

## Tolstoy's public biography in the Australian press

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### Streszczenie

*Artykuł omawia zjawisko publicznej biografii Lwa Tołstoja, które ukształtowało się w prasie australijskiej przed I wojną światową. Obszerny zbiór kilku tysięcy tekstów informacyjnych został wyselekcjonowany i skategoryzowany na podstawie opracowanego przez autora artykułu kolektora danych. W funkcjonalny sposób przedstawiono i opisano elementy treści pojawiające się w: telegramach, felietonach, anegdotach, informatorach i wzmiankach dotyczących życia pisarza, w tym wywiadach, a także w opiniach krytyków. Zwrócono także uwagę na obecność dzieł pisarza na rynku księgarskim, w australijskich bibliotekach, teatrach i kinach. Artykuł ukazuje mechanizm powstania wyjątkowej popularności Tołstoja w Australii oraz znaczenie doniesień o nim, które budowały nie tylko wiedzę o jego życiu i twórczości, ale także Rosji.]*

*Słowa-klucze: [Lew Tołstoj, biografia publiczna, prasa australijska 1887–1914, kolekcjonerzy danych, treść przekazu medialnego, kultura australijska, obraz Rosji]*

### Abstract

## Tolstoy's public biography in the Australian press

*The article discusses the phenomenon of the public biography of Leo Tolstoy which took shape in the Australian press before World War I. An extensive collection of several thousands of informational texts and texts pertaining to the writer was selected and categorised on the basis of a data collector developed by the author of the article. Presented and described in a functional manner are elements of content appearing in telegrams, columns of anecdotes, pieces of information, and records about the life of the writer, including interviews, as well as in opinions of literary critics, in rankings, and in advertisements. Attention was also given to the presence of the writer's works on the book market, in Australian libraries, theatres, and cinemas – as described in the press. The article reveals the mechanism of Tolstoy's exceptional popularity in Australia and the significance of the reports about him which were building not only knowledge of his life and work but also knowledge of Russia.*

*Keywords: Leo Tolstoy – public biography – Australian press 1887-1914 – data collectors – media message content – Australian culture – image of Russia*

## I. WSTĘP

The aim of the article is to analyse and interpret the phenomenon of the public biography of Leo Tolstoy generated in the Australian press in the years 1887-1910 and throughout the several years that followed the writer's death. By a public biography the author of the article understands any information pertaining to an influential person which is reported in the press, is shaping their image *in statu nascendi*, and is being constantly supplied by events connected to their life and work. The public biography definitely has to be differentiated from the biographical construction which is the object of interest of biographies as well as from sources serving to create this construction, that is letters, correspondences, and archival documents which allow to recreate facts from the life of their author. A public biography does not have one author (it only has its one and only object), since it is generated by the media and spread, via the telegraph, by press agencies, therefore it has an "anonymous" character, as secret as it is powerful, akin to Virgil's *Fama* that accompanies great events and their heroes. A public biography is a product of the press, it is therefore subject to the judgement of public opinion and its elements can be met with approval or criticism. At the turn of the 19th and 20th century, the most excellent example of a public biography in international media is connected to Leo Tolstoy. The choice of the Australian press is intentional. Why? Because it can be used as an example to demonstrate in an analytical manner that in a country in every respect distant from Russia, the public opinion was still constantly interested in the life and works of Tolstoy. It is then a contribution to the global significance of the Russian writer. As well as to his impact on the public opinion on the continent of Australia, into which, by means of his charisma, Tolstoy implanted the image of Russia and the Slavic world. In the antipodes, the question "what is happening in Russia?" was accompanied by another: what does Tolstoy have to say about it? The situation was similar in the international press, but in the London, Paris, or Berlin press, the name of the writer floated in the wide and deep media mainstream. The young and resilient Australian press was filtering that mainstream, but, as a result, Tolstoy was, paradoxically, more visible in it.

When it comes to the timeframe adopted in the article, the year 1887 and the several following years can be conventionally regarded as the beginning of an intensified interest in the author of *War and Peace* in Australia, which is evident in the increasing information bulletin regarding his life and works coming from the Great Britain. The fame of his name came somewhat before the writer's works became available on the book market, intensified in the year 1889 and in the several years that followed, which will be discussed later. Before 1887, some mentions were appearing, one of the earliest of which is the review "The Cossacks" (*The Herald* 07.01.1879). But a greater interest in the writer emerged eight years later. In 1887, Tolstoy is visited by George Kennan from the influential British journal the *Pall Mall Gazette* who conducts an interview with him, reported in detail in one of the Australian periodicals ("How to Bring About the Reign of Peace on Earth", *The Armidale Express and New England*

*General Advertiser* 20.09.1887). The title of the piece is telling, just like the summaries of the article by the important British poet and critic Matthew Arnold, published in December 1887 in the reputable magazine *The Fortnightly Review* („Count Tolstoy and Christianity”, *Evening Journal* 14.01.1888). The *Pall Mall Gazette* correspondent provoked the writer with questions about his doctrine of non-resistance to evil, while the literary critic performed an analysis of *Anna Karenina* as a work with a religious foundation and in the context of Tolstoy’s religious writings: *My Confession*, *My Religion*, and *Que Faire?*. Therefore, to generalise, the Russian writer reached the consciousness of Australians with the stereotype of an idea addict, interpreting the rules of Christianity in a fundamentalist manner, but in a way that was original and attractive for newspaper readers. It had the appearance of an introduction to the broader topic of the Slavic world, an introduction that had a certain media allure and to which Tolstoy himself was consistently contributing, bearing witness to the calamity that was the famine in Russia, which gained global resonance (“Count Tolstoy on Russia’s Famine”, with a rare in the Australian press depiction of the author, *Camperdown Chronicle* 12.04.1892). The year 1888 is also significant due to the fact that in London, the most famous journalist in the world, William Thomas Stead, published the book *Truth About Russia*, in which he described, among other things, his impressions from a meeting with Leo Tolstoy. The book became a fundamental Russian studies title, with an emphasis on the writer’s significance for the issue of understanding Russia. Between 1887 and 1910, superlative expressions used to describe Tolstoy multiply, such as “one of the most remarkable personalities of the century” (*Argus* 01.10.1898) and “the most picturesque personality in the world at the present moment”, “the greatest living writer”, “the greatest man in Russia”, “the famous Russian novelist and social reformer” (the cliché appearing the most often). There is no need to broaden this nominal list, since a number of other such expressions will appear in the cited press material. To precede the conclusions, it may be said that before World War I, he was the most recognisable Russian brand and signaller of Russian issues in the Australian press, appearing as an unquestionable moral and political authority.

An extensive collection of several thousands of units of information and texts in which Tolstoy’s name appears in the Australian press before World War I – digitised in the National Library of Australia – required the use of an appropriate method of selection and categorisation. The aim was to develop a data collector that would enable to obtain a clear and distinct picture of Tolstoy’s public biography. The article therefore uses a **collector** made up of six elements, with their respective set of issues and a set of examples. First, **telegrams** were discussed, that is the most laconic pieces of information showing Tolstoy as an influential person arousing the interest of the whole world. Next, interpreted were **personal** columns, collecting reports on the life and work of the writer. The next element of the collector comprises of **anecdotes and derivatives**, that is Tolstoy’s casual and colourful statements as well as statements about him that circulated in the media as detached references, allusions, quotes, as well as names and described semiotic objects (portraits). The fourth element is **interviews and**

**statements** of the writer himself, published in the international media, and gaining resonance even in the Australian press. The fifth element is the **book market** and the **paragons and rankings** connected to it, as well as the content of libraries indicating Tolstoy's prominent position as the most recognisable Slavic writer among Australian readers. The sixth element encompasses the **cultural and art space**, showing, among other things, the presence of Tolstoy's works in the Australian culture in the shape of theatrical productions and film adaptations of his works. The last two elements comprise a somewhat separate element of the hexagon, which is why it will be given the name of Tolstoy's presence in the Australian culture.

### **Telegrams**

In 1872, Australia obtained indirect telegraph connection with Europe, followed in the next thirty years by obtaining contact – through submarine cables – with other continents and countries of the world. This contact came at a calculable price as an information service priced according to the scale, similarly to the postage of letters or a phone call. Editorial staffs of newspapers were buying information through international press agencies, such as Reuter, Havas, Associated Press, and Wolffs Telegraphisches Bureau; they also copied information taken from different press sources. Telegrams were grouped in special columns which were – after the political and sensational reports published on the first pages of newspapers – the most attractive segment, separated as a column, of a given issue. Those columns in the Australian press (just like in the international press) had a clearly specified title, such as *Telegram, Foreign Telegrams, Cablegrams, General Cables, Latest Cablegrams, Telegraphic. Telegraphic News, Brevities, Cable Brevities, News in Brief, Epitome of News, Summary, Summary of News, Summary of Cable News, Local and General News, Local and General, General News*. Reports from Reuters, the world's most powerful agency, were predominant, deemed to be the most important because they came from the very heart of the empire, which was pointed out under the title of the column, for example "Latest Cablegrams [By Reuter's Agency]", "Telegraphic [Reuter's Cablegrams]", "The Latest [Reuter's]", or, omitting the name of the agency, "Telegraph [By Submarine Telegraph]". The column included several dozen texts of mostly one sentence-long telegrams, and their brevity was signalled by the cited titles: *Brevities, News in Brief, Epitome of News*. The telegrams informed about the most important events in the world and in Australia as well as about the most prominent persons: monarchs, presidents, prime ministers, ministers, and generally about prominent people: famous inventors, bankers, businessmen, artists, and writers. Illness and death of such persons was a particular matter of interest for the public, hence the recording of this kind of facts in telegrams. They are noteworthy as the briefest pieces of information about a person, laconic, and thus raising the most important social functions or achievements of a given individual. What follows is a list of selected false telegrams informing on three occasions about the death of Tolstoy. They are false but interesting as a testimony of the Russian writer's position in the pantheon of the

world's literature. In the years 1899, 1901, and 1902, the Australian press published these very telegrams, moreover never denying their untrue content:

"The death is announced of Count Tolstoy<sup>1</sup>, the well known Russian Novelist" (*Western Mail* 11.05.1899).

"Count Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoy, the famous Russian novelist, died yesterday in his sixty-first year. He had been ill for some time before his death" (*Adelaide Observer* 11.05.1899).

"The death of Count Tolstoy, the great Russian novelist, is reported" (*Queenslander* 11.05.1889). Under the telegram, the editors inserted a bio of the writer and a comment about his most outstanding works in parentheses.

"Count Tolstoy is laid up with fever, and his position is critical" (*Australian Star* 18.07.1901).

"Tolstoy is very ill" (*Western Mail* 27.07.1901).

"Count Leo Tolstoy, the famous septuagenarian Russian novelist, philanthropist and social reformer, is reported to be dying" (*Murchison Advocate* 27.07.1901). The information was accompanied by a short comment, the first and last sentences of which are worth quoting: "Only recently he was expelled from the Russian Church for alleged heretical writings", "His strange genius has been made doubly apparent through its birth place – Russia – a country practically barren of men who have made a mark in the world of letters".

The writer's health was described in detail by correspondents of *The Times* who were sending telegrams from Saint Petersburg and Odessa (*Register* 07.09.1901).

"Count Tolstoy is reported to be dying" (*Australian Star* 13.02.1902).

"Count Tolstoy is dying" (*Sydney Morning Herald* 14.02.1902).

"Count Tolstoy reported dying" (*Mercury* 14.02.1902).

"Count Tolstoy, the eminent Russian author and social reformer, is dying" (*Brisbane Courier* 14.02.1902).

"Count Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoy, the Russian novelist and social reformer, who was born on August 28 [according to the Julian calendar], 1828, is dying at his residence at Yasnaya Polyana, Russia" (*Zeehan and Dundas Herald* 14.02.1902).

"Count Tolstoy, the Russian novelist and social reformer, is reported to be dying. He was born in 1828" (*Daily Telegraph* 14.02.1902).

"Count Tolstoy is reported to be dying" ("[By Reuter's Agency]", *Manning River Times and Advocate for the Northern Coast Districts of New South Wales* 15.02.1902).

"Count Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoy, the great Russian novelist and social reformer, is dying" (*Pilbarra Goldfield News* 27.02.1902).

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<sup>1</sup> In the Australian press, the name Leo Tolstoy was also spelled as Lev Tolstoi and Lyof Tolstoi (in this article, the spelling of the name was standardised). Similarly, the spelling of Russian names and titles, such as Turgenev, Yasnaya Polyana, tsar, was standardised.

The false telegrams about the three times Tolstoy was said to die are interesting because they show the exceptional level of interest in the writer, and in his illness on the basis of which an overhasty conclusion of his death was drawn. It could be said, somewhat spectacularly, that only an exceptional person could die several times. It is difficult to find a similar example. It clearly follows from the quoted texts that "Count Tolstoy" was a brand of a world-class writer, a brand that did not require further clarifications, as in the telegrams published in *Australian Star*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, and *Mercury*. But if those clarifications did appear, a certain shift is visible in the presented list. In the telegrams from 1889, it is emphasised that Tolstoy is a famous Russian writer, while in the telegrams from 1901 and 1902, it is his significance as a social reformer and philanthropist that is featured. This is the effect of the writer's public addresses at the beginning of the 20th century.

