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time. The printers of Q1 did not collate their text with *FV*; rather, they either added their recollections of *FV* to the text before them, or used the printed text for reference when guessing at words in a damaged or illegible manuscript.

It is impossible to be certain whether a damaged or illegible text necessitated this use of the *FV* printed text; the small number of echoes involved suggests illegibility rather than text loss, but the evidence is inconclusive; the Q1 text here as a whole differs greatly from the Folio version, and there could have been damage to the Q1 manuscript. The evidence suggests strongly, however, that Creede's reader and/or his printers were responsible for the echoes of *The Famous Victories* in the first Quarto of *Henry V*.

ROBERT A. H. SMITH *The British Library, London*

ORWELL, TOLSTOY, AND *ANIMAL FARM*

Leo Tolstoy and George Orwell are sometimes contrasted as two figures with totally opposite attitudes to life, the one an other-worldly believer and the other a this-worldly humanist. In a celebrated essay, published in 1947,¹ Orwell defended Shakespeare's *King Lear* against the Russian's intemperate attack and, moreover, also criticized his whole outlook on life. Tolstoy, he wrote, was an imperious and egotistical bully, and he quoted his biographer Derrick Leon that he would frequently 'slap the faces of those with whom he disagreed'.² Orwell wrote that Tolstoy was incapable of either tolerance or humility; and he considered that his attack on the artistic integrity of *Lear* arose partly because it was too near the knuckle. *Lear*'s 'huge and gratuitous act of renunciation' bore an uncomfortably close resemblance to Tolstoy's similarly foolish renunciation in old age of worldly wealth, sexuality, and other ties that bind us to 'the surface of the earth—including love, in the ordinary sense of caring more for one human being than another'.³ But this, according to Orwell, was what love was all about, and he characterized Tolstoy—and other would-be saints like Gandhi—as forbiddingly inhuman in their attitudes.⁴ He himself cared strongly about 'the surface of the earth' and was with Shakespeare in his interest in the 'actual process of life'. The main aim of the puritanical Tolstoy, Orwell believed, was 'to narrow the range of human consciousness',⁵ a process which he himself, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and other later writings, was struggling valiantly to counteract. It is very easy therefore to see the two men as polar opposites, in both their temperament and their artistic aims.

1 *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell* (hereafter *CEJL*) (Harmondsworth, 1970), iv. 331–48: 'Lear, Tolstoy and the Fool'.

2 *Ibid.* 339.

3 *Ibid.* 339, 344.

4 *Ibid.* 527.

5 *Ibid.* 338; *ibid.* i. 28.

Yet this view is quite mistaken. Orwell's criticisms have sometimes been misunderstood; Orwell and Tolstoy had far more in common than is generally realized; and indeed the Russian influenced this peculiarly English writer in several important ways, not least in that—almost certainly—he furnished him with material for one of the most significant episodes in *Animal Farm*. The parallels between this book and Russian history are well known, but the debt owed to Tolstoy's *What I Believe* has never been acknowledged.

In his biography of Tolstoy, A. N. Wilson praises Orwell's image of Tolstoy-as-Lear but insists that this unforgettable depiction of 'the reason' for the attack on *Lear* is misleading because it distracts our attention from Tolstoy's more deep-seated motivation, which Wilson sees as an 'unconscious envy'.⁶ But this is a misreading of Orwell's essay. The likeness between Tolstoy and Lear was, according to Orwell, only one reason for the diatribe against Shakespeare; and towards the end of his essay he pointed to another source of inspiration, the rivalry which the great Russian novelist felt towards perhaps his only rival in world literature.⁷ Elsewhere, Orwell referred directly to Tolstoy's jealousy of Shakespeare.⁸ Wilson has therefore stolen Orwell's clothes. Indeed too often Orwell's views on Tolstoy have been treated superficially. In fact he felt tremendous admiration for Tolstoy, and his 1947 attack was unrestrained only because he had found an 'opponent' worthy of his mettle. Hence it was, in many ways, a sign of respect. In a broadcast in 1941, he insisted that if 'so great a man as Tolstoy' could not destroy Shakespeare's reputation, then surely no one else could.⁹

Orwell read *War and Peace* several times, first when he was about 20. His sole quarrel with the book, despite its three stout volumes, was that it did not go on long enough. Its characters, he later recalled, 'were people about whom one would gladly go on reading for ever'.¹⁰ He judged that Tolstoy's creations had international appeal and that therefore one could hold imaginary conversations with figures like Pierre Bezukhov. Such men and women seemed to be engaged in the process of making their souls, and therefore Tolstoy's grasp was 'so much larger than Dickens's'.¹¹ This was high praise indeed, and even when criticizing Tolstoy's attack on Shakespeare he paid a passing tribute to *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*.¹² Nor was Orwell familiar only with these classics. He also read *The Cossacks*, *Sebastopol*, and other works, including the later short stories, written with parable-like simplicity. Indeed, such was his regard for Tolstoy that he went to considerable trouble to read several of his more obscure works. He even judged

6 A. N. Wilson, *Tolstoy* (London, 1988), 480.

7 *CEJL* iv. 347: 'The more pleasure people took in Shakespeare, the less they would listen to Tolstoy.'

8 *Ibid.* ii. 154.

9 *Ibid.* 157.

10 *Ibid.* iii. 129.

11 *Ibid.* i. 500.

12 *Ibid.* iv. 348.

that Tolstoy would still be a remarkable man if he had written nothing except his polemical pamphlets, for no one could read him and still feel quite the same about life.¹³

There is no evidence that Orwell read all of Tolstoy's translated writings. We do not know, for instance, whether he read a compendium of Tolstoy's religious writings translated by Aylmer Maude and published by Oxford University Press in 1940 as *A Confession: The Gospel in Brief and What I Believe*. Certainly there was no copy among Orwell's books at his death. Yet this is the book which, I wish to argue, influenced *Animal Farm*. It may be that Orwell came to it second-hand, by the extracts quoted in Derrick Leon's biography of Tolstoy, which Orwell read on publication early in 1944, referred to in his 'As I Please' column in *Tribune* and reviewed for the *Observer*, describing it as 'an outstanding book'.¹⁴ He was reading it just as he was working hard to complete *Animal Farm*.

Everyone is familiar with the parallels between Russian history and the plot of *Animal Farm*. Perhaps indeed we are over-familiar with them, for the details of the book had a wider totalitarian relevance than to any one country, and Orwell borrowed from Italian history ('Mussolini is always right') and from German, as well as from Russian. But there is one issue in the book for which there seems no real-life equivalent: this is the rewriting of the original revolutionary aims, the principles of Animalism. Admittedly revolutionary idealism in Russia and elsewhere was betrayed and perverted, but there was no outward repudiation of Marxist rhetoric. Although Stalin ignored such theory in his actions and imposed his will by force of arms and propaganda, he never ceased to pay lip-service to the original ideals. Even when he was arraigning the Old Bolsheviks in the Show Trials of the 1930s, he was at pains to assert that it was they—not he—who had sinned against the holy writ of Marxist–Leninist ideology. So what inspired Orwell's brilliant and hard-hitting reformulations?

First, we must look at the precise ways in which the Commandments of the first chapter of *Animal Farm* were perverted in the course of the book. 'No animal shall sleep in a bed' became 'No animal shall sleep in a bed *with sheets*'. 'No animal shall drink alcohol' changed into 'No animal shall drink alcohol *to excess*'. 'No animal shall kill any other animal' became 'No animal shall kill another animal *without cause*'. Most famously of all, 'All animals are equal' became 'All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others'. In short, each commandment received a coda, a reservation which effectively reversed its meaning.

There is no parallel to this in Russian political history. But Leo Tolstoy had observed a very similar perversion, in Russian religious history, as Leon recounts in his biography. What Tolstoy considered the essential precepts of the Sermon on the Mount had become almost their opposites in the mouths of Russian Orthodox

13 *CEJL* ii. 156, 223; *Observer*, 26 Mar. 1944.

14 *Ibid.* iii. 129; *Observer*, 26 Mar. 1944: I am grateful to Professor Peter Davison for providing me with a photocopy of Orwell's review.

clerics. The original 'Do not be angry' had become 'Do not be angry *without a cause*'.¹⁵ The phrase 'without a cause' was, to Tolstoy, the key to an understanding of the perversion of scripture. Of course everyone who is angry justifies himself with a cause, however trivial or unjust, and therefore he guessed, correctly as he soon found, that the words were a later interpolation designed to devalue the original injunction. Similarly the instructions not to promise anything on oath, not to resist evil by violence, and not to judge or go to law had all been overturned, and had become their opposites, when the church had sought accommodation with the civil power.

Orwell's reading of the extracts from Tolstoy in Leon's biography, as detailed above, may well have inspired his rewriting of the principles of Animalism. This, of course, is not to denigrate Orwell's achievement. It was he who had, first, to see the appositeness to his own work of the banal—but contextually brilliant—'without a cause' and, then, to invent similar reservations. But it is to insist that the provenance of the details of *Animal Farm* is far wider than the painful period of history through which Orwell lived. It is also to contend that Tolstoy was an important influence on Orwell.

Although this may be considered more speculative, it is quite possible that Orwell actually read the original Tolstoy, either before Leon's book was published or as a result of seeing its brief extracts. We do know that Orwell was prepared to search 'all over London' to track down a Tolstoyan quarry;¹⁶ and as a bibliophile he was always well aware of new material being published, even in the dark days of 1940. The fact that, for effect, Orwell italicized his codas as did Tolstoy, though Leon's quotations were all in roman script,¹⁷ is added evidence for this. If he did consult the original translation by Aylmer Maude, Orwell would have found other neat reformulations by Tolstoy which may well have influenced his own. To say 'do not be angry *without a cause*', Tolstoy decided, was like urging someone to 'Love the neighbour whom thou approvest of'.¹⁸ He also drew attention to the 1864 edition of the Catechism which, after quoting each of the Ten Commandments, then gave 'a reservation which cancelled it'. For instance, the commandment to honour one God had an addendum to the effect that we should also honour the angels and saints, 'besides, of course, the Mother of God and the three persons of the Trinity'. The second commandment, not to make idols, was perverted into an injunction to make obeisance before icons; the third, not to take oaths, became a demand to swear when called upon to do so by the legal authorities. The command to honour one's mother and father degenerated into a call to honour also the Tsar, the ministers of the church, and all those in authority—specified on three long pages! 'Thou shalt not

15 D. Leon, *Tolstoy: His Life and Work* (London, 1944), 200.

16 *CEJL* ii. 156.

17 Leon, *Tolstoy*, 199–200; Leo Tolstoy, *A Confession: The Gospel in Brief and What I Believe* (Oxford, 1940), 372.

18 Tolstoy, *Confession*, 373.

kill' was interpreted ingeniously. One should not kill 'except in the fulfilment of one's duties'.¹⁹

The similarity between the methods employed in the relevant passages of Tolstoy and Orwell is astonishing. The most obvious way of accounting for this is by direct influence. There are indeed other indications that Orwell's reading and rereading of Tolstoy left its mark on his work. May not the character of Boxer in *Animal Farm* have been influenced by the long-suffering talking horse who was carried off to the knacker at the end of Tolstoy's short story 'Strider: The Story of a Horse'? Orwell's concept of Doublethink may also have owed something to a superb example from Vronsky's code of principles, in *Anna Karenina*, 'that one must pay a cardsharper, but need not pay a tailor; that one must never tell a lie to a man, but one may to a woman; *that one must never cheat anyone, but one may a husband*; that one must never pardon an insult, but may give one, and so on'. The arresting opening of *Homage to Catalonia* may also owe a debt to Tolstoy. Orwell took an 'immediate liking' to an unnamed, tough-looking Italian, whose face somehow deeply moved him. This episode, whose authenticity historians must doubt, bears a close resemblance to the passage in *War and Peace* where Pierre and Davout gaze at each other and, in so doing, see each other's essential humanity. Similarly the execution, in the same book, contains details resembling those Orwell included in 'A Hanging'. Orwell's Burmese prisoner steps aside to avoid a puddle, despite the fact that he will soon be dead. In the same way, Tolstoy's Russian prisoner adjusts the uncomfortable knot of his blindfold just before the execution squad put an end to his life. Finally, Tolstoy is undoubtedly relevant to the nightmare world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The Russian wondered when the priests would understand 'that even in the face of death, two and two still make four';²⁰ Orwell knew that some priests would never admit any such thing and that, after Room 101, even Winston Smith might accept that ' $2 + 2 = 5$ '.²¹

Of course it may be merely a coincidence—or a series of coincidences—that Orwell's rewriting of the Seven Commandments bears such a strong resemblance to Tolstoy's exposure of the perversion of the Ten Commandments, and that there are, in addition, other parallels in their writings which seem best explained by direct, if perhaps unconscious, influence. But if so, then this is good evidence that the two men had far more in common than anyone has ever pointed out. Certainly their self-presentations were similar. Tolstoy once called himself 'a quite enfeebled, good-for-nothing parasite, who can only exist under the most exceptional conditions found only when thousands of people labour to support a life that is of no value to anyone'.²² Orwell did not go quite as far as that; but he was the British equivalent. 'I am a degenerate modern semi-intellectual who would die if I

19 Tolstoy, *Confession*, 496–7.

20 For these and other parallels, see my editions of *The Sayings of George Orwell* (London, 1994) and *The Sayings of Leo Tolstoy* (London, 1995).

21 P. Davison, *George Orwell, A Literary Life* (London, 1996), 134.

22 Leo Tolstoy, *What Then Must We Do?*, trans. A. Maude (Oxford, 1935), p. xvi.

did not get my early morning cup of tea and my *New Statesman* every Friday.²³ On the surface, the two men seem so different, but the fact is that there were many similarities between them.²⁴ (Who realizes, without looking up the dates, that their deaths were separated by only forty years?) Orwell may have castigated Tolstoy as other-worldly, but both men seemed essentially puritanical to others. Whereas the one insisted on making his own shoes, the other would try to make his own furniture, and both went to considerable pains to grow their own food. Each was an enemy of the machine age. Both were dedicated writers, both moralists and humanitarians, and both polemicists. After writing discursive books early in their careers, each of them was an 'engaged' writer later in life. They needed a mission, or purpose, in life and shared the opinion that man could not live by hedonism alone. In addition, they berated mere intellectuals. Neither would passively accept what he was told: each had to work ideas out for himself, displaying great intellectual self-confidence—and considerable unorthodoxy—in the process. Should we compare them as religious thinkers? Certainly there are religious aspects to Orwell's thought.²⁵ Should we, as George Woodcock argues, even compare Orwell's repudiation of his education and his quitting of his career in the imperial civil service with Tolstoy's renunciations,²⁶ or his migration to Jura with Tolstoy's flight from Yasnaya Polyana to Astapovo? If so, then Orwell's criticisms of Tolstoy in 1947 were similar to Tolstoy's of Shakespeare in 1906, in that both were motivated by 'a half-recognized similarity'.²⁷ Obviously such comparisons may be pushed too far. What does seem clear, however, is that the connections between these two figures are worth recognizing, and also worth further study.

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23 George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (Harmondsworth, 1962), 184.

24 R. Rees, *George Orwell: Fugitive from the Camp of Victory* (London, 1961), 114: 'It seems to me that Orwell was a good deal nearer to the other-worldly Tolstoy and Gandhi and a good deal further from the average humanistic progressive than he himself was prepared to recognise.'

25 For interesting comments on this issue, see S. Ingle, *George Orwell: A Political Life* (Manchester, 1993), 21–35, 108–11.

26 G. Woodcock, *The Crystal Spirit* (London, 1967), 242.

27 *Ibid.*