our age]. Vanity turns every officer into a "little Napoleon" who would promote war for glory. Countering vanity and the simple fear of death is only that sense of duty introduced in Nabeg. In keeping, however, with the Thackerian satirical tone of Sevastopol' v mae, duty itself is merely a kind of inner negative compulsion. Speaking of Staff Captain Mikhajlov, who overcomes fear to return to check up on Praskukhin, the narrator explains that duty is particularly strong in people of limited intelligence (Chapter 4). Mikhajlov's unquestioning religious faith is present without being overly emphasized or even elevating him that much above other officers.

In the four war stories written before his arrival in Petersburg, Tolstoy was as interested in examples of genuine as of false courage. The charm of war, its natural attraction to a youth wanting to try his strength, is more thoroughly accepted as a fact and investigated by this future pacifist than by any other modern writer. Beyond high spirits, which carry a soldier only so far, there is another, steadier courage that Tolstoy identifies as particularly Russian. This courage is silent: it manifests itself in deeds, not words. It is philosophical in the Socratic sense that it depends on an absolute acceptance of personal mortality that frees one, even if momentarily, from fear of death.¹⁷ This is how, at any rate, Tolstoy explains the courage of ordinary soldiers in Pierre's climactic dreams in the inn-yard after the battle of Borodino. These first two types of courage make psychological sense for the individual, although the second already requires him to use his reason, however unself-consciously, to prevail over his instinct for self-preservation. The third kind of courage in the war stories, based on duty, is harder to fathom. In Sevastopol' v mae, Mikhajlov's sense of duty is linked to strong and unquestioning religious faith; while in the more positive Sevasto-

express this dumb poetry of nature." See Botkin, Sochinenija. Stat'i po literature i iskusstve. Pis'ma, Vol. 1 (St Petersburg, 1891): 358.

¹⁷I am convinced that Tolstoy developed this definition of courage under the influence of Plato, whom he read intensively in the early 1850s. The narrator in *Nabeg* quotes a Platonic definition of courage.

pol' v dekabre mesjatse, it is linked to patriotism. Patriotism is present, then, but only as a motivation for heroic action, not as a object of study in its own right.

Sevastopol' v mae, the best of the pre-Petersburg war stories, is also the most sombre. In mid-December, a month after his arrival in the capital, Tolstov sat down to write his third and last Sevastopol sketch, Sevastopol' v avguste [Sevastopol in August] which depicted the actual fall of the city. Given the circumstances, one would expect this tale to be as bleak as its predecessor. But this is not so. While the theme of Sevastopol' v mae was vanity, that of Sevastopol' v avguste is heroism, which is shown in its various false and then its true aspects. It opens with an officer, Mikhail Kozel'tsov, returning to the front from hospital after having been wounded on May 10, the date of the action described in Sevastopol v mae. Having denied the existence of heroes in that story, Tolstoy pointedly makes one of the two main characters in Sevastopol' v avguste someone who fought on May 10, and who chooses to return to battle even before his wound is entirely healed. Whereas in the famous finale to Sevastopol' v mae the narrator declares that there are no heroes in wartime except "truth", the narrator in Sevastopol' v avguste claims that each of the participants has the potential to be a hero.

На дне души каждого лежит та благородная искра, которая сделает из него героя; но искра эта устает гореть ярко, — придет роковая минута, она вспыхнет пламенем и осветит великие дела. [At the bottom of the soul of each of them lies that noble spark that will make of him a hero; but this spark tires of constantly burning brightly. Let the fateful minute come, it will burst into flame and illuminate great deeds.] (Chapter 18)

It is to this passage, not to one in the more positive first Sevastopol sketch, that the canny Nikolaj Strakhov, reviewing Tolstoy's collected works in 1866, rightly pointed as proof that despite Tolstoy's debunking of courage in his war stories, he still believed in heroism.¹⁸ What Strakhov does not say, because it does not suit his purpose, is that *Sevastopol' vavguste* is qualitatively different from earlier military tales in a way that makes heroism easier to defend. As we have seen, Tolstoy believed before in the higher feelings of courage and self-sacrifice: he had read about them in Lermontov and, more importantly, he had seen them in others on the battlefield and felt them himself. He had not, however, been able to account for them satisfactorily in his earlier stories. In Petersburg, where Tolstoy finished up *Sevastopol' v avguste*, he came under the influence of that idealist philosophy to which he so disparagingly refers in *Ispoved'*. By providing a metaphysical justification for pa-

¹⁸"Sochinenija grafa L. N. Tolstogo," in Kriticheskie stat'i ob I. S. Turgeneve i L. N. Tolstom (1862–1885), Vol. 1 (The Hague–Paris, 1969): 174–78.

triotism, this philosophy tranformed the facts of war as he had hithertofore observed and analysed them.

The person ultimately most responsible for this change was Vasilij Petrovich Botkin.¹⁹ Tolstoy's first mentor, other than Turgenev, with whom he lived for the first while in the capital, was not Botkin, but the critic and writer A. V. Druzhinin. We can be sure, however, that - through Druzhinin, Turgenev, Nekrasov and others -Tolstoy heard about the famous intellectual and bon vivant Botkin. Botkin knew of Tolstoy's writings, of course. (He had commented favourably on both Sevastopol sketches in letters to Turgenev.²⁰) On November 24th, five days after Tolstoy's arrival in the capital, Botkin had received an ecstatic letter about the fledgling writer from Nekrasov.²¹ The two finally met on December 14th,²² just when Tolstoy was working intensely on Sevastopol' v avguste.23 They became close friends, with Tolstoy in 1857 designating Botkin "мой любимый воображаемый читатель" [my favourite imaginary reader] (JE, 60:214); and declaring Botkin's article about poet A. A. Fet (published in Sovremennik in January, 1857) a "catechism of poetry" (60:152).

¹⁹Botkin's role in Russian literary life in general, and in Tolstoy's development in particular, has been systematically underestimated by both Soviet and Western critics. Born in 1811, Botkin, the son of a wealthy merchant, was an early raznochinets who, after becoming a member of Stankevich's circle at Moscow University in 1835, contributed in various important ways to Russian cultural life for three decades. He knew European literature well, and helped acquaint his compatriots with it. An excellent linguist, he translated literary and critical works from German, English and Spanish. He nourished home-grown talent as well, becoming the confidant of Turgenev, Druzhinin, Fet, Nekrasov (for a while) and Tolstoy. Botkin loved music, and published several important articles about it. He was also an accomplished art critic, one of the first, for instance, to notice the work of sea-scapist I. K. Ajvazovskij. In addition to all this, he was a sophisticated reader of contemporary and especially German philosophy. (As is well known, he served as the philosophic mentor of Belinsky, who knew no foreign languages.) His philosophic training and the breadth and depth of his artistic interests made him a formidable æsthetician, much respected by contemporaries. Extremely intelligent, sensitive to both music and art, learned, Botkin was a midwife at the birth of the great age of Russian prose. For more on Botkin and Tolstoy, see Orwin, Tolstoy's art and thought, 1847-1880, 55-60.

²⁰V. P. Botkin i I. S. Turgenev: neizdannaja perepiska, 1851–1869: 64, 68–69.

²¹See N. N. Gusev, Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoj: materialy k biografii s 1855 po 1869 god (Moscow, 1957): 3–4.

²²See Gusev, 5.

²³He read the beginning of *Sevastopol' v avguste* to Druzhinin on December 19th. See Gusev, 16.

When the Tolstoy of Ispoved' disparages the "theories" of his youth, these must include those of Thomas Carlyle, communicated to him by Botkin. In the fall of 1855 Botkin was in the throes of a new enthusiasm for Carlyle. In December, when he and Tolstoy met, he was translating a chapter ("The Hero as Poet. Dante; Shakespeare") from Carlyle's On Heroes, hero-worship, and the heroic in history. This chapter begins with the assertion that all great men, whatever their profession, are poets in a deep sense. There follows a description of what Goethe called the "open secret" of all appearances as manifestations of God's thought, organized around principles of musical harmony.²⁴ (It is from here that Botkin takes his quote about the musicality of ideal reality in the July 1855 letter to Turgenev cited above.) Because it is musical, reality is more accessible to the poet than to the philosopher. Botkin would have supplied the theoretical underpinnings of that idea, scorned by Tolstoy in Ispoved', of the poet as spiritual leader. In a letter from 1862, Botkin described Tolstoy's own gaze in terms taken directly from Carlyle, as a window to the "бесконечное пространство" [infinite expanse] within him.²⁵ Tolstoy may eventually have discarded the priestly robes bestowed on him by Botkin, but at the time he was as enamoured as Botkin of the Carlylian vision of harmonious reality and the "musical thought" needed to comprehend it. This ideal reality informs not only such stories as Liutsern [Lucerne] and Al'bert [Albert] in the 1850s, but Vojna i mir and Anna Karenina as well.

As a student of German thought, Carlyle believed in progress through historical evolution. He argues in On Heroes that great men shape history through the thoughts that they introduce into the world. The metaphysical force behind history is *time*, which Carlyle compares to a "всеобъемлющий океан" [an all-embracing ocean]:

Это безграничное, немое, непрерывно стремящееся вещь, названное Временем! Неотразимо, быстро, молча несется оно, как всеобъемлющий океан, на котором мы и вся вселенная плаваем как явления, которые показываются — и изчезают.

[This limitless, dumb, ceaselessly flowing *thing* called Time! Inexpressibly, quickly, silently it rushes, like an all-embracing ocean, on which we and the whole universe swim as apparitions which show themselves and disappear.]²⁶

²⁴Carlyle also cites Fichte as another source of his thought. See *Sovremennik* (January, 1856), 2:35.

²⁵Perepiska L. N. Tolstogo s V. P. Botkinym (Moscow, 1923): 85.

²⁶ Sovremennik (October, 1855), 2:100 (emphasis Botkin's). The language of this passage is reminiscent, of course, of Tjutchev, whose poetry was much admired and promoted by Tolstoy's new friends. Tolstoy himself became acquainted both with Tjutchev's poetry and with him personally at this time. Tjutchev, as Tolstoy recalled in 1904, "сделал ему честь" [did him the hon-

This specific passage appears in the first chapter of On Heroes, hero-worship, and the heroic in history, which Botkin had published in translation in the October 1855 Sovremennik. The title alone of Carlyle's book, shortened in Russian to O gerojakh i geroicheskom v istorii,²⁷ would have been enough to draw Tolstoy's attention. Preoccupied himself with the theme of heroism and familiar with Botkin's reputation, he would have read this translation. He certainly discussed it with friends and with Botkin himself when they met in December. So here, in the two chapters from On Heroes translated by Botkin, in a nutshell, are the ideas — the poets as prime movers in an infinitely developing world — that Tolstoy claims in Ispoved' to have encountered in Petersburg.

The theme of Carlyle's first chapter, the one published in October, is paganism, and the hero as divinity. Carlyle poses a question as relevant today as it was in the nineteenth century. How could people in the past believe in religions that strike us today as simple-minded? He vindicates these early people as more open to wonder, and to that extent more profound, than we are. A man's religion, no matter what kind, he says, "есть самое главное, существенное в нем" [is the chief fact with regard to him].

Под словом «религия» разумею я здесь не одну церковь, — мы видим людей всяких вероисповеданий, которые стоят на всех возможных ступенях достоинства, — под словом религия разумею я еще и то, что человек искренно и *практически* принимает к сердцу, как непреложную достоверность, как неопровержимую истину в своих отношениях к этому таинственному целому — ко вселенной, к своему долгу, к своему назначению в мире.

[By the word "religion" I understand here not just the church — one sees people of every faith of every degree of worth — by the word religion I also understand that which a person sincerely and *practically* takes to heart, as unalterable authenticity, as irrefutable truth in his relations to this mysterious whole — to the universe, to his duty, to his meaning in the world.]²⁸

our] of calling on him first as the writer of the Sevastopol sketches. Tolstoy was struck at Tjutchev's appreciation of the subtleties of Russian in the story. See Gusev, 13. Despite his abandonment of German idealism, Tolstoy was a life-long devotee of Tjutchev's poetry.

²⁷As Botkin changed the title, so did he loosely translate the chapter and change passages, sometimes in deference to the censor, but also perhaps to make Carlyle's arguments more relevant to the Russian situation. I therefore translate Carlyle's text back from Botkin's Russian when necessary. Where Carlyle's text differs markedly from Botkin's translation, I will include the original in a footnote.

²⁸Sovremennik (October, 1855), 2:95, emphasis Botkin's. Carlyle's original is quite different in this place. "By religion I do not mean here the church-creed which he professes, the articles of faith which he will sign, and, in words or Actions flow from thoughts, thoughts from feelings, feelings from religion understood in the broad sense elaborated above: so an individual's relation to the "Unseen World" determines everything else. Paganism in all its forms represented for Carlyle the first penetrations of the "Unseen World" behind nature.

Everything — nature, time, the universe and mankind itself presents itself to the pagan mind as forces [силы] that move and develop mysteriously. At bottom everything is "создание всемогущего Бога" [the creation of an All-powerful God].²⁹ In the hero the pagans worshipped the Godlike in man. As an example Carlyle discusses Odin, whom he assumes originally to have been a hero:

...великая, глубокая душа, кипящая энтузиазмом, полная неодолимых внутренних стремлений; он не знает сам откуда этот поток, он беспрестанно загадка для самого себя, он для самого себя нечто в роде ужаса и чуда.

[a great deep soul, bubbling with enthusiasm, full of internal impulses; he does not know himself whence this stream. He is constantly a mystery to himself, he is something in the nature of a horror and marvel for himself.]³⁰

His new friends saw Tolstoy himself as just such a "великая, глубокая душа" [deep, great soul]. From them, Tolstoy learned about the "Unseen World" which would at last tie the heights and the depths of his wartime experience together. Crucial to his acceptance of it, and something he left out in recounting it many years later, was its religious and moral colouring. It is no accident that Carlyle was a favourite author of Tolstoy in his last years.³¹ The same Victorian obsession with virtue that appealed to Tolstoy then would have attracted him in *On Heroes*. At the same time, Carlyle's Norsemen resemble Slavs. (According to one of Carlyle's

otherwise, assert; not this wholly, in many cases not this at all. We see men of all kinds of professed creeds attain to almost all degrees of worth or worthlessness under each or any of them. This is not what I call religion, this profession and assertion; which is often only a profession and assertion from the outworks of the man, from the mere argumentative region of him, if even so deep as that. But the thing a man does practically believe (and this is often enough *without* asserting it even to himself, much less to others); the thing a man does practically lay to heart, and know for certain, concerning his vital relations to the mysterious Universe, and his duty and destiny there, that is in all cases the primary thing for him, and creatively determines all the rest." Botkin then omits a sentence about scepticism as itself a possible relation to the "Unseen World".

²⁹ Sovremennik, 2:101.

³⁰Sovremennik, 2:113.

³¹There are many quotations from Carlyle in the daily readers that Tolstoy compiled from 1904 to 1908.

sources, they may have come from a Black Sea tribe.³²) Like Russian soldiers as Tolstoy presents them in his war stories, the Norsemen's defining characteristics were "какая-то сердечная добросовестность, неуклюжая сила, какая-то великая, грубая искренность" [a certain heartfelt conscientiousness, an awkward strength, a certain great rude authenticity].³³ These qualities informed their myths and made valour [храбрость] their principle passion, associated, as in Tolstoy, with fire. Their chiefs, when dying, had themselves placed in ships to be burned at sea.³⁴

Tolstoy wasted no time incorporating lessons gleaned from Botkin's translation into Sevastopol' v avguste. Like Carlyle's Norsemen, his Russian officers combine rude physical strength with spirituality, mostly in the form of courage. The "Unseen World" of German idealism makes its first appearance in this text and in Tolstoy's fiction as a whole in that allegorical spark that Strakhov discerned hidden in Tolstoy's officers. Tolstoy had been present at the capitulation of Sevastopol, and had written an official report of it for General N. A. Kryzhanovskij. As a result Sevastopol' v avguste is factual to an unusual degree.³⁵ The story is also realistic in another, typically Tolstoyan way: settings, action and characters are all rendered concretely. The realism of the story is almost exaggerated, as Tolstoy for the first time self-consciously sought to portray the spiritual incarnated in the physical world. It is no accident that the reference to the spark in each soul comes at the end and in justification of a drunken brawl over cards. The same physical energy that flares up chaotically in the bunker will "illuminate great deeds".

The co-heroes of the story are examples of the relation of physical to spiritual energy. The long description of the older brother Mikhail in the first chapter stresses his sturdy build, his good looks, small "insolent" [HarJble] eyes, his thick moustaches; while 17--year-old Volodja, bubbling with unself-conscious energy, is a naïve version of his older brother (Chapter 6). The brothers' last name, Kozel'tsov, with its reference to goats, discreetly underscores their animal spirits.

Volodja resembles Ensign Alanin in Nabeg. Mikhail, although he is an officer's version of the "desperate" [отчаянный] type described in Rubka lesa, does not descend from any one character in earlier stories. Tolstoy seems deliberately to contrast Mikhail with the mediocre Mikhajlov of Sevastopol' v mae.

³² Sovremennik (October, 1855), 2:112.

³³ Sovremennik, 2:108.

³⁴ Sovremennik, 2:117.

³⁵V. I. Sreznevskij gives details in JE, 393-94.

Его натура была довольно богата; он был неглуп и вместе с тем талантлив, хорошо пел, играл на гитаре, говорил очень бойко и писал весьма легко, особенно казенные бумаги, на которые набил руку в свою бытность полковым адъютантом; но более всего замечательна была его натура самолюбивой энергией, которая, хотя и была более всего основана на этой мелкой даровитости, была сама по себе черта резкая и поразительная.

[His nature was quite rich; he was not stupid and was talented besides, he sang well, played the guitar, spoke with great verve and wrote very fluidly, especially official papers at which he became a practised hand during his stint as regimental adjutant; but most remarkable in him was his proud energy which, although it was most of all based on this minor giftedness was itself a sharp and striking feature.] (Chapter 1)

Mikhail Kozel'tsov, as befits a Carlylian hero, is a poet: he sings, plays the guitar and writes well. His superiority, of which he himself and others are aware, makes him a natural leader: "он делал все, что ему хотелось, а другие уж делали то же самое и были уверены, что это было хорошо" [he did everything he wanted, and others did the same things and were convinced that it was good]. He lives for glory as the proper fulfilment of that "самолюбивая энергия" which is his most salient feature. The suggestion is that Mikhail's nature is all of a piece, spun out of a physical strength infused with spirit from that musical, poetic "Unseen World" of which Tolstoy had recently become aware. Like one of Carlyle's Norsemen, Mikhail dies happily in battle with "невыразимый восторг сознания того, что он сделал геройское дело" [the inexpressible joy of the consciousness that he had behaved heroically] (Chapter 25).

At the same time, Mikhail's deepest personal satisfaction as he lies dying is "что он исполнил свой долг, что в первый раз за всю свою службу он поступил так хорошо, как только можно было, и ни в чем не может упрекнуть себя" [that he had fulfilled his duty, that for the first time in all his service he had acted as well as possible and had nothing to reproach himself for]. His sense of duty presumably comes from the same "Angel-Comforter" sent by God to bring "терпение, чувство долга и отраду надежды" [patience, a feeling of duty and the joy of hope] (Chapter 14) to give courage to Volodja Kozel'tsov. But duty in Sevastopol' v avguste is anchored in a patriotism that requires more than self-satisfaction for fulfilment. Mikhail dies joyfully because of his mistaken perception that the French have been repelled, in part by his efforts, from the bastion. He fulfils himself as one part of the Russian army, which Tolstoy for the first time, in the closing lines of the story, compares to an ocean current. This image resonates with those lines, quoted above, from the first chapter of On Heroes, in which time, the natural force behind history, is embodied as an ocean.³⁶ According to Carlyle, each "Hapoд" [people], like each individual, through its "religion", understood in the broad Carlylian sense, is part of the "mysterious whole" which underlies external reality.³⁷ As such, it participates in history as a kind of force or current in its own right. And each person is connected to the "mysterious whole" directly and indirectly as well, through his membership in a people. If each individual is spiritually joined to and ultimately defined by a nation that itself exists as a metaphysical force, then duty, service to the nation, even if it seems to contradict the interests or the morality of the individual, makes psychological sense.

Just as in Carlyle, a poetic "Unseen World" embodied in primal images of fire and water underlies the sternly prosaic details of Tolstoy's text. As in Carlyle, the complexion of this "Unseen World" is religious and moral, the source of duty as well as of personal courage and vitality. Drawing on Carlyle, in Mikhail Kozel'tsov for the first time Tolstoy combined the energetic self-loving man with the man of duty. Because of the Russian context, and because of Botkin's translation, there is more of a stress on the people, the *narod*, than in Carlyle, but as in Carlyle, the people are understood as a religious entity, bound together by an idea as well as by blood. Newly under the spell of Carlyle, in Mikhail Kozel'tsov Tolstoy for once created a natural leader whom he did not debunk. In this sense, Kozel'tsov is a predecessor not only of Denisov but of Kutuzov as well.³⁸ Even in *Sevastopol v avguste*, however, Tolstoy draws his hero from the line

³⁶Tolstoy's comparison of the troops to an ocean was added after the Sovremennik version of the story, which ended with the lines "«Известно, будет!» — сказал другой с убеждением" ["There sure will!" said another with conviction] The rest of the story appeared only in the May 1856 edition of Tolstoy's collected war stories, at a time when Tolstoy was already very close to Botkin. See Sreznevskij's account of the complicated history of Sevastopol' v avguste (JE, 4:395–96).

³⁷"Это равно относится, как к каждому человекеу отдельно, так и к целой нации, к народу" [This is true as well of each individual person as of the whole nation, the people]. Sovremennik (October, 1855), 2.:95.

³⁸The great Soviet critic A. Skaftymov has shown that, far from being merely passive, Kutuzov actively leads his troops in accordance with his privileged understanding of the real meaning of the war. See his "Obraz Kutuzova i filosofija istorii v romane L. Tolstogo «Vojna i mir»", in Skaftymov, Nravstvennye iskanija russkikh pisatelej (Moscow, 1972): 182–217. Skaftymov suggests that Tolstoy's idea of the leader came from Hegel, with whom he polemicizes in his novel. A more likely source is Carlyle, whose leaders are conceived as bound by moral law while Hegel's are not. Kutuzov alone understands that "народное чувствс" [national feeling] underlies the events of 1812, because as a Carlylian hero he alone "carries [it] within himself in all its purity and strength" (Vol. 4, Bk 4, Ch. 5).

officers on the front rather than the general's staff. He suggests, typically, that all of us, from generals on down, can behave heroically at the right moment.

Tolstoy's individualism, his democratic tendencies and his consequent ultimate rejection of Carlylian hierarchies eventually moved him closer to Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Carlyle of the New World, than to Carlyle himself. Tolstoy knew about Emerson in the 1850s, but may not have read him until much later.³⁹ In 1884 he did read Emerson and singled out the essay *Self-reliance* for special praise. Tolstoy recognized the kinship of Emerson's Transcendental philosophy to the German idealism of the "people of the 1840s" who had influenced him in his youth. Interpreting the philosopher through his writing, Tolstoy commented that "Эмерсон сильный человек, но с дурью людей 40-х годов" [Emerson is a strong man, but with the foolishness of the people of the 1840s] (*JE*, 49:94). Both in Carlyle and again in Emerson's Transcendentalism, Tolstoy was attracted to the Kantian defence of individual moral freedom while rejecting a belief in an "Unseen World".

In the 1850s, the Carlylian vision of the "Unseen World" functioned for Tolstoy as a natural religion that allowed him to broaden his focus from the individual to the nation. He thereby found a theoretical justification for a love of country that reached its peak during the Crimean War. As critics from Viktor Shklovsky to Kathryn Feuer have maintained, there is a strong emotional link between Tolstoy's wounded patriotic feelings at Sevastopol, and Vojna i mir,

³⁹On March 24, 1858, Tolstoy made a note in his diary of two essays of Emerson (on Goethe and Shakespeare) in German translation, mentioned in a German journal (Literarisches Zentralblatt, 1858, No 11 [13 March]: 48:11). George Motolanez claims to have found proof in unpublished letters that Botkin knew Emerson's essays (Botkin as literary critic, 25-29). Motolanez (165) also contends that Son [Dream], a highly allegorical fragment written by Tolstoy in the late 1850s, was influenced by Emerson's essay The Poet. Motolanez's arguments are confusing, and I have been unable to find decisive evidence that Tolstoy actually read Emerson in the 1850s. Galina Alekseeva, Head of the Research Section of the Tolstoy Museum at Jasnaja Poljana, has informed me that the relevant issue of Literarisches Zentralblatt is not in Tolstoy's library. The library does contain an edition of Emerson's Representative men published in Germany in 1856 (R. W. Emerson, Representative men: Seven lectures [Leipzig: Alphons Dürr, 1856], Vol. 22 of Dürr's collection of standard American authors, edited by William E. Drugulin). Although the pages of *Representative men* are cut, there is no other indication that Tolstoy might have read the essays on Goethe and Shakespeare. We also do not know when Tolstoy actually acquired this book.

in which the Russians defeat a foreign enemy.⁴⁰ Revised and greatly expanded, the ideas that finally ground and validate patriotism in Sevastopol' v avguste become the theory about historical forces and the relations of nations to them in Vojna i mir. In that novel, characters are portraved both as individuals, and as citizens or soldiers who may do things contrary to their individual interests or even morality. In Ispoved', by contrast, Tolstoy wrote that one cannot define the individual in terms of a "таинственное человечество, состоящее из таких же людей, как и он сам, не понимающих самих себя" [mysterious humanity, made up of people like himself, who didn't understand themselves] (Chapter 4). When, in Chapter 12 of Ispoved', he turned to the Russian people for guidance, he approached them not as a unique spiritual entity, but as "простой трудовой народ" [the simple working people] who happened to be at hand. By the time he wrote Tsarstvo Bozhie vnutri vas [The Kingdom of God is within you] (1890-93), he stated outright his belief that patriotism was impossible. (It spread self-love too thin - see [E, 28:82.) He could no longer look for self-understanding or morality to any human entity, be it a nation or all humanity, larger than the individual human soul.

⁴⁰See Shklovskij, Mater'ial i stil' v romane L'va Tolstogo «Vojna i mir» (Moscow, 1928) and Feuer, Tolstoy and the Genesis of War and peace (upcoming from Cornell University Press, autumn 1996).