The fourth death, preceded by an illness and flight from Yasnaya Polyana, was real. Here are some examples of the telegrams informing about those facts:

"Count Tolstoy, the famous Russian author, is suffering from fever, and confined to his bed" (*Queenslander* 08.01.1910).

"Count Tolstoy now is supposed to have run away from home for the reason that, being an excommunicated churchman, his funeral would have caused his wife and family pain" (*Daily News* 16.11.1910).

"The disappearance of grand old Tolstoy and his subsequent discovery are being used as pegs upon which religious controversialist are hanging their many colored caps. Tolstoi is slowly sinking into the valley of the shadow, but however deep he may be in the shadow today the glory of his wonderful work will never pass away" (*Westralian Worker* 18.11.1910).

"Tolstoy's last words – 'There are millions of people suffering in the world: why are so many of you around me?'" (*Argus* 22.11.1910).

"Count Tolstoy, the greatest figure in Russian modern literature, and Russian most advanced thinker, died on Saturday last, after two cardial seizures. He was 82 years of age" (*Kiama Independent, and Shoalhaven Advertiser* 23.11. 1910).

Tolstoy's position in the world was also attested by telegrams informing about various aspects of his activity and life situation. Some of them are very detailed issues, but, because they concerned the life of an exceptional individual, they were seen as worthy of being recorded. For instance, it was reported that Tolstoy, who had inherited an opulent fortune, gave it to the poor and was earning his living by making shoes (*Evening News* 25.05.1886). It is an interesting example of biographical transmutation (similar to the false information about the writer's death), that is a transformation of a false idea into one that seems real. Here we see a good Christian giving his wealth away and earning a living by working with his hands. The image is oleograph-like indeed, but it matches the common notions about a good Christian and about a good Samaritan, as in the news item reporting that Tolstoy donated 1500 pounds to help Jewish people in Chişinău (*World's News* 04.07.1903). The charisma of a good Christian

paradoxically consolidates the fact of the writer's excommunication by The Russian Holy Synod, which put him in the position of a heretic, but the religious reminiscence clearly imposes itself. For this fact had to bring to mind the condemnation of Jesus Christ by the Sanhedrin. As a result of the excommunication, Tolstoy became a living image of a religious person *in nuce* in the media mainstream, a picture of a Christian – so what if spurned by the Holy Synod, since, in effect, even more real as one subjected to a test of faith. The telegrams feature an emblem of Tolstoy as a righteous and just person, persecuted not only by religious but also state authorities. They mention that the last publication pertaining to Tolstoy, “the famous Russian novelist and social reformer” (this is a typical cliché), excommunicated by the Holy Synod, was banned by the Russian censor (*Wagga Wagga Express* 11.04.1901). Even after the writer's death, his works were confiscated (*Southern Record and Advertiser* 25.03.1911). But the tsar showed his generosity by granting the writer's widow an annual gratuity amounting to 1000 pounds (*Portland Guardian* 02.02.1912).

Therefore, the content of the telegrams, inherently extremely laconic, already shows Tolstoy as an influential person of the highest religious and moral class. But the telegrams also show him as a political personage, in this case confronted not with the Holy Synod but with the tsar, the embodiment of despotic power. The antithesis Tolstoy – tsar is visible in the telegrams, but, naturally, it is further developed in the press comments and articles, which will be discussed later. Here is an example of the mentioned antithesis:

“Count Leo Tolstoy has told the Tsar that if Russia desires the nations of the world to accept the policy of universal peace and brotherhood she ought to set them an example by first disarming herself” (*Express and Telegraph* 19.01.1899).

Another report says that the tsar requested Tolstoy to express in a few words his opinion on the announcement of the organisation of the Peace Conference. He was to give the following answer:

„I am heartily glad to hear the news. I am sure before long we shall hear a great deal more of this sort of thing” (*Sydney Morning Herald* 21.01.1899).

The difference in the content, while non-contradictory, is still considerable. However, both reports share the emphasis on Tolstoy's high standing, as that of an influential person whose opinion the tsar takes into account.

The attitude of an avowed pacifist adopted by Tolstoy in response to the tsar's request, enters a not at all theoretical context five years later, after the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War. The writer condemns the civilisation resorting to wars: “Tolstoy does know whether the so-called civilised world is advancing or going backwards” (*Express and Telegraph* 13.05.1904). This is not, however, just an intellectual's abstract declaration. Russia is at war with Japan and the Russian authorities and public opinion are not willing to share the arguments of pacifism. The writer's views are therefore vulnerable to incrimination: “That reports are current that

Tolstoy's banishment to Siberia has been suggested owing to his straight out opinions on the Russo Japanese war" (*Murchison Times and Day Dawn Gazette* 14.07.1904). They are also vulnerable to the public opinion's judgement; Russian journals attribute the defeats in the war with Japan to the disastrous impact of the doctrine of nonviolence on the Russian people's morale (*Maitland Daily Mercury* 22.09.1904).

Telegrams also included information about Tolstoy's private life, for example those mentioning his direct use of his own agricultural and artisanal production (making his own shoes) or the visits from his friends. Those kinds of details making their way into the telegrams are an evidence of the exceptional popularity of the person they pertained to. However, the source of news about the writer's private affairs was not so much the telegrams but the column which can be labelled with the general title *Personal*.

### **Personal**

Columns devoted to prominent personages and individuals were important for the editors of newspapers due to the readers' interest not only in the events that took place but also in the actors who participated in them: monarchs, politicians, business tycoons, or outstanding artists. The press was satisfying the curiosity of ordinary readers in regards to the details of the life of high society, fairly similarly to the romances narrating stories about refined worlds and sophisticated love games played out within their luxurious expanses. A telegram quenched the thirst for information, but after its consumption a certain lack would have persisted if there had not been any dessert, that is reports related to the rumour and focusing on the individuals. This dessert was sometimes located in special columns titled: *Personal, Mainly about People, Social Notes, Concerning People, and Items of Interest, From All Quarters, Town Talk, In the Papers, Echoes from London, News and Notes, Literary Notes, Books and Authors*. The presence of Tolstoy's name is constant in columns of this kind, and it intensifies after the year 1898. No other person from the Slavic world can compete with him in regards to this presence which is a function of the unheard-of popularity of the writer. Texts featured in those columns can be divided into four groups: 1) informing about some incidental, important, or less significant event from Tolstoy's life, that is of biographical detail, 2) giving an account of and describing the writer's everyday life, 3) talking about the writer's wife and children, 4) presenting the writer's biography in connection to his consecutive birthdays. An important biographical detail is, for example, the writer's excommunication by the Holy Synod (*Telegraph* 14.03.1901, *Register* 27.04.1901), but recorded were also such facts as, for example, quite intimate details of his illness referred to by Russians as "stomach typhus" (*Australasian* 01.11.1902 – description as cited in *Literary World*) or his founding of a bookstore in Moscow, offering cheap books to poor readers (*Lithgow Mercury* 09.06.1905). It was also the political position of the writer that was written about in the *Personal* columns. One column expressed agitation at the repressions he was subjected to at the hands of the Russian government and



the bureaucracy. There, Tolstoy was referred to as “a grand figure of age” and “the protagonist of liberty in a cruelly oppressed country” (*Table Talk* 02.09.1909).

The writer’s everyday life could be especially intriguing due to the interest in the way of life of this great writer, moralist, and philanthropist. This interest is natural, since the confrontation of the man of ideas and passion with the surrounding reality could be exciting for the reader. Does a person surrounded by such glory, praising simplicity and moderation live modestly and indigently, how does he cope with everyday life, what are his relationships with his family, and how does he behave towards his guests? It could be said that this “spying” on Tolstoy is a kind of test of whether the *sacrum* (generated by the writer’s public image) will not be strained and maybe even compromised by the *profanum* (the everyday life). After all, it sometimes happens that great people suffer a loss when they are observed from the perspective of their life entanglements. Now, it must be said right away that Tolstoy comes out of this exciting confrontation victorious. In other words, he does not cease to be “holy” and he inspires respect with his, as it can be called, “dogmatic” approach to the demands of everyday life and lifestyle. In this case, we can speak of a positive bias towards the writer, which greatly limits the scope of criticism, although not in every case, which will be discussed later on.

In one of the columns devoted to prominent individuals, Tolstoy was referred to as “the celebrated Russian novelist and mystic”. He is discussed as the author of *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, novels that are especially popular in France. Recently, his work *My Religion* was translated into English. Tolstoy is a religious writer, also in the sense of professing practical poverty. He believes that manual labour is the salvage for the human being, and he puts this idea into practice in his life. The writer makes his shoes, makes his bed, and cleans his rooms himself, and in order to save on laundry, he uses bed sheets less often (*Geelong Advertiser* 03.05.1886). This kind of biographical information was circulating and building the stereotypical image of Tolstoy which was made up of behaviours associated with labour, with a simple way of life, and with peasant clothing. A personalised image straight out of the feudal world was great at anchoring itself in the industrial imagination of an individual living in the world of capitalism becoming globalised. The press knew what a valuable exhibit a person going athwart the civilizational tendencies was, which is why, every now and then, it was displaying him to its readers. But it was also Tolstoy who benefited from his making the civilisation into an exhibit going athwart the idea of God.

A certain tourist visited Tolstoy in his home and described his impressions from the short stay there. The writer – he said – leads a remarkably regular lifestyle. In the morning, at 8 sharp, he eats breakfast, then goes on a two-mile walk. Afterwards, he is engaged with his correspondence, reading, and writing. After dinner, he goes on a two-hour horse ride in his riding clothes. He participates in the family life and he is a vegetarian (*Bendigo Advertiser* 14.09.1907 as cited in the paper *The Reader*). The description of the writer’s everyday life is not very detailed and does not include any specific information regarding the circumstances of

said tourist's visit. The visit could have actually taken place or not – and have been an invention of not that much the tourist, as the editor who was taking advantage of the opinions about the writer's everyday life that were circulating in the press. It may seem strange that the tourist who "saw" the writer – assuming that this tourist is a real person – put himself in the position of an observer and did not attempt to talk to the author. Did Tolstoy assume the role of a host? It seems dubious. In the world of the press, information gambling remained rather unpunished and false information was frequently sold as saleable commodity, provided that it appeared attractive. On the other hand, observable were taboo practices which (outside of sensational press) moderated journalists in such a way that they avoided descriptions of scandalising events and snags in the biographies of outstanding influential persons. Those same comments can be applied to another description of Tolstoy's everyday life (*Argus* 10.10.1908). It refers to the spacious and comfortable house 130 miles to the South of Moscow, in which the writer lives together with his family. The interior of the house is evidence of the culture of its residents. Tolstoy leads a regular lifestyle. After breakfast, he devotes himself to studies and writing, he eats dinner with his family; he is a vegetarian. Walks and horse rides are not mentioned here, as opposed to the previously discussed description.

Is Tolstoy completely honest in displaying his simplicity? Does he really eat the same meals as a common peasant? One of the American journalists was trying to answer this question<sup>2</sup>. People from all around the world come to personally meet the writer and get to know his everyday life. It is not as simple as he himself claims, since refined dishes and peaches, which out of season cannot be afforded even by well-to-do people, do appear on his table. Tolstoy displays brusque impatience when somebody does not share his views. But he is "terribly sincere", which is illustrated by an anecdote about a several hour-long visit from an American scholar, a broad-minded individual, president of one of the leading American universities. "What do you think of this American scholar?" was asked of Tolstoy. 'He is only a barbarian', returned the 'master'" (*Advertiser* 01.09.1908 as cited in the *American Munsey's Magazine*).

A separate place is occupied by informational texts describing the writer's family life, especially those referring to his wife as Countess Tolstoy or Madame Tolstoy. They add a familial element, although a rather restricted one, to the opinions circulating in the press. For what is sometimes striking in the texts which will be discussed, is the lack of mention of the name of the writer's wife, as well as their descriptive dryness. In the first of them, it is emphasised that in his early youth, Tolstoy did not consider marriage. However, at the age of 32, he changed his mind and married a 16-year-old. His wife, considered a great beauty, comes from a German family. She gave birth to 16 children, out of whom 9 survived. Her house was

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<sup>2</sup> An abundant collection of conversations between Americans and Tolstoy can be found in the anthology: *Americans in Conversation with Tolstoy. Selected Accounts, 1887–1923*. Ed. P. Sekirin. London 2006.

therefore full of nursemaids, governesses, and preceptors. She does not share the socialist views of her talented husband (*Telegraph* 09.08.1900). Another text opens with the opinion that the wife "of the great Russian novelist and social reformer" (the popularity of this cliché has already been mentioned) is an important individual, just like her famous husband. She does not always agree with him, for example in the matter of the copyright system. She has a rich educational experience and is characterised by a "cool, deliberate intellect". She is brave, for when her husband, suffering from cancer, was excommunicated, she wrote a vigorous letter which was a protest against the resolutions of the Holy Synod (*Northern Miner* 16.04.1902). In yet another informational text, the Countess was referred to as "a beautiful and accomplished woman". She likes the society, but she leaves having a taste in social issues to her husband. She works as his private secretary, sending out many typewritten copies of her husband's works that are banned in Russia to their numerous friends. The Tolstoy family has 9 children and most of them are musically talented. The entire family converses fluently in English and French (*Table Talk* 15.06.1905) and the writer himself is a polyglot (*Mount Alexander Mail* 15.11.1902 and *Fitzroy City Press* 13.03.1908).

A *Sun* correspondent visited the Tolstoy family in their home. He noticed that their lifestyle is not uniform. The writer's children share their father's views and devote themselves to work, or they do not work, passing their time playing tennis or spending a long time in the music-room. The correspondent joined Maria, the writer's second daughter, when she was working in the field. The peasants considered the foreigner to be playing the role of a philanthropist but did not think this of Maria who was used to farm work and behaved like other workers. Nobody doubted the honesty of the daughter, who was following in the footsteps of her father, nor her positive influence on the peasants (*Brisbane Courier* 28.04.1899).

The Australian press recorded the writer's birthdays. One of the most extensive pieces was written in connection with his 70th birthday. The opening sentence refers to Tolstoy as "one of the most remarkable personalities of the century" and "a microcosm of the Russian people". The celebrant receives congratulation letters from all over Europe, he also receives visits, like the recent one from the American Ernest Crosby who described the manor and household at Yasnaya Polyana. The manor is modestly furnished and lacks ornaments. Tolstoy is dressed in the coarse garb of a "moujik" (peasant) and devotes himself to simple activities (this is the iconic image of the writer). The guest had the opportunity to see one of the writer's daughters working in the field alongside peasant women. Most of the piece consists of opinions pertaining to the writer's life and work, but their source is not provided. For instance, in the discussion of *The Kreutzer Sonata*, the following sentence appears: "He has cosmopolitan fame as a painter of battlepieces unequalled in modern literature for grim realism, for introspection, for description not only of the routine but of the inner side of war". The visionariness of his attitude to life, evangelical and intolerant of hypocrisy, is emphasised. "He is an apostle, writing in these latter days only to propound the new conception of life, which he has evolved from Christianity" (*Argus* 01.10.1898).

A telegram from London featured a two sentences-long message about the circumstances of the writer's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. The birthday was celebrated in the company of a small circle of family and friends. Tolstoy was moved by the congratulations pouring in from all around the world (*Daily Telegraph* 12.09.1908). An article summarised and reprinted from *Literary World* devotes more space to this birthday. In it, Tolstoy was referred to as "probably the greatest living Russian". The author of the article first reminded the readers about some facts from the writer's life, especially his military service in the Crimean War, then emphasised the importance of the changes that had taken place in Russia in the past three years, reminiscent of a civil war. The Crimean War and the revolution are two enormous events which cannot be measured by the same standards. It is difficult to evaluate – the author of the article writes – the value of Tolstoy's "political teaching", but in the current historical situation, this value is doubtful and deserves to be criticised: "The doctrine of nonresistance is utterly opposed to Western ideas; and we may all claim that Western Europe would not be what it is to-day if brave men had not lifted their hand against wrong in a manner which Tolstoy could never have approved". The article does not glorify Tolstoy, highlighting the anachronism of his doctrine which now seems to be a negative reference point. It is a kind of depopularisation which often appears as a motif in articles discussing Tolstoy's thought and ideas in the last years of his life (which will be discussed later). In any case, it should be pointed out that the article written on the occasion of the writer's 80th birthday is not a panegyric (*Queenslander* 10.10.1908).

The Australian press also recorded the writer's 82nd and last birthday. In one of the pieces written on the occasion, the question of the popularity of his works was put at the forefront. In Russia, the book *A New Alphabet*, a million copies of which were printed, gained the greatest popularity, followed by *First Reading Book for Children (Fables for Children)*, with a quarter of a million fewer copies. His works are read in all European languages as well as in Japanese and Hindi. The mention of the role of the British press in the spreading of the writer's views is the most interesting: "When the Russian censor forbade the publication of his seditious treaties in his native land, Tolstoy took advantage of the freedom of the English Press, and many of his greatest pronouncements have been made in the columns of our leading journals". Indeed, censorship bans and various forms of repression used against the writer echoed widely in the British, and, subsequently, the international and, of course, the Australian press. The mention referring to the many reports of the writer's death, which fortunately turned out to be untrue, is also interesting. Since he was excommunicated by the Russian Church, he expressed his wish for his body to be embalmed and buried in Bucharest (*Telegraph* 15.10.1910).

What is very interesting is the description of the Tolstoy Museum in London. It was conceived as a commemoration of the last moments of the great writer's life. The most striking feature of this establishment is a model of the stationmaster's room in Astapovo, where he passed away. The furniture and other objects were all recreated to look exactly as they did in

real life. They are in a gloomy, low, and shoddily decorated room, illuminated by a green, dimmed lamp. The writer's fading eyes were gazing at a wallpaper printed in an unhappy pattern. The couch and carpeting and gloomily colourful. On the wall, next to the narrow iron bed in which Tolstoy died, his profile was painted. There is also a coat hung in the room, looking like the one he was wearing when he fled Yasnaya Polyana in the last days of his life (*Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* 16.11.1912). The idea of creating a Tolstoy Museum should be regarded as a spectacular one, commemorating in an interesting way the most important, next to his birthday, fact from the writer's biography. The semiotic recreation of the interior aimed to create an impression of contrast between the gravity of the death of a man known all around the world and the accidental and shoddy interior of the room where his life ended.

### **Anecdotes and Derivatives**

An anecdote is a derivative, since it is a story about a famous person that is out of context or a quote from a statement made by this very person. An anecdote aims to arouse the reader's interest, entertain them, or be food for thought. It can be recounted entirely irrespectively of the biographical circumstances. The press takes advantage of the rich repertoire of a variety of anecdotes, publishing them in columns of the *Personal* kind (in order to diversify them) or, for example, in *People We Know*, *Topics of the Day*, *Dispatch Bag*, *Crumbs*, *Items of Interest*. The difference between a biographical information that references a specific event and an anecdote must be emphasised. The former appears in papers as a fact (for example one concerning a person's health), whereas the latter can be activated at any moment, since it is not concerned with fact but with the state of affairs that is detached from fact. Editors use anecdotal material mainly to diversify the content of the paper and sometimes in order to modify the aesthetic tone by introducing the element of entertainment and humour. Anecdotes simply sell well, since they show a prominent personage in the light of their own detached opinion, preferably an interesting, controversial, or paradoxical one. However, there are also other forms of derivatives circulating in the media, especially in columns diversifying the paper's content and featuring short, interesting pieces of information. They may comprise of, for instance, citing the opinions or views (maxims) of an influential person, references, reminiscences, allusions, and quotes pertaining to them, dedications, or even names evoking that person. Sometimes an opinion or a quote fulfil the function of an anecdote, but it can also be the other way around; it is then virtually difficult to differentiate them, since columns and journalism genres become commingled.

Here are some examples of anecdotes:

“Count Tolstoy is said to have become such an enthusiastic chess player that he and all his family play all day ‘as if their lives depended on it’. All the tables in the

house being marked out as chessboards, and even the dogs and cats being christened after chess pieces" (*Geelong Advertiser* 05.07.1897).

"Tolstoy is an ardent student of Henry George 'If the Czar were to ask me what I would advise him to do', he says, 'I would answer, 'Use your autocratic power to abolish landed property in Russia, and substitute the single tax system: then give up your power, and let the people rule themselves under a liberal constitution'" (*Newsletter: an Australian Paper for Australian People* 23.05.1903).

"Some time ago Mr. John D. Rockefeller, reputed to be richest man in the world, wrote to Count Tolstoy asking what was the best to employ wealth for the greatest good of humanity. Tolstoy replied that he ought to get rid of it at once" (*Catholic Press* 26.12.1907).

Tolstoy's views and his lifestyle made for an inexhaustible treasury of anecdotes and derivatives, sometimes signalled by a formula such as: "Count Tolstoy is said...", "As Tolstoy says ...", "Count Tolstoy on ...", "Tolstoy once said ...", "The writer says ...".

What emerges from them is a distinct silhouette of the writer as an idea addict who is extremely consistent in his views and puts them into practice. It is a bipolar silhouette, its one extreme being libertarianism in the sense of rejecting the evil that comes from coercion, the other being ultraconservatism. This libertarianism is at its base religious, but it was sometimes perceived as anarchism, as is the case in the piece of news saying that Tolstoy established an "anarchist school" for boys in Yasnaya Polyana, a school where "the principle of non-resistance" is practiced, and where "the child's liberty is inviolable, and even that the children should suggest to their master the subjects they wish to be taught and the methods to be adopted". The added comment is ironic and says that Tolstoy's education system will have the approval of those young people who disregard their parents (*Melbourne Punch* 19.11.1891). The term "libertarianism" – when it is applied to Tolstoy – requires further clarification depending on the different contexts. However, overall, it builds Tolstoy's media image as that of "the freest man in Russia", freer than the tsar in the expression of his will and his actions (*Evening Journal* 28.03.1905 as cited in *New York Success*). The writer excellently personified the attitude which can be described with the Latin maxim "Plus ratio quam vis", although, naturally, the ground for this attitude was not rationalism but religious convictions, paradoxically articulated as ultimate rationales, reinforced by the assertion factor. Tolstoy is the embodiment of freedom, which is why the government fights his works, sentencing people for their dissemination. "The Russian Government dares not lay a finger on the venerable head of Count Leo Tolstoy, the protagonist of liberty in a cruelly oppressed country" (*Daily News* 11.09.1909). The key biographical moment which contributed to the perception of Tolstoy as a signaller of freedom was his excommunication by the Holy Synod. This fact is emphasised by the formula added to the writer's name, as in the following sentence which opens a certain piece of information: "In his latest work, 'The Slavery of Our Times', Count Tolstoy, the ex-

communicated author, has given a terrible picture of the condition of the toilers in Russia". Afterwards, given are several examples taken from this work and describing the disastrous life and working conditions of the workers in the cold of 20 degrees below zero, the 12 hour-long workday of the women workers who send their children to family villages after birth or abandon them to the fate of a foundling (*Warwick Argus* 08.06.1901).

The ultraconservative attitude seems to be anachronistic in a modernising world, but not in the case of Tolstoy. It is so specific that it constitutes a natural material to be used by the press as a peculiarity that will satisfy the reader's curiosity. Great people have their quirks and inclinations, and, in terms of media coverage, it is great if they are simply eccentric. It is therefore mentioned about Tolstoy that his doctrine of new Christianity and treating manual labour as a religious act is extreme as a literal rejection of everything beyond the New Testament as things that are superfluous (*Telegraph* 02.03.1892). Emphasised is his view on the education of women which should not be profound, since it is motherhood that is the destiny of a woman (*Daily Telegraph* 08.10.1892). The writer's words regarding divorce are cited:

"Count Tolstoy on Divorce: 'According to Mark, Luke and Paul, divorce is never lawful. In the saying that man and wife are one flesh, and that their union is of God, a saying repeated in two of the Gospels, divorce is forbidden' (...)"

But the editors add a characteristic comment to this quote: "We do not accept Tolstoy as an interpreter of Scripture, but his opinion in the case is worthy of respect" (*Freeman's Journal* 03.06.1905). The writer's views pertaining to the women's question fit the extremely anti-emancipatory model, which must have been striking, considering that Australia was one of the first countries in the world to give women the right to vote (as early as in 1903). Still, the writer's traditionalist viewpoint could not be especially peculiar, since it was the Holy Scripture that was its source, which the editorial staff of the *Freeman's Journal*, a Catholic magazine published in Sydney, had to respect.

Tolstoy's view on literature and poetry must have also been striking in its extremity. Asked for advice by a peasant from the Simbirsk Governorate who also was writing, Tolstoy told him that the word, which is the expression of thought and the manifestation of spirit, is too important to tie it to rhythm and rhyme, that is the sphere of ornamentation. Instead, it should be like in the case of a ploughman who is walking behind the plough, caring only to maintain the neatness and regularity of the furrow. Therefore, the writer concludes, "Poetry, even when it is good, is, in my opinion, a very silly superstition" (*Daily News* 18.06.1908).

Tolstoy's name appears in the anecdotal context of a certain report about doctors of philosophy working in Hungary and in Sofia as shoeshiners. An ironic thought comes to mind, the thought that, influenced by his ideas, they want to show that even a doctor of philosophy is good enough to earn his living in this not much respected profession (*Tocsin* 11.05.1905 as cited in *Manchester Guardian*). Tolstoy's philippics against the Mammon were sometimes treated irreverently, described as idealistic ("life is real", "life is money") or even as a

sentiment typical of poets and hysterical young ladies (*East Murchison News* 03.06.1905, author Harold Begbie).

Finding paradoxes and contradictions in Tolstoy's thought was in demand, the way it was done by Francis Gribble, a famous author of biographies of great people, in the article "Tolstoy and the Tolstoyans", published in the *Fortnightly Review* (September 1908). One of the newspapers took several threads from this article, threads which were to illustrate the presence of "pure paradox" in Tolstoy's philosophical thought. Summarised was the opinion of Gribble who "declares that much in Tolstoy is contradictory and superfluous, that esoteric Tolstoyism is not a kind of Christianity, but a kind of Pantheism, and that Tolstoy only agrees with Christ when Christ agrees with him". (*Bendigo Independent* 19.10.1908). This example shows that periodicals could use specialist papers if they included issues that could interest an ordinary reader (attractive figures of thought carrying paradoxical content could be important). But in the columns of "lapidaria", there were also paradoxes enclosed in just one sentence, for example "Tolstoy was the leader of the Passive Resisters; he had his goods sold rather than be vaccinated" (*Young Chronicle* 05.01.1910). The writer's "words of wisdom", derived from his religious convictions, had the quality of attractiveness for the reader, seeing that they were used to create a mini-anthology ("New Years Thoughts. By Count Leo Tolstoy", *Geraldton Advertiser* 27.11.1905).

It was also the writer's ruminations, full of paradoxes, on life and death and the predestination of the human being, that circulated in the press. One of the pieces begins as follows: "Tolstoy once said he loved to be ill. 'Sickness and suffering destroy what is mortal in man solely to prepare him for something better'". The reflection then changes into a seemingly familiar address to his wife in which the writer argues that there is nothing scary in death, that it constitutes a moment of passing into the eternal life, and he concludes with a confession quite incongruous with the circumstances of a domestic, intimate conversation with Countess Sophia Andreyevna: "As the slave looks for the liberator, so I look for death" (*Zeehan and Dundas Herald* 15.02.1911 as cited in *Westminster Gazette*). However, citing this anecdote is grounded, since it entered the circulation after the writer's death, similarly to many others in the Australian press in the years 1910-1914, such as "Tolstoy's Health Maxims" (*Evening Journal* 24.08.1912).

Bernard Shaw's specific reaction to the writer's death is interesting, since his slightly belated review of the biography *Life of Tolstoy* by the excellent expert on Tolstoy and translator of his works Aylmer Maude, a biography published in two volumes in 1908 and 1910, can probably be interpreted as such a reaction. The review aims to express Tolstoy's smallness and greatness, naturally with reference to the text of the monograph. But, in reality, it is not as much critical of this biographical work as of its hero. Here, Tolstoy's image is parodied and takes on the shape of a lampoon, as in the following excerpt from the review:

"He put on the dress of a moujik exactly as Don Quixote put on a suit of armor. He tried to ignore money as Don Quixote did. He left his own skilled work to build



houses that could hardly be induced to stand, and to make boots than an army contractor would have been ashamed of. He let his property drift to the verge of insolvency and ruin like the laziest Irish squire, because he disapproved of property as an institution. And he was neither honest nor respectable in his follies. He connived at all sorts of evasions. He would not take money on a journey, but he would take a companion who would buy railway tickets and pay hotel bills behind his backs" ("Shaw and Tolstoy", *West Gippsland Gazette* 01.08.1911, as cited in *Fabian News*<sup>3</sup>).

Well, Shaw forgot that Tolstoy was an artist, which is probably why he parodied him in a way that was worthy of a philistine.

References to Tolstoy's thought which are indicators of the respect for the writer as an authority make up a special class of derivatives. His name is uttered during the sessions of the Australian parliaments. The stenographic record from the session of the parliament of Victoria includes the following sentence spoken by one of the speakers as an argument against the opponents: "Count Tolstoy had written recently of the coming emancipation of man from the system of brain poisoning by narcotics" (*Argus* 15.09.1892). Naturally, this is an argument revealing the conservative attitude of the speaker. But the writer's name is sometimes brought up by a liberal, as in the case of Joseph Carruthers, future Premier of New South Wales, who during a debate cited Tolstoy's view that there are no reforms without sacrifices (*Australian Star* 30.08.1901). The writer's name is invoked by one the speakers during a pre-election meeting gathering the candidates to the two Houses of the Federal Parliament of Australia: "Tolstoy was a Christian Socialist, and a good, clean, honest man" (*Richmond River Express and Casino Kyogle Advertiser* (04.12.1906). And a one sentence-long quote printed without comment in a magazine aimed at workers connotes the writer's attitude as communist: "I think the Social Revolution will break out first in the United States. – TOLSTOI" (*Worker* 04.07.1896).

In the United States (just like in the international press as a whole), Tolstoy's name appears in the context of the revolution in Russia. A special correspondent from the Brisbane journal *Week* describes a Chicago meeting held under the banner of sympathy with Russia, whose guiding idea is epitomised by the slogan likening the Russian revolution to the American revolution. This was wishful thinking on the part of the American public opinion which wanted to see a liberation movement similar to the American War of Independence in the events transpiring in Russia. This kind of wishful thinking emerged during the collapse of the Soviet Union, when the American press proclaimed Gorbachev as the "Roosevelt of the Soviet Union". During the meeting, Jane Addams, "the famed founder of the Hull House Social Settlement" (awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931), said to the attendees:

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<sup>3</sup> The issue of the *Fabian News* containing Shaw's piece was published in May 1911. See: *Shaw's Book Reviews: 1884–1950*. Ed. T. Brian. The Pennsylvania State University 1966, p.45–46 and 259.

“I should like to remind you of the things which that greatest living Russian has said. I know that it is not a time when the doctrines of Count Tolstoy are popular, because his voice is always lifted for peace. But though this revolution is going to be the greatest in the history of the world. I believe with him that it will be successful just in the same measure as it is free from violence”.

The speaker expressed her hope that the Russian nation will write an honourable page in its history, obtaining the freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and abolishing autocracy, without resorting to violence and property damage (*Week* 10.03.1905).

It is also in statements referring to the realm of religion and morality that Tolstoy's name is invoked as an authority, which does not exclude a polemical attitude towards the writer, as is the case in, for instance, the speech given by Rev. G.D. Buchanan of the Presbyterian Church, in which Tolstoy's doctrine of non-resistance of evil was criticised as illogical in its application (*Brisbane Courier* 14.07.1890); on the same page, a polemical response by Walter Roberts was printed. But there appear opinions that nobody described the nature of evil as well as Tolstoy, which is illustrated by an extensive excerpt from his book *My Religion* (*Chronicle* 04.04.1896). Rev. R.J. Campbell enters into a polemic with Tolstoy in regards to the question of the presence of God in the actions of a human being (*Advertiser* 09.04.1904, as cited in *Pall Mall Gazette*). A review of Henry Jones's book *Idealism as a Practical Creed* features the notion that a human being's moral nature which is subject to repair must have previously been evil. It is illustrated by a reference to the biography of Tolstoy who in his old age appears to be holy because the mistakes of his youth make it evident (*Advertiser* 17.07.1909). The writer is treated as an arbiter of morality in statements regarding the human nature's inclination to evil. For example, the censure of smoking is accompanied by a quote from Tolstoy's thought stating that this addiction is “among the deadliest of sins” (*The Catholic Press* 17.09.1903). Maurice Baring, a *Morning Post* correspondent, writes in his account from Russia about treating the writer as an anti-institutional religious believer. He quotes the words of a peasant deputy to the Duma: “My religion is the same as that of Tolstoy” (*Australasian* 29.06. 1907). So it is not the Orthodox religion but Tolstoy's religion.

The writer's name appears in books about Russia. After all, it would be difficult to omit it while he is looked upon as the highest authority on the country's issues and its inhabitants. To put it in contemporary terms, there is no Russian studies without reference to this authority. The reader as if automatically expects to find the answers to the question: what does Tolstoy think about this? – and so the author tries to satisfy them, at least partially. The writer's name serves to emphasise the publication's repute. In the discussion of Sampson Low's book *Through Famine-Stricken Russia*, it is mentioned that the book is dedicated to Tolstoy and includes his portrait (*Sydney Morning Herald* 06.08.1892). Mentions of the writer were recorded in the reviews of Russian studies (travel and political) books *All the Russias. Travels and Studies in Contemporary European Russia, Finland, Siberia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia* [1902] by Henry

Norman (*Advertiser* 05.07.1902), *With the Russians in Manchuria* [1905] by the *Morning Post* war correspondent Maurice Baring (*Burrowa News* 08.09.1905), and *The Dawn in Russia – Or Scenes in the Russian Revolution* [1906] by *The Daily Chronicle* correspondent Henry Woodd Nevinson (*Geelong Advertiser* 10.07.1906) which includes an opinion about the writer that was recorded. Tolstoy – Nevinson writes – is admired by everyone in Russia and feared by the bureaucracy. He is perceived as an agreeable revolutionary and his portraits are welcome in shop windows. The writer's anarchism is too mild and his Christianity seems boring. It may be true that he reproves the society violently, but that is not particularly important. In 1910, Baring, who was already mentioned, published a book that consisted of a series of studies of Russian writers, including Tolstoy, Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoyevsky, and Chekhov. It is interesting that he shared the view of a certain Russian professor declaring the lack of hypocrisy in the Russian national character, as opposed to that of the English; the different kinds of sense of humour differentiating those two nations were also compared (*The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser* 27.04.1910).

The writer's name appears in a variety of circumstances and contexts. Here are some examples. After publishing his religious book *In His Steps*, Charles Monroe Sheldon was named "the American Tolstoy". Several millions of copies of the book were printed and it was translated into eight languages (*Argonaut* 02.12.1899). Tolstoy is sometimes also referenced as an authority pronouncing a positive opinion about a certain writer, for example Morrison Davidson who published the book *The Gospel of the Poor; the Christ of the Commune* (*Herald* 22.05.1903). Recorded is Tolstoy's inspiring role in shaping the religious views of Presbyterians, thanks to his book *The Spiritual Teachings of Jesus Christ* (*Truth* 12.04.1903). This role is noticed in the social and humanitarian convictions of, for example, the American lawyer and philosophe Ernest Howard Crosby, a friend of the Russian writer and promoter of his ideas (*Quirindi Herald and District News* 12.04.1907 – the editorial staff received a permission to reprint a small collection of Crosby's reflections and sayings from the *London Daily News*).

Tolstoy's name is well at home in the media, it is referred to by journalists, politicians, and clergymen. A spectacular example of a derivative is using the writer's name as the name of a horse (*Australian Town and Country Journal* 01.09.1900), a dog (Count Tolstoy and Tzar of Russia and Lady Volga) (*Age* 08.06.1911, *Leader* 10.06.1911), and as the name of a variety of tuberous begonia (*Advertiser* 04.03.1904) and of a clothing fabric (*Evening Journal* 15.05.1909). These examples are evidence of the popularity of the writer whose name is becoming an easily recognisable Russian brand around the world.

The situation is similar in the case of the writer's portraits printed in the press and his likenesses (portraits, photographs, and drawings) spotted in the studies of the world's notabilities. This is no longer a matter of the semantic but of the semiotic recognisability of the writer. It is impossible to describe the phenomenon of the media image of Tolstoy as not only a person but an iconic representation of a Russian and of Russia, it will then be fit to give no more than a few examples. One of the Canadian magazines published in Toronto printed 16

portraits of “the grand old man of the day”, such as Ferdinand de Lesseps, Leo XIII, William Ewart Gladstone, Prince Bismarck, Kossuth, Verdi, and, the youngest among them, Tolstoy and Ibsen (*Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser* 28.12.1893). Tired of being constantly photographed, Emma Calvé, “the famous operatic singer”, confesses that it would be best the world contented itself with photographic portraits of “grand old men”: Walt Whitman, John Burroughs, John Muir, and Tolstoy. It is interesting that the French singer gave the names of Americans and a Russian, which she probably associated with old age that can now be immortalised (*Age* 13.06.1914). Empress Alexandra Fedorovna is an admirer of Tolstoy whose portrait occupies a prominent spot in her study. She not only fills her favourite bookshelf with the writer’s books but also diligently reads them. Another passion of hers is collecting photographs (*Argus* 01.04.1905 as cited in the British magazine *Tattle*). Drawings of Tolstoy were placed in one of the spaces commemorating Oscar Wilde (*Arrow* 23.01.1909).

### Interviews and Statements

The elements of the paradigm that have been discussed so far (telegrams, personal, anecdotes, and derivatives) refer to the way in which Tolstoy’s name circulates in the media, how it recurrently appears in a variety of contexts, and in what way it is functional. These elements tell us what is contained in the records pertaining to the writer. His own direct voice, however, is something quite different, and it takes two forms: that of an interview and that of a direct statement regarding a specific issue, closely related to the time of its utterance. At the turn of the 19th and 20th century, the interview was promoted to the rank of an attractive for the reader journalistic form that revealed the life and work of prominent persons, often in the private context. Press agencies and leading magazines made endeavours to carry out interviews with individuals who were known all around the world, such as Edison or Twain. On the other hand, the journalists carrying out interviews were required to be professional in the highest degree. Few among them enjoyed fame equal to that of the famous William Thomas Stead, the editor of the *Review of Reviews*. A statement of a given individual regarding a given subject, expressed directly and in circumstances that can be specified, can be regarded as a shortened form of an interview. An example can be Tolstoy’s statements about the famine in Russia in 1892 or about the Russo-Japanese War which broke out in February 1904. They included content which referred to the reality and were subject to public reception (approval or criticism) as the great writer taking a stance on a given matter. In this way, he had an impact on the public opinion and was becoming simply a publicist.

We will describe several interviews with Tolstoy which were repeated by the Australian press after the Russian, English, and French press, as well as his selected statements pertaining to, especially, social and political issues. In an interview given to a Russian journalist (the source was not provided), the writer first informs that he is in poor health and that he is ready to meet the inevitable, although, as is his custom, he resumed work (*South*

*Australian Register* 10.03.1900). Asked about his creative plans, he said that nothing was settled in that regard but expressed his view on his new work *Resurrection*, saying, among other things:

“My new novel will represent the various aspects of love. This work will be a pleasing task to me, for it will be the expression of ideas which have long engaged my mind. I do not care to speak of the difficulties which I have had to overcome with the censor of the Press in regard to this work”.

What follows is the writer’s vehement philippic against Ibsen’s last drama, *When We Dead Awaken*:

“It is simply a delirium, and is devoid of life, character, and dramatic action. Thirty-five years ago such a drama would have been stifled by a cutting parody in the Press, and the piece would, have been ridiculed to death”.

An agitation typical of anchorites, present in the timeless plaintive topic, can be sensed in this philippic. Tolstoy thinks that the serious tasks of the theatre came to an end and that literature was destroyed by the press.

In an interview published in the Russian journal *Novoye Vremya*, the writer ascertains that his health is fairly good and allows him to finish his last work. He receives books and press from all around the world. He vividly describes an event relating to a rich American which took place during his stay in the Crimea (*Telegraph* 13.06.1903). In this case, the piece is a summary of an interview, which is also the case with the interview given for the London paper *Standard*. The thread concerning the events in Russia was selected from the text of the interview. Tolstoy claims that he did not anticipate a revolution, that is, he did not call to its rousing. The peasants’ behaviour, if they were to resort to violence, would be as unjust as the behaviour of the army resorting to violence. The writer thinks of the revolution in moral categories: “A revolution would come through the spread of education, especially a personal revolution in the people’s lives, by acquiring the true religious spirit. People must have land, but not by riot” (*Australian Town and Country Journal* 08.02.1905). An extensive quote was selected from an interview given for the Paris journal *Matin*, opening with the confession: “Personally, I hate both Autocracy and Socialism, which produce Governments one as despotic as the other”. In the quote, he goes on to say that a Republic (a republican system) does not differ much from an Empire (an autocratic system) because it has an army and a police that has spies and informants. They push for war in a similar way and they take advantage of people in a similar way. Tolstoy says that he was sometimes presented as a supporter of the Russian autocracy. Meanwhile, not only does he despise it but he loathes it with all his soul. But, as he adds, he knows some republics that are really only concealed autocracies. Now, when it comes to Russia itself, the number of people who call for reforms is infinitely small in comparison to the peasant population whose only desire is for the land to become the property of those who cultivate it. The Russian nation – according to the writer –

does not contemplate carrying out a revolution, which, besides, is impossible due to the enormous means that the government has at its disposal. The only thing that can be done is to refuse it to participate in crimes and offences.

By means of the telegraph, the Australian reader was therefore receiving the content of Tolstoy's interviews with important Russian, British, and French journals. This way, the reader obtained knowledge taken from the European press, rather fragmentary in nature but attesting to the prominent position of the person whose voice was reaching even the antipodes. This position was attested especially by the numerous statements made by the writer which circulated in the Australian press. Tolstoy commented on social and political events in a way that made him a media star. His point of view was, first of all, independent of any external factors, consistent after the fundamentalist fashion, and honest, even exhibitionistic. The press treated him like a prism through which Russia could be understood, or a medium through which the truth about this enigmatic country reaches the world. He was believable in the views which his lifestyle seemed to confirm. Tolstoy's statements are so numerous that making a certain selection of them will be necessary here.

Tolstoy's letter published in the Parisian *Temps*, dated from Moscow, April 4, in which he explains his perspective on his excommunication by the Russian Synod, is very important. He writes that he does not reject the Church because of a rebellion against God, quite the contrary, he rejects it because he wants to serve God with his entire soul. He then describes the circumstances which led him to thorough deliberations on the issue of faith, the conclusion he reached being that "the teaching of the Church is theoretically a cunning and injurious lie, and practically a compound of coarse superstitions and sorcery, under which the sense of Christian doctrines disappears utterly". He rejects the doctrines of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Trinity, and the Immaculate Conception, but he does not reject "God the spirit, a unique God of love, the principle of all things". He does not believe in heaven and hell but in the immortality of the soul and the moral responsibility of the human being. Extreme Unction, icons, prayers, and ceremonies are, according to him, a result of superstitious ignorance. He professes his own faith in God:

"I believe. He is in me, as I am in Him. I believe that the will of God has never been more exactly and luminously expressed than in the doctrine of the Man Christ, but we cannot consider Christ as God, and address prayers to Him without committing in my opinion the greatest sacrileges".

In the conclusion of his letter, the writer points out that his views may hurt or offend some people, or even seem scandalous, but there is no such force that could compel him to change them, for they constitute his personal return to God ("Tolstoy's Creed", *Advertiser* 08.06.1901). The letter published in *Temps* was of great importance to the propaganda of Tolstoy's religious thought around the world, the evidence of which is its summary (with numerous quotes) in an Australian journal. Directly, it was an explanation of the writer's

position on his excommunication by the Holy Synod, a fact which was recorded by the most important media in the world. However, this explanation was not at all a defence, on the contrary, it was a form of ostentatious attack on the doctrines of the Orthodox Church and, more widely, of Christianity. Indeed, it could “scandalise some persons”, which is mentioned in the letter, but those words referred already to the readers of *Temps* and the Western press. It was them who were the proper addressees of Tolstoy’s statement, one that was even shocking but drawing attention in the highest degree to the extreme parameter of his independence. In this case, this parameter had a religious dimension, but it was easily transposed to a worldview and a political dimension, for instance to the writer’s conservative pacifism attested by his statements regarding the Anglo-Boer War and the Russo-Japanese War.

The same issue of the *Advertiser* featured reports from the London *Standard* correspondents from Kyiv and Moscow. The first of them reports that the Russian government is considering banishing Tolstoy, but the opinion that this decision could trigger an outbreak of a national revolution, expressed in the world of bureaucracy and the army, is prevailing. The second reports that – in connection to the excommunication of Tolstoy – many Russians requested the Holy Synod to excommunicate them from the Orthodox Church.

Tolstoy’s letter published in *The Times* on 27 June 1904, regarding the Russo-Japanese War and calling for putting it to an end and introducing peace, was very important for the opinion of the West. In the several days that followed, the letter was written about by the most important British journals as a political sensation, the journals generally presenting Tolstoy’s perspective in an objective way. Besides, it was a previously announced sensation, since already at the beginning of June, the British press informed that the publisher of Free Age Press had just received from Tolstoy an article about the war which was now being translated and would soon be published (*St. James Gazette* 07.06.1904). When it comes to the Australian press, the article published on 6 August 1904 in the Melbourne journal *Argus* is the most interesting one, for the reason that it is highly critical of the writer’s address and – to generalise the matter – is evidence of the change in a part of the Western public opinion towards his position during the ongoing Russo-Japanese War. Even in February of that year, on the wave of fascination with Russia, the Australian press glorified Tolstoy. Left-wing magazines relished the “Colossus of the North” as a “country of revolution” carried out by the “great Russian nation” (“Russia”, *Worker* 12.03.1904). Tolstoy is named among the greatest representatives of the Revolutionary Movement and his name, as that of an exponent of peace and an enemy of tyranny, is uttered next to famed names of Russian anarchists. The *Catholic Press*, published in Sydney, expressed its pro-Russian enthusiasm by reprinting an extensive excerpt from William Thomas Stead’s 1888 book *Truth About Russia*, moving the emboldened passage entitled “I Love the Russian People” to the forefront. The piece also emphasises Stead’s thesis that Russia is “the true peasant Republic” because “mir” (a form of collective use of land) is “the most democratic and socialistic of any institution now existing in all

Europe" (25.02.1904). It was a putting forward of a thesis that Russia is a country of revolution on account of genetic social conditions (it is another thing that the archaic "mir" could later on be associated by sovietologists with the "kolkhoz", that is a collective farm). The passage "As Tolstoy and I Were Talking" features the writer's opinion on "mir". However, the defeats of the Russian army change the perspective on this enthusiasm for Russia. Tolstoy's consistent pacifism, unpopular in Russia, introduces an element of confusion in the Western public opinion and sometimes becomes a reason for criticising the writer, tempered by reports saying that due to his articles opposing the war (specifically, this referred to the article in *The Times* which is discussed below), the authorities intend to condemn him to banishment, send him into exile in Siberia (*Queenslander* 23.07.1904).

The article published in the *Argus* opens with the thought that Tolstoy is a man who is always doing something to spark the interest of the world. This time, it is his 10-column "flaming manifesto" printed in *The Times*. There is a nuance of irritation in referring to Tolstoy's open letter in this way, just as in calling the piece "his last production". The letter – writes the author of the article – will not cause Russians trouble, since the authorities will probably not allow them to familiarise themselves with this document, that is they will not permit it to be reprinted. (Indeed, sending the letter to *The Times* was in itself a rather spectacular measure<sup>4</sup>). Many readers will be delighted by the severe condemnation of Russia, but those who appreciate the sacrifice of the people who participate in the war will feel sorry for "a poor old man". The expression "old man" appears also in another context in the article, connoting the naivety of Tolstoy's attitude, its discrete senility. Tolstoy went through three phases in his attitude towards war. In the first, while serving in the army, "he was an ardent fighter"; in the second, he was describing war, and some scenes from *Sevastopol* and *War and Peace* remain in the reader's memory just like scenes from Shakespeare or Scott. The third phase is the unmasking of war, Tolstoy being a radical unmasker. His attitude towards war takes up most of the manifesto, and it is this issue that the author of the article focuses on, taking an antipacifist position and citing a number of opinions and arguments referring to the nature of war. If wars are so radical and unrelentingly sinful, then where do religious wars come from and why do conflict parties pray for a blessing from the heavens? Presently, we find references to the "Lord of Hosts", not to the "Prince of Peace". Certainly, the author of the article explains, the bud of peace is in the Gospel, but the bud of peace has to slowly develop. And it does develop, besides under the influence of Christianity. It is a slow evolution, and, currently, men are not being killed when their country is conquered, and women are not becoming slaves. Today, in the civilised world – with the exception of barbarians – peace is respected, the evidence of which is the Red Cross organisation and the establishment of the Court in the Hague.

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<sup>4</sup> *Interviu i besedy s L'vom Tolstym*. Ed. V.J. Lakshin. Moskva 1986. See: comment on p. 484.



Tolstoy's idea of surrendering to the enemy instead of fighting with them – the author of the article writes – is irrational and so naïve that a child sees its weakness. Following this logic, one should hand over their property to the burglar. Tolstoy speaks in the name of the Saviour, but the consequence of his idea would be an admission of violence and of Satan. The author of the article argues with Tolstoy, but, as a matter of fact, does not cite his arguments and does not quote him, with the exception of the following metaphor: "When crawling locusts cross rivers, it happens that the lower layers are drowned, until from the bodies is formed a bridge over which the upper ranks can pass. In the same way are the Russian people being disposed 'of'". This bill of indictment of the writer also says that he plays a role similar to that played in England by William Thomas Stead when, during the Boer War, he was publishing appeals for peace "Stop the War" and "Our Brother Boer" which irritated his countrymen, reinforcing the public opinion on the Continent against England (the British press was then writing about Continental Anglophobes). When the nation is in danger, one cannot act in the way Stead and Tolstoy did. The author of the article is offended by Tolstoy's approval of a letter he received from a Russian soldier writing that he does not want any Japanese child to become an orphan because of him. Certainly, the situation of the English is different because mandatory military service does not apply to them, and those who enlist must be subordinated. Whereas in Russia, military service is compulsory, therefore the human conscience is broken when a person is forced to kill. For the author of the article, the exemplar of a patriot is the Iron Duke (1st Duke of Wellington) who was aware of the atrocities of war and tried to minimise the massacres and plunder that are related to it. But he also called on England to remember about its responsibilities and be ready to fight.

Let it be considered a digression, but the condemnation of Stead and Tolstoy requires a certain comment. Here the most famous journalist and the most famous writer in the world – who knew each other personally – had the courage to oppose their own public opinion by displaying an attitude of consistent and extreme pacifism. But it was not either of them who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1904 or 1905 (in fact, they never received it). It could be said that they were the most interesting minority in the international public opinion, speaking against the governments of their countries, in a sense contesting their power status. They were taking upon themselves a considerable moral responsibility and constituted an overt or more discrete object of attack, which, besides, was building their media position in the world. In the age of the Boer War, Stead was attacked for the "Peace Crusade" and reminded that his beloved Tolstoy was not, fortunately, naïve in regards to the peaceful intentions of the tsar and was not forgetting about the political victims of the regime: "Poor Mr. Stead! If there is one person on earth whom he has exalted in season and out that individual is Count Tolstoi. Nobody – he has told us again and again – understand Russia half so well as this apostolic Slav. And now lo!" (*Express and Telegraph* 28.03.1899). Indeed, Tolstoy's views on the war in South Africa were different from Stead's. The British press carefully recorded the Russian writer's statements, for example his interview in the Moscow journal *Russkij Listok*, in which

he weighted the arguments of both sides of the conflict (*Warwick and Warwickshire Advertiser* 03.02.1900). *The Times* correspondent in St. Petersburg informed about Tolstoy's refusal to send a telegram for the Boer delegation in the United States, which he was asked to do by an American press agency (*Dundee Evening Telegraph* 29.05.1900). It was surely satisfying for the British public opinion. The Australian press showed interest in Tolstoy's position as well, for example reprinting his letter to the Brussels *Le Soir*, in which he took the side of neither the Transvaal people nor the British, seeing the causes of the war in the nature of the human being and the condition of the civilisation based on an uneven distribution of property across the world, class exploitation, the interest of the military caste, and the deceptive and false doctrines that took root in the young generation (*The Maitland Daily Mercury* 03.07.1900).

Perhaps Tolstoy's reserve towards the British, which emerged undisguised in Isabel Florence Hapgood's account published in 1891 in the magazine *Atlantic*, played a certain role in his approach to this war. The American translator and writer visited Tolstoy in summer 1889 and engaged with him in a number of conversations. In one of them, the writer talked about the English in a very brutal manner. He stated that they were the most astounding nation in the world, professing the faith in physical strength, having an inclination for wars and executions. The Russian civilisation is heavy, certainly, but even the most stern Russian shrinks from killing. An English, however, if it was not for the fear of himself, would devour the body of his own father<sup>5</sup>. Tolstoy sometimes expressed his anti-English prejudices. The *Saturday Review*, a London weekly newspaper, published his emotional words against the decadent taste of the British readers on the occasion of the writer's 80th birthday. The editorial staff took advantage of Tolstoy's agitation, adding an ironic comment to the text. The Russian writer, proclaiming unfeasible social and political views – the author of the comment judges – enjoys the fame of the most profound living writer, equalled only by the English writer George Eliot. Indeed, the contemporary English novel is lamentable, but what is the use of establishing this obvious fact? An average six-shilling novel is not good for anyone. But in most countries, including Russia, France, and Germany, there are a few writers who do good work. Even poor Scandinavia – the commentator says with irony – can pride itself on Ibsen (Tolstoy despised him), Bjørnson, Prydz. Tolstoy certainly found his admirers in England, but – as the commentator emphasises – he cannot be an oracle in regards to the taste of novel readers (*Australasian* 24.10.1908).

### **The Book Market. Paragons and Rankings**

The Australian book market was an extension of the British market. It was attractive for the British publishers, such as, for instance, Walter Scott Publishing Co. A certain note emphasised the significance of the founder of this publishing house (Walter Scott, 1st Baronet

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<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, p. 67.

of Beauclerc, 1826-1910) in the development of the railway system, pointing out that he is more widely known as one of the most enterprising British publishers, famous for publishing English classics and the works of world-class writers, such as Ibsen and Tolstoy. It was stressed that English readers are thankful to him for the earliest possible familiarity with the works of both those notabilities (*Sunday Sun* 29.12.1907). Indeed, the presence of this publishing house on the Australian market was confirmed by the constant offer of its books set out in advertisements printed in the Australian press. Naturally, an advertisement must be distinguished from a notice about a book. Notices are contained in columns titled mainly *New Books*, *Books*, and *Recent Publications*, *New Books Recently Added*, *Books Up To Date*, or *New and Forthcoming Books* printed in fixed places in the newspapers; they have a general character, that is they include only the name of the writer and the title of the work. Meanwhile, advertisements contain one more detail apart from those, one that is important as part of an offer, namely the price of the book. Generally, advertisements rarely include the name of the publisher and, even less often – in the case of translations – the name of the translator. However, in large-format advertisements, the names of publishers offering book series is definitely moved to the forefront. It was a commercial undertaking, aiming to attach the reader to a purchase of a title they find interesting, and sometimes to compiling a given series and making it an element of a home or public library. An example is the *Masterpiece Library* series published by William Thomas Stead, made up of 108 volumes “for one pound”; the list of advertised authors included Tolstoy’s name as well (*Daily News* 19.12.1896). It also appears on *The Library of Famous Literature* series list, comprised of 20 volumes and advertised as “the Most Readable work Ever Offered to Australians”; its editor was Richard Garnett. The content of volume XIX was defined in the two opening sentences in this way: “Russia is a world power in literature as in politics. That strange Titan, Count Tolstoy, is well represented in the Library, as also are Pushkin, Turgenev, and the humorus Gogol”. Following the Russian writers, enumerated were names of, among others, Kipling, Zola, and Flaubert. The Russian brand was in this case the most important. The books were advertised as “A Most Appropriate Christmas Gift” (*Coolgardie Miner* 07.12.1901). In the *Contemporary Authors in Their Homes* series, comprised of more than 20 items and presenting the life and work of contemporary creators, Tolstoy’s name is also included, as well as those of Ibsen, Ruskin, and Daudet (*Bendigo Advertiser* 21.08.1901). Book series from specific publishers must be distinguished from collections of books issued by different publishers but offered by the papers’ editorial staffs under such names as *Standard Literature for Country Readers* (*Australian Star* 02.11.1895). In a large-format advertisement printed in this journal, singled out were such sections as “The Sixpenny Library” or “One Shilling Library”, where Tolstoy’s work *Family Happiness* was advertised. A given book could be purchased by sending the equivalence of its price in postage stamps to the editorial office. Book trade was also carried out by specialised businesses, such as, for example, the company E.S. Wigg & Son from Adelaide, which sold office supplies as well. It advertised books under the headline *Books, Stationery* in sets titled “Good Shilling

Novels" (including Tolstoy's *Kreutzer Sonate*) and "For Summer Reading" (*Advertiser* 23.01.1891).

The titles of Tolstoy's works appeared very often in columns devoted to new titles and book advertisements. Until the year 1914, the following titles were present on the Australian market (the years are provided in parentheses, without specifying the title of the paper, since a given work was sometimes advertised several times and in several different periodicals): *War and Peace. Before Tilsit; The Invasion; The French at Moscow* (1889, *The Invasion* 1896), *My Religion* (1889, 1890), *Anna Karenina* (1889, 1890, 1904, and 1911 in French), *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1890, 1891, 1892), *Works* (1890; in one of the papers, Tolstoy's name was announced as "the Russian prototype of Dickens"), *My Confession* (1890, 1892, also under the title *Vicious Pleasures*), *Sevastopol* (1890), *Childhood, Boyhood, Youth* (1890), *The Long Exile* (1890), *Work While Ye Have the Light* (1891, 1904), *The Old Devil and the Three Little Devils* (1892), *My Husband and I* (1892), *The Cossacks* (1892), *Boyhood* (1894), *The Kingdom of God is Within You* (1894), *The Four Gospels* (1895), *Master and Man* (1895, 1896), *The Physiology of War. Napoleon and The Russian Campaign* (1896), *The Invasion* (1896), *Family Happiness* (1896), *Resurrection* (1903, 1905, 1900 in French), *Life and Teaching of Leo Tolstoy* (1904), *What is Art?* (1905), *The One Thing Needful* (1906), *A Great Iniquity* (1906), *Immunity* (1909), *Great Works* (1913). The list shows that the year 1899 and the 1890s saw the most editions of Tolstoy's works, not reprinted in the first decade of the 20th century despite the immense interest in the views of the Russian writer. However, his new works, such as *Resurrection* (first printing 1899) were reaching the market.

The lists of new titles and advertisements were accompanied by such columns as *Literature, Current Literature, Literary Lines, Books and Bookmen, or Literary Notes*. They contained news that can be given the name of "literary life" and that were for various reasons interesting for the reader. The columns informed about, for instance, the translation of *The Kreutzer Sonata* into Czech and the confiscation of the print run of this work by the Austrian authorities (*Telegraph* 23.08.1890), about Isabel Florence Hapgood's English translation of *Sevastopol*, with the mention of the name of the publishing house Walter Scott and Co. (*Argus* 05.04.1890) which also published "a wonderful little pocket edition of Tolstoy's 'Master and Man', illustrated, on toned paper, in small, clear print, with wide margins" (*Daily Telegraph* 27.07.1895). Announced was the new novel by the author of *Résurrection*, a novel which was just finished and the profit from which the author assigned to charity (*Le Courrier Australien* 24.12.1898). Opinions about the book were voiced (*Register* 01.07.1901) as well as opinions about the view of the writer who believed that if a simple person does not understand some musical or literary work, such work is not art (the *Sydney Sun* 23.07.1910, as cited in the *The Times* in London). The daily press also informed about the content of literary magazines, usually in the form of paid advertisements. For instance, the January issue of *The Review of Reviews* was advertised as containing several articles, including "Count Tolstoy and the Russian Famine" (*North Coast Standard* 05.03.1892). In the November issue of the *North American Review*, one of the pieces expressed indignation at the order of the Postmaster-General of the United States prohibiting the distribution of

Tolstoy's *The Kreutzer Sonata* by post, which, besides, excited an interest in the story (*Argus* 22.11.1890). As is evident, the work was not only confiscated by the Russian and Austrian authorities but also subjected to another form of restrictions by the American post. In an advertisement of the content of the periodical, *The Sydney Mail* calls a piece devoted to Tolstoy's death "An Interesting Illustrated Article" (*Argus* 26.11.1910).

A literary work is a book product intended for sale, having its market price behind which is the publishers' calculation for profit. But it is also an artistic work which has a non-commercial and autotelic value. As such it is judged by literary critics, that is professionals paid for by the editorial staff not for the advertising of a product but for an opinion on it that could interest the reader. Naturally, reviews may contain surreptitious advertising, what is more, they may be written not only by professionals but also by amateurs and dilettantes if they are allowed to take the floor publicly. In any case, on the book market, the correlate of a work is the information about it as about a book and its advertisement, expressed in the price, while on the review market, the correlate of a work is not its price but the evaluation of its artistic value. This evaluation may have a general character and regard the work or specific works of a given writer, or be a more detailed one, especially when the author's achievements are compared to the achievements of other authors from the past or the present. Such comparisons – and a literary critic is in the domain of constant judgement about values and of adopting the position of comparative readiness – may be called paragoning (as examples of paragoning).

The general evaluation of Tolstoy's work in the Australian press (in large measure borrowed from the British press) is enthusiastic, finding in his works the genius of Russian spirituality. One of the critics (the name was not provided) declared that Tolstoy was in the forefront of the living writers, calling him "the Rembrandt of his race", who "has painted the Russians for themselves, and in the maturity of time for humanity". But this man is more exceptional than his books, since he gives up his high social position and wealth, instead working in the field like an ordinary peasant. He strives towards the moral rebirth of his compatriots by showing them ardent compassion and practical fulfilment of the teachings of Christ (*Argus* 20.10.1888 as cited in *The Westminster Review*). One of the articles has the characteristic title "Russia and Her Literature" and it opens with the opinion that the growing role of Russia in Europe and its influence on the history of the world make it absolutely necessary for the British to become acquainted with the customs, politics, and literature of this great *terra incognita*. And making this acquaintance is possible to the fullest extent through the works of Russian literature. The author of the piece performs a short overview of the literary production pertaining to Russia, including an article published in the *American Century Magazine*. The conclusion of this overview is that in the Anglo-Saxon world, Tolstoy is the most famous Russian writer, as the author of such great works as *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, valued also across Australia. After Tolstoy, the most popular Russian writer in English translation is Ivan Turgenev (*Colac Herald* 20.06.1890). A review of Ignaty Potapenko's novel

*A Russian Priest* opens with the sentence: "Novels are sometimes better than newspapers for giving a picture at once faithful and vivid of contemporary things". This sentence unfolds into the thought that Potapenko describes a countryside which is contemporary but as if known to the reader from the older novels by Turgenev and Tolstoy (*Narracan Shire Advocate* 14.11.1891 as cited in *Pall Mall Gazette*). Therefore, Russia is – in short – Russian literature. One of the critics matched the descriptions of the countries of the world to the authors describing them. In England, the works of Thackeray and Dickens enjoy an enduring fame; recently, popularity is enjoyed by George Eliot. Enumerated are writers who represent images of the United States, Africa, and India (Kipling). The Scandinavian world is embodied in the writing of Bjørnsen and Ibsen, while the Russian world – in the writing of Tolstoy and Gorki (*Daily Telegraph* 03.05.1902). Years later, the same journal presented a similar list but with another detailed "geography" of names pertaining to the parts of the world and parts of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Here appears the name of the Australian writer Edward Dyson, and Russia – just like ten years earlier – is represented by Tolstoy's name, to which was added in parentheses: "of course", as well as that of Gorki (*Daily Telegraph* 20.04.1912).

Paragons appear in different circumstances. In an unsigned correspondence from London, there is a statement about the tone of melancholy and despair pervading new literature and coming from the North and the East of Europe. This tone is evident in the dramas of Ibsen and novels of Tolstoy (*Sydney Morning Herald* 06.06.1891). The combination Ibsen – Tolstoy reappears often in different kinds of paragons, sometimes in an irreverent manner as an imaginary problem of the "Tolstoy and Ibsen" kind that has no importance for humanity (*Argus* 17.10.1896). But this combination showed a constant persistence, appearing in later literary criticism papers (*Sun* 08.11.1913). The praise for the English writer George Gissing is accompanied by the opinion that his works express a gloomy and pessimistic tone and that they lack idealism. Because of this, he cannot be included in the list of the greatest masters of the novel (he does not stand the comparison with them), such as Scott, Thackeray, George Eliot, Balzac, Turgenev, and Tolstoy (the opinion mentioned above referred exactly to the tone of melancholy and despair of this writer) (*Australasian* 17.07.1897). The criterion of artistic mastery may be the profundity of description of the human nature, expressed in the works of Shakespeare, Balzac, Turgenev, and Tolstoy; it is an honourable paragon for Russian writers (*Argus* 02.01.1897). Years later, the same periodical, in a report about the arrest of Maxim Gorki, features one more specific list, namely a list of the most prominent Russian writers imprisoned or persecuted by the authorities. It is a list of glory which features the names of Dostoyevsky, Turgenev, and Tolstoy (*Argus* 02.02.1905). Thomas Power O'Connor, a famous Irish journalist and politician, published an article comparing Henryk Sienkiewicz to Tolstoy in the British periodical MAP. According to him, the Polish writer is influenced by the style of the greatest works by the author of *War and Peace*, however in the novel *Quo Vadis*, Sienkiewicz was fortunate to take up the subject of the early days of Christianity and he described it with such a literary gift and in such a dignified way that he can safely be named

“an enormous genius”. It can be presumed that the print run of *Quo Vadis* may exceed 800,000 copies, that is more than the copies of the previous record holder, Lewis Wallace’s *Ben Hur* (*Inquirer and Commercial News* 07.06.1901). The paragons in which the name of Tolstoy appeared are a collection of names of the international elite of writers, including Shakespeare, Dickens, Balzac, Ibsen, or Rousseau. An example may be a mention related to that last name, included in an article about Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s 200th birthday:

“Need we say that much of Russian literature, as far as it is not the expression of the Slav nature, is Rousseauism transplanted to a chilly atmosphere and ungenial soil? Even Tolstoy, with all his many special gifts, may be said to be the continuer of that long line which Jean Jacques was the first” (*Register* 10.08.1912).

One could say that for his contemporary generation, Tolstoy was a living classic author who in his statements referred to the most current problems troubling the present-day world. He was therefore the leader of the public opinion, a voice from Russia respected by the most important agencies and press titles released in the West.

The concept of the book market connotes the publishers’ ceaseless rivalry over the reader, which is evident especially in the area of advertisement. But there are also other types of measures, a spectacular form of which is rankings and different kinds of bestseller lists. The last two decades of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, until the outbreak of the Great War, are a period of intensifying rivalry between the great powers, of exceptional development of science and technology, manifested in such new products as the car, the aeroplane, the telephone, the ocean liner. The Nobel Prize is a symbolic evidence of the elevation of science to an almost religious dignity, and inventions are an object of general admiration. Another element is sports which also becomes a cultural extension of the international rivalry which is getting more and more militarised. Records and the repeatedly broken records of speed of cars and aeroplanes take a prominent place in the news columns in the press, just like important political events. The spirit of record-mania and ranking-mania becomes omnipresent and it would be difficult to imagine a journal that does not give in to it. Books were also subject to the influence of this spirit, which manifested in the trend to classify authors and their works according to, most often, the criterion of popularity. In 1891, Tolstoy himself penned a list of more than 50 books which influenced his views and life, naming, among others, the works of Sterne, Rousseau, Schiller, Goethe, George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans), and Henry George<sup>6</sup>. The list of the writer’s favourite authors (Marcus Aurelius, Plato, Epictetus, Cicero, Confucius, Rousseau, Voltaire, Lessing, Kant, Schopenhauer, Emerson, Channing, Ruskin) appears in the Australian press as well (*Australasian* 07.10.1905).

Those kinds of lists were made by writers, literary critics, editors of specialist journals and popular papers, and, in general, people who were asked to do so. Generally, it can be said

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<sup>6</sup> Online sources such as *Tolstoy’s Reading List* and *Leo Tolstoy Makes List of the 50+*.

that Tolstoy is constantly present on those lists. Here are some examples. In the article "Novelists on Novels" (*Leader* 07.09.1889), several significant British writers, such as Robert William Buchanan, Hall Caine, Joseph Hatton, Justin McCarthy, talked about their favourite books. They gave dozens of names of classic authors, such as Cervantes, Defoe, Scott, Thackeray, Hugo, Dumas, Balzac. Vernon Lee, however, (which is the pseudonym of the British writer Violet Paget) gives only two names: Tolstoy, the author of *War and Peace* and Stendhal, the author of *The Charterhouse of Parma*. Two authors also included Turgenev and Dostoyevsky on their lists. Apart from the names of Russian writers, no other represents the Slavic world. The world of the Slavs – and this is the case in other rankings as well – is first of all the Russian world. It will only be Sienkiewicz's *Quo Vadis* that slightly cracks this hegemony, but not as much as to shake the identification: the Slavic equals the Russian. On a similar list made by writers and authors hidden behind pseudonyms and recording between a few and over a dozen most popular writers from the ancient times on, Tolstoy's name appears again (*The Daily Telegraph* 28.10.1901). The London monthly magazine *The Bookman* compiled a list of the most significant writers revealing their presence in works of an autobiographical character. Next to the works of Shakespeare, Byron, Balzac, Dickens, Thackeray, Huysmans, and several other British and – which was quite surprising – American authors (Richard Grant White, Nathaniel Hawthorne), Tolstoy's *Resurrection* was also listed (*Australasian* 06.02.1904).

All-time best lists had the greatest breadth, usually taking the form of a round number of the most valuable works of the world literature. An example is the list "The Best Hundred Novels" compiled by the prominent British literary critic Clement King Shorter for *The Bookman* (*Queenslander* 09.04.1898). The list consists of 100 titles, each accompanied by the date of its publication and the name of the author, and it is – which differentiates it from many others – arranged chronologically; it opens with Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, and is concluded by *Le Rêve* by Émile Zola. British and French classic novels prevail on the list, but it also includes four German works (their authors are Goethe, Wilhelm Hauff, Gustav Freytag, and Joseph Victor von Scheffel) and three Russian ones: Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*, Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, and Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. Russian literature is then in the fourth place in the international ranking. This list does not include any other Slavic names. Other countries "are represented" by single names (Alessandro Manzoni, Giovanni Ruffini, Harriet Beecher Stowe). At the end, Shorter lists his eight favourite novels by living authors, among them Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* and *An Egyptian Princess* by Georg Ebers, a German Egyptologist and novelist (although his work did not end up on the said list of 100 best novels).

A list of 100 best novels was also published by the London *Daily Telegraph* (*Advertiser* 28.04.1900). The record-breakers here are Walter Scott, with 7 novel titles, and Dickens, with 5, and the list is comprised almost entirely of names of British and French classic authors. The rest of Europe is represented by Tolstoy, the author of *Anna Karenina*, and Henryk Sienkiewicz, the author of *Quo Vadis* (as is evident, this novel, published in 1896, very quickly found



recognition in those kinds of rankings). The list "The Twelve Best Novels" was compiled as the results of a survey conducted among specialists hidden behind pseudonyms whose choices were recorded separately and from which choices the most often mentioned titles and authors were then isolated (*Argus* 08.03.1905). The list opens with Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (101 votes), Dickens's *David Copperfield* is in the second place, Blackmore's *Lorna Doone* in the third, Scott's *Ivanhoe* in the fourth. It is a remarkably British list, and the only exception is Dumas with his two novels in the 9th and 11th place (*The Count of Monte Cristo* and *The Three Musketeers*). A comment mentions the works that received a significant number of votes but did not make it onto the list, among them those by Victor Hugo, Tolstoy, Flaubert, and the Hungarian writer Maurice Jokai. The most popular American writer was considered to be Winston Churchill, the author of the bestseller *Richard Carvel*, and, among others, Jack London. Votes were also cast for novels by Australian writers: *For the Term of His Natural Life* by Marcus Clarke and *Robbery Under Arms* by Rolf Boldrewood (the pseudonym of Thomas Alexander Browne). Apart from those kinds of lists prepared as a numerical abstract from votes cast by interlocutors, the Australian press features not only rankings but also statements regarding reading preferences, sometimes contained in such columns as *Favorite Reading* (*Worker* 12.11.1908). The list, sent to the editorial staff by Robert McLean from Harrow, opens with Tolstoy's *Resurrection* and *My Religion*. Among women authors, he distinguishes the novel *Senator North* by the American writer Gertrude Atherton. He also highly values the novel *Such is Life* by the Australian writer Henry Lawson.

The surveys created by the editors of periodicals and aimed at eminent personages of the public life should also be regarded in the context of rankings. The answers included in them gave the reader the possibility to compare what politicians, writers, people of culture and science think about a given subject (for example the Boer War). The editors knew very well that issues containing those answers would increase the periodical's popularity with the readers, so they sometimes dosed the responses out in batches. The world of paragons, comparisons of artistic achievements of various creators, was not unknown to Tolstoy, which is visible even in his *Journals*. He liked surveys and answered them. The first two sentences of Viktor Shklovsky's outstanding monograph devoted to Tolstoy state that the writer loved the "questions and answers" game, created home newspapers, "even preferred to write than talk", and his daughter Tatiana kept a book "containing a collection of a sort of surveys" that were answered by the family<sup>7</sup>. Tolstoy answered a letter signed by prominent Swedish personages regarding an inquiry in the Finnish question; it was also a sort of answer to a survey (*Evening News* 20.05.1899). He also took a stand in response to Sienkiewicz's survey regarding the Polish matters (*Daily Telegraph* 02.01.1909).

### Cultural and Art Space

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<sup>7</sup> W. Szklowski: *Lew Tolstoj. Biografia*. Transl. R. Granas. Warsaw 2008, p. 11.

Books are objects of trade, but their value cannot be reduced to the market price, since they do not get used up like other products and they are not for one-off consumption. In home libraries and in public libraries, they serve generations of readers, making up a significant cultural space. There, the presence of copies of works by a given writer is therefore an important element of perceiving their significance in libraries, and thus also in the consciousness of the Australian readers. The situation is similar in the case of public lectures and readings, a form of popularising cultural and scientific knowledge that was then valued all around the world. Readings devoted to literature enjoyed an immense popularity, and the function of this popularity was a constant development of readership. Attention then has to be given not only to Tolstoy in book advertising but also the presence of his works on library shelves and the presence of his name as the subject of public readings. A particular bloom of culture is art which also constitutes an important social need, satisfied mostly by the theatre. It was seeking to extend the classical repertoire to include not only original dramatic works but also adaptations of epic works, as for example in the case of Wilson Barrett's famous spectacles at the turn of the 19th and 20th century, and then film which also used novelistic plots. It is therefore fitting to consider the question of the presence of Tolstoy's works in the Australian theatre whose audience could be attracted by the well-known name of the Russian writer. Added to that is the success of the film adaptation of *Resurrection* in the Australian cinemas, a picture produced in the United States in 1909.

The Australian press appreciated the significance of libraries and often recorded their acquisition of new books. An example may be a certain note which says that The Library Committee, wishing to support The Institute Library (there is no specific information about the character of these institutions), gave it the funds to buy the first batch of books. The editorial staff's comment about the list of the purchased books, which opens with Tolstoy's name, is interesting:

"We notice a number of standard works in the list, by Tolstoy, Balzac, Lumholtz, and others of like reputation. 'Among Cannibals' by the last named author, 'Rough Notes of a Traveller' by Dobbie, and 'Blacks and Bushrangers', by Kennedy, should find a large circle of readers. The latest works of Clarke Russell, Crawford, Hall, Haggard, Kipling, Craic, Payne, Farjeon and other authors of light reading are also to hand (*Port Augusta Dispatch, Newcastle and Flinders Chronicle* 30.10.1891).

An picture of the purchasing committee's taste, probably very similar to the readers' preferences, emerges from the list. The list is dual but asymmetrical, since, on the one hand, it features the names of only two classics of literature (Tolstoy, Balzac), on the other, the names and titles of works by authors read eagerly by a wider audience, consisting by large of travel and adventure writing. The reader was attracted by the world of the Australian exotic, as in the case of the mentioned works by the Norwegian ethnographer and traveller Carl Lumholtz

and the British traveller Edward B. Kennedy, as well as the exotic of other countries in the world, for example Sri Lanka and the Arabian countries (the buoyant Australian entrepreneur Alexander Williamson Dobbie), India (Rudyard Kipling), or Africa (Henry Rider Haggard).

A library in a psychiatric hospital could be described as a specific one. A certain detailed description of the everyday life of the boarders in such a medical facility includes observations regarding their preferences and the used therapy methods. One of them was music, by means of which the emotions of the patients were affected, another was "recreation" brought about by means of book reading. Today, those methods are described as art therapy and bibliotherapy. The patients take the most pleasure in books, illustrated magazines and journals, including the *Daily News* published in Perth. The library has several hundred carefully selected volumes, among them sets of works by Dickens, Thackeray, Bulwer-Lytton, Scott, and Lever, as well as selected works by, among others, Rider Haggard, Mrs. Henry Wood (Ellen Price), and Tolstoy. The greatest popularity is enjoyed by Charles Lever, followed by Edward Bulwer-Lytton and Charles Dickens. Tolstoy's *War and Peace* is also quite well known, while Thackeray's works do not get much admiration from the readers because – as the author of the description maliciously says – they are too complicated and intricate to gain approval in an institution dominated by a strict diet, weak tea, and feeble intellect (Lex., "The Lunatic Asylum", *Daily News* 05.07.1892).

It is interesting to look at the data presented by the Melbourne Public Library. In the year 1901, 7 000 readers borrowed 140 000 volumes. 63% of the borrowed books were literary works. The list of the most often read writers opens with Kipling, Stevenson, Dickens, Verne, Dumas, as well as, among others, Thackeray, Scott, Balzac, George Eliot, Marcus Clarke, Daudet, Haggard, Lever. The works of Tolstoy and Turgenev enjoy a lesser popularity, but theirs are the only names of Slavic writers mentioned (*Euroa Advertiser* 28.03.1902).

The editors of Australian papers organised competitions for descriptions of home libraries. The first prize in one of such competitions was awarded to an author signed with the pseudonym Nemo ("Our Bookshelf", *Observer* 02.12.1905). The book list he provides is impressive as to the quantity, and yet it is still – as he pointed out – incomplete, since it does not include, for example, scientific works or all the poets. The classics of the British novel prevail, the lack of French names on the list is noticeable (there are a few American ones), and "continental" literature seems to be represented by the exception that is Tolstoy, the author of *The Simple Life*. The library of the contest winner includes a separate biography section represented by, among other titles, *The Life of Goethe* by George Henry Lewis, *The Life of John Ruskin* by Oliver Wendell Holmes, *The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson* by Graham Balfour, and *The Childhood and Youth of Dickens* by Robert Langton. Another separate section is for works by Australian writers: Rolf Boldrewood, Marcus Clarke, Simpson Newland, and Ethel Turner. Titles of travel books (including two about Siberia) catch the eye as well. The winner of the second place created a rich list of British classics, too, but also showed the presence of writers from the United States, leading in the world, in his library. He rated the American prose as

healthy, wise, and well-written. The fact of American writers being in fashion is mentioned by Mabel Morrison, the winner of the third place in the contest.

The subject of readership and his own library was discussed by the mentioned prominent literary critic Shorter ("Books Make The Best Furniture", By Clement K[ing] Shorter, author of *Charlotte Brontë and Her Circle, Sixty Years of Victorian Literature*, etc., etc., *West Australian* 09.05.1906). He opened by praising booklovers who value books for the ideas contained in them, for the emotions and the lessons they teach. However, they are an elect group, since the general public, that does not buy books nor borrow them from libraries, prevails. Subsequently, he described his literary preferences and the contents of his own impressive library; he also provided a profile of the publishing houses and the book series they publish. He emphasised that he has on his shelves the complete collection of works by Scott, Dumas, and Tolstoy in different forms published by the London publisher J.M. Dent and Vermont Charles E. Tuttle. Only Tolstoy represents the Russian and Slavic literary production, besides, even works of French writers are scarce in this library. It is a Victorian taste that reigns there.

Knowledge about Tolstoy's works was popularised in the form of public lectures and readings. One of the lectures was especially spectacular (*Argus* 13.07.1900). The University of Melbourne music professor George Marshall-Hall, known as a scandalmonger because of his views, referred during the lecture to the announced Beethoven concert in the Town Hall. But he touched upon Tolstoy's *The Kreutzer Sonata*, telling the students that they should acquire and read this work. A member of the University Council whose daughter was present at the lecture addressed the professor with a courteously expressed reproof saying that Tolstoy's book is not appropriate to be recommended to young ladies. As a result, a discussion broke out during which the professor was also the target of accusations that he is an adherent of "an immoral anti-marriage doctrine". It is an interesting contribution to the legend of Tolstoy's immoralism not only in Russia, in the West of Europe, or in the United States, but also in the antipodes.

The advertisement page in one of the journals included an announcement of a reading by Mr. Martin, "The Life and Message of Leo Tolstoi" (part of the "Sunday Night Lectures" series), with the comment "Collection to defray expenses" and the signature of the secretary H. Glance (*Kalgoorlie Miner* 29.04.1905). The list of cultural events includes a mention of a lecture "Tolstoi and Shakespeare" by doctor Bevan which is to take place in Melbourne, in the Independent Hall at Collins Street (*Argus* 11.04.1908).

An announcement published by the Stow Memorial Church in Adelaide, about a week-long church event endorsed by Rev. Alfred Gifford, is very interesting (*Register* 19.11.1910). The programme includes prayers and hymns but also addresses (it is difficult to say whether these are readings of the writer's texts or readings about him): "Readings from Tolstoy" and "Count Tolstoy – the Man and His Message". In this case, the announcement can be treated as a contribution to the legend of the writer's holiness. When it comes to the event itself, it may

have been the quickest in the world religious reaction (commemorative in function) to the news of the writer's death. The writer died on 20 November 1910, but if the time difference between London and Adelaide is taken into account, this supposition cannot be ruled out. All the more so because the news of the writer's death – before it really took place – could have appeared earlier, which is shown by the dementi: "The report of the death of Count Tolstoy is not true" (*Manilla Express* 19.11.1910). Tolstoy's death was also commemorated by the Christ Church (Congregational) in Launceston, Tasmania. The ceremony was led by Rev. Sidney J. Baker and it comprised of three parts: "A New Song", "Count Tolstoy. Reformer. Peace Advocate. Prophet", and "Anthem 'I will Lift up Mine Eyes'". Illustrations titled "The Funeral of Tolstoy" were published by the *Pathe's Animated Gazette* (*West Australian* 12.01.1911).

The most popular and attractive visual form was moving pictures (film). In one of the large-format advertisements, the King's Pictures cinema invited to come see "the fine biographical study": THE LIFE OF TOLSTOI (*Brisbane Courier* 20.07.1911)<sup>8</sup>. Those pictures showing the life of the "great Russian writer" were also the first event during the outdoor screenings of Dutton Park Continentals in Brisbane, to be followed by the screening of "two fun examples of the popular western dramas" (*Brisbane Courier* 02.09.1911). Earlier, in Ballarat, in the Alfred Hall, there were screenings of the film "Count Tolstoy's Funeral" (most probably by Drankov) alongside the comedy and suspense productions (*Ballarat Star* 06.01.1911). Thus, the writer's death caused a strong cultural reaction, which was evident – to put it symbolically – in the space of the Church (tradition) as well as the space of cinema and entertainment (modernity).

When it comes to the theatre, Henry Bataille and Michael Morton's stage adaptation of Tolstoy's novel *Resurrection* which was staged in Australia enjoyed an enormous popularity. The premiere took place in His Majesty's Theatre in London in February 1903, and its announcement appeared in the Australian press ("A Woman's Letter From London", *Sydney Morning Herald* 07.02.1903; the correspondence is situated: London, Jan.1.). The premiere ("first night") was attended by a person who was sending her correspondence to Australian journals and signing her name as "Penelope", and it is not out of the question that it was, in fact, the author of the abovementioned letters from London (*Western Mail* 04.04.1903, the correspondence is situated: London. February 24). She was describing news from the world of politics, art, and fashion, but most of all she was interested in the theatre. Her impressions from the premiere were exceedingly positive, which she expressed in her review that was part of the correspondence. The show drew an enormous number of the "first nighters" who filled all the seats in the theatre. The general characterisation of the work: "'Resurrection' is a strange

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<sup>8</sup> It was most probably a collection of technically good films by Alexander Drankov, made in the years 1908–1910, featuring Tolstoy and his family, the manor in Yasnaya Polyana, landscapes, locomotive scenes, and the writer on his deathbed, as well as the course of the funeral rites. A 46 minute-long film has been available on YouTube since 2018, but it does not include all Drankov's films (for example the one showing Tolstoy at a car race; this film was described in Shklovsky's aforementioned monograph).

and pathetic story of Russia – of Russian life and the suffering and horrors of Siberia” (which Penelope associates with the “old Russian love story” of Tom Taylor’s *The Serf*), is completed by its summary accompanied by a very positive opinion on the acting of the performers: Beerbohm Tree and Lena Ashwell (starring as Nekhlyudov and Katyusha). The review’s conclusion is as follows: “‘Resurrection’ is altogether a very fine production, the staging as is always the case under the management of Mr. Tree, absolutely perfect and artistic to the smallest detail, and is yet another interesting and successful venture on the part of our most enterprising London manager”.

Indeed, Beerbohm Tree was a very enterprising manager who was thinking, with a global flourish, of moving the adaptation to Australian theatres (the second show was to be *The Eternal City* based on Hall Caine’s work). Already in April 1903, the Australian press features the news that in September, His Majesty’s Theatre will present *Resurrection* in Australia, and the Australian manager James Classius Williamson will be working with Beerbohm Tree (*Herald* 24.04.1903, in *The Stage* column). Another news (*Sydney Morning Herald* 27.06.1903, in the *Music and Drama* column) is accompanied by a critical comment referring first of all to whether the Australian audience will be watching the “original” that was staged in London, since the cast of the show will be definitely changed (essentially, the actors did not decide to go to the antipodes, among them Lena Ashwell). The illusion of the original is to be ensured by the photographs of the main stages from the London show that were sent to Williamson (the approaching 30th anniversary of this actor-manager’s debut in Australia was recorded). The set decorations will be made by John Gordon and George Dixon. Beerbohm Tree will sail out to Australia on the ship *Orizaba* on 3 July, while the new leading actors (Julius Knight and Maud Jeffries) will sail two weeks later on the *Orient*. Indeed, the journey did take place and the company of artists arrived on the R.M.S. *Orient* (“A New Theatrical Company”, *Argus* 27.08.1903). The note includes some information about the actors taking part in the journey whose aim is to stage several new plays in Australia. The first one will be *The Resurrection* in Melbourne, at Her Majesty’s Theatre, directed by James Classius Williamson (he named the theatre following the death of Queen Victoria in order to commemorate her). The most interesting part of the note is the words of the leading actor, Julius Knight. After gracious words expressing his great pleasure at visiting Australia once more, he explained that the readers of Tolstoy’s great work may not have very good impressions while watching it on stage. That is because certain unpleasant conjunctures were eliminated from the novelistic original, while its lighter side was highlighted due to the demands of the stage. The actor recalled a few scenes from the play, especially the judgement scene played as “a fine dramatic composition” and “the gorgeous snow scene on the road to Siberia, where the play ends”. The theatrical effect is also achieved through the contrast between the great Russian drawing room and the loathsome prison. It appears that Knight’s opinion points to the commercial character of the adaptation of Tolstoy’s work; after all, the theatre company’s escapade was costly.

Furthermore, in the case of this adaptation, the creators most probably reckoned with the standard of Victorian morality, which required a discrete elimination of “the disagreeable”.

One of the notes announcing the show opens with the reflection that everything that is Russian and comes from the country of the great White Tzar is specifically attractive for the Australian theatre enthusiasts, the evidence of which was the success of *Fédora* (by Victorien Sardou) and similar plays. Russian costumes and customs as illustrations of events playing out against the background of the truly Russian landscape are already attractive for the audience. It will await with curiosity the performances of Julius Knight who made an excellent impression as Marcus Superbus in *The Sign of the Cross* (it was Wilson Barrett’s great undertaking) and the audience’s favourite star Maud Jeffries. The cast of carefully selected English actors, picked by Beerbohm Tree – this is the last sentence of the note – should make the upcoming season a considerable success for Her Majesty’s Theatre (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser* 19.09.1903).

The show was accompanied by an rich press advertisement, sometimes taking up a space of one hundred square centimetres, and striking the reader with the bold print containing the most important information regarding the show, including about the location of Her Majesty’s Theatre in Melbourne, the performing group of guests actors from the London His Majesty’s Theatre – the Beerbohm Tree’s Company, the names of the theatre directors, the date of the show, names of the authors of the adaptation (Henry Bataille and Michael Morton), names of the leading actors (Maud Jeffries and Julius Knight, referred to as “Immensely Popular Artistes”), and the name of the author of the novel (TOLSTOY’S GREAT WORK, “RESURRECTION”, TOLSTOY’S GREATEST WORK “RESURRECTION”) (*Age* 03.10.1903). An important element of this advertisement was the technique of repetition of succinct phrases, which had a persuasive function: LAST SIX NIGHTS (3x), “RESURRECTION” (3x), LAST SIX NIGHTS of “RESURRECTION” (3x), “LAST SATURDAY NIGHT (3x). This function is also fulfilled by the direct words of the director, Williamson, directed at the audience he asks (BEGS TO CALL ATENTION) to notice that the season of shows by the Beerbohm Tree’s Company will soon come to an end and will last – in accordance with the concluded contracts – only a few weeks more.

The most interesting advertisement is one regarding the shows in Sydney (*Sydney Morning Herald* 22.02.1904). It takes up half of the column and consists of five segments separated by the repeating name HER MAJESTY’S THEATRE printed in the biggest font. The stock of provided information is similar to that in the advertisement discussed above, expanded only by certain elements (the name of the costume designer was provided, as well as the fact that the Special Choir and the Grand Orchestra will perform in the show). The staging of *Resurrection* was emphasised as a sensation: TOLSTOY IN SYDNEY. A SENSATION, highlighted by the use of such words as “success”, “enthusiasm”, “record” (they connoted modernity). But the most interesting and truly sensational part was something else, namely the rarely seen in advertisements explanation of the show producer’s intentions, surely

aimed to fulfil protective functions in view of the possibility of treating Tolstoy's novel as a blasphemy (it was possible among the puritanical part of the Australian society, which is evidenced by the previously mentioned example of the lecture at the University of Melbourne):

"It should be pointed out that 'RESURRECTION' and NOT 'THE RESURRECTION', is the name of the Drama, and NO REFERENCE IS INTENDED TO ANY BIBLICAL EVENT, that the Play, although, inculcating a Great Ethical Lesson, is not religious in Character, and that the action points to the Resurrection or, rather, to the Regeneration – of the very human beings from a fallen to a higher state".

That is not all; directly following this sentence, which is the fourth segment of the advertisement, comes the last, fifth segment titled INTERESTING. TOLSTOY'S "RESURRