

spare's theatre]. But from a historical point of view, Tolstoy is the objective heir of Shakespeare (объективный наследник Шекспира)" (104). Although we may acknowledge both playwrights' keen awareness of the dramatic effectiveness of their writings on stage, in light of the well-known fierce criticism of Shakespeare in Tolstoy's essay of 1906 "On the Drama and on Shakespeare," it makes no sense to call Tolstoy especially the "objective" heir of Shakespeare.

Singling out one of Tolstoy's dramatic heroes, Fedya Protasov, helps demonstrate how sweeping and erratic Shul'ts's statements on Tolstoy's dramatis personae are. On page thirty-seven, Shul'ts claims that Protasov is a character that refuses to search for the truth. On page 119, we read: "...the situation that he [Protasov] is without family [Shul'ts uses the word 'бессемейность' which is not in Ozhegov] (it is not accidental that he cannot unite with either Liza or Masha) symbolizes 'man in general (человек вообще),' the kernel of mankind in its pure form [Shul'ts uses the adjective беспримесный, which is not in Ozhegov either]." Thus, we have to conclude that a character who refuses to search for the truth, and who is also incapable of maintaining a family, is the prototype of mankind. And then to realize that Protasov is a creation of Tolstoy who claimed that his greatest hero was the truth. But even more incomprehensible is the fact that Protasov, according to Shul'ts, is a divine figure. On page 161, we read: "'Atonement,' the fact that Protasov takes upon himself the sins of the whole world, urges us to remember not simply a saintlike type [again the word 'архетипика' is not in Ozhegov] but immediately the type of the suffering Christ, naturally differently interpreted." As so often, the reader is left on his own to figure out how to understand "differently interpreted." But much more puzzling is the comparison with the suffering Christ and the taking on of the sins of the entire world. After all, the dying Protasov, as the result of his self-inflicted shot, confesses to Liza (and thus indirectly to Karenin, to whom she is married) that his suicide is for his own sake, and not hers.

Finally, and totally incomprehensible, is Shul'ts's statement on page 192: "Fedya's character is endowed with a basic inner conflict: notwithstanding his 'love of gypsy life [цыганщина],' he honored the law—even by imitating suicide because in this manner he acknowledged its power and rightfulness (because real non-abidance by the law would make such contrivances

unnecessary)." Well, simple common sense dictates that simulating suicide is unlawful.

In conclusion then, notwithstanding the author's impressive amount of information on Russian and world literature, the reader and reviewer is not even so much unwilling to solve the puzzle of Shul'ts's study, but is simply incapable of doing so.

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**Порудоминский, В.И. О Толстом. С. Петербург: Алетейя, 2006. 416 стр; 225 руб. (softcover).**

This new book by a veteran of Soviet and post-Soviet literary and cultural criticism came out in a highly respectable Russia Abroad: Sources and Investigations series founded and formerly headed by the late Sergei Averinstev.

For over three decades now, Vladimir Porudominsky has been a household name with lovers of popular biographies on important cultural figures, primarily of the Russian nineteenth century. I remember my own acquaintance with Porudominsky's prose, his book on the painter Nikolai Ge, which came my way some time in high school or early in college, still during the Soviet rule. The book was craftily written, succinct, and short on ideology. And it really spoke of the painter more than of Marxist aesthetics or class struggle, while also managing not to skirt issues in explaining Ge's fascination with religious topics. This was a pleasant surprise, and it led me to explore other books by the author.

During his long and fruitful career, Porudominsky has published more than fifteen biographies, which came out in prestigious series, such as *Жизнь замечательных людей* and *Жизнь в искусстве* of Vladimir Dal, Vsevolod Garshin, Nikolai Pirogov, Nikolai Ge, and Ivan Kramskoi. He also authored numerous essays that often appeared in thick journals and popular magazines – *Октябрь*, *Огонек*, *Звезда*, and many others. His first book of prose, *Wakeful Sleep (Пробуждение во сне)* was published by Aleteia in 2004. Since the 1990s, Porudominsky has lived in Germany. There he published his study of colors in *War and Peace: Цвета Толстого: Война и мир—колорит портретов: наблюдения и заметки* (Köln: Pastor Zond, 1997).

Porudominsky's fascination with Tolstoy's genius has been lifelong. In one of his interviews, he confessed to being a proud owner of the complete Jubilee edition, a rare privilege at any time, not to mention the time before the collapse of communism. He certainly put the Jubilee to good use. A quick perusal of any of Porudominsky's explorations of Tolstoy will convince even the most skeptical reader of his enormous erudition and intimate familiarity with the whole corpus of Tolstoy's texts—major and lesser known works, long or short, fiction or non-fiction, autobiographical or polemical. The volume under review is a collection of fifteen essays written over the scope of twenty years. The earliest, on Tolstoy and Dal, appeared in *Русская речь* in 1987. The majority of the essays are very recent, however, dating from 1997 and later.

In assembling his collection, Porudominsky stayed faithful to his preferred genre of European-style impressionistic journalism rather than heavy-handed scholarly article with footnotes, references, self-references, and nit-picking with other scholars. He employs the collage technique often practiced by Tolstoy himself: short evocative expostulations, numerous repetitions, lengthy quotations, and little or no analysis. In this, Porudominsky's style strongly reminds one of the older Victor Shklovsky, especially his *The Energy of Contradiction* (*Энергия заблуждения*). The same phrase of Tolstoy may reappear numerous in different contexts throughout the volume. The same phrase by Porudominsky on the same phrase by Tolstoy may also crop up a few times over the course of several essays.

Porudominsky loves discovering coincidences—within Tolstoy and of Tolstoy with other writers. In the former category belong his essays on Tolstoy's truth and soul-searching—for example, "For this world" ("Для мира сего" 6-36), "Help me, father!" ("Помоги, Отец!" 37-57), and "What Am I?" ("Что я такое?" 79-101). These essays will hold few or no surprises for professional scholars of Tolstoy, for they are little more than famous quotes assembled from various Tolstoy sources. In doing so, Porudominsky has his point right, reminding us that the technique was Tolstoy's own in works such as *The Circle of Reading*. The loving and poetically arranged quotes read like "Tolstoy for everyday" on a chosen topic, never a trivial one. In the category of intertextual readings belong Porudominsky's studies of Garshin's and Dal' connections in Tolstoy (see the

chapters "The Inevitability of the Arzamas Horror" ("Неизбежность арзамасского ужаса" 176-189) and "From the Notepad of a Dal Scholar" ("Из заметок далевода" 190-213). These are interesting if not groundbreaking readings, suggesting kinship of Garshin's and Tolstoy's madmen and Dal's and Tolstoy's ideas about educating artistic literacy by way of popular style.

Although the whole book is an interesting read for every level of Tolstoy literacy and point of interest, from the perspective of this reviewer, the most important contributions in Porudominsky's book are the essays placed at the very end of the volume. The essay "The Equality of All People is the Axiom" ("Равенство всех людей—аксиома" 247-258) explores several episodes in Tolstoy's communication with the renowned Jewish intellectuals of the Empire. Several times Tolstoy was asked to make public announcements to condemn the persecution of the Jews, and several times he refused, while certainly sympathizing with the plight of the oppressed. Time after time Tolstoy found it uncomfortable to be a mouthpiece for the Jewish cause, arguing repeatedly that in his mind the Jewish cause should not be separated from other plights in the nation and the world. While admitting that he had the greatest esteem for the level of moral respect and responsibility of those professing Judaism in comparison with "quasi-Christians" of his day, Tolstoy refused to endorse the exclusionary or "chosen ones" rhetoric of his correspondents. However, when asked to sign the telegram addressed to the mayor of Kishinev following the terrible pogrom in April of 1903, Tolstoy did so with readiness and understanding. He also contributed several of his extraordinary shorter works, including "After the Ball" and "The Assyrian Tsar Assarkhadon" to Sholom-Aleykhem's subscription in support of the pogrom victims. The essay is a useful if far from comprehensive gloss to Tolstoy's involvement with the Jews and Judaism. The next two essays, "Invitation to a Ball" ("Приглашение на бал" 259-305) and "Colors in Tolstoy" ("Цвета Толстого" 306-412), are suggestive, somewhat eclectic attempts, in paragraph-long statements, at providing semiotic studies of dance and color. These are impossible to summarize in a comprehensive way, but those interested will be creatively provoked and challenged to add analysis to Porudominsky's hilarious play with Tolstoy's descriptive devices. Some of the subchapter titles, "The Sign of the Gait" ("Знак

походки” 284-85) or “Man in the Grey Frock-Coat” (“Человек в сером сюртуке” 352) will hopefully pique curiosity of the Tolstoy community.

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**Donskov, Andrew. *Leo Tolstoy and the Canadian Doukhobors: An Historic Relationship*. Ottawa: Centre for Research on Canadian-Russian Relations, Carleton University, 2005. xiv + 473 pp.; \$25 (hardcover); ISBN 0889273200.**

In this significant monograph, Andrew Donskov, known for a number of other books in Tolstoy scholarship, has brought together a wealth of material pertaining to the historic relationship between Tolstoy and the Doukhobors and the vital assistance Tolstoy rendered to their cause at the time of their emigration to Canada in 1899. Of course, it was his timely assistance, aided by Chertkov and other Tolstoyan sympathizers, which helped to bring about their immigration to Canada, an assistance that originated with his early attraction to the Doukhobors in the 1880s and 1890s.

Donskov’s book is the first thorough and profound research work on this important subject. It covers the whole history of the Tolstoy–Doukhobor relationship, including the pre-emigration period, and not only Tolstoy himself, but the oft-overlooked role of the members of his family as well.

To help us understand the spiritual development underlying Tolstoy’s interest in this group, in whom may be seen an embodiment of the Tolstoyan ideal, Donskov traces the writer’s own religious seekings and influences, including those of “kindred spirits” such as William L. Garrison, Adin Ballou, and Edward Bellamy. In the 1880s and 1890s Tolstoy was greatly interested in the American communal movement—“practical Christianity” as he called it in one of his letters to Maria Aleksandrovna Shmidt (ПСС 65: 144), in reality—a kind of utopia. Of course, these influences have been thoroughly explored elsewhere, but in this case Professor Donskov relates them specifically to Doukhobor practices and beliefs, in particular to the concept of “unity of people” which the Doukhobors exemplified. For Tolstoy the Doukhobors represented a *living example* of “practical Christianity,”

the religious communal movement—i.e., one of the possible utopias.

Added to that was the complex nature of Tolstoy’s relationship to the Church and the divergence in his views of Jesus Christ (more literal than mystical), all of which not only contributed to his growing affinity for the Doukhobors, but also provoked severe official criticism and sanctions on the part of both church and government hierarchies (Donskov devotes a whole chapter to this).

The formulation of these beliefs is outlined early in this volume as a natural prelude to our understanding of Tolstoy’s eventual attraction to and active participation in the Doukhobor cause and emigration, not only on the level of moral and public support but of substantial personal financial involvement as well.

It is particularly in this early exploration that Professor Donskov demonstrates a thorough familiarity with his subject—the result of years of scholarly dedication—which brings the pertinent historical facts into perspective.

As the book progresses, we are made privy to a collection of Doukhobor–Tolstoy materials. Of special interest here is an overview of contemporary Doukhobor activities concerning Tolstoy, including prominent Doukhobors such as J. J. Verigin Sr., Honorary Chairman of the Union of Spiritual Community of Christ (the largest Doukhobor organization in Canada today).

The opening chapter of the book presents a summarized history of the Doukhobor people, their obscure origins, and their eventual migration to Canada. Along the pathway of this history, we are also informed of Tolstoy’s interest in and assistance to other groups whose causes he likewise championed, such as the Molokans. This preliminary survey—aided by maps to show their movements in both Russia and Canada—serves as a good general summation of Doukhobor history, paving the way for a discussion of Tolstoy’s involvement with them. The volume also includes more than forty illustrations (photographs and reproductions of original manuscripts), which significantly enhance our understanding of the Tolstoy–Doukhobor connection as a whole and especially Tolstoy’s continuing pride of place among Doukhobors in Canada today.

Further, Donskov’s study is replete with a great many bibliographical references. Several of these deserve specific mention here: (a) *The Doukhobor Centenary in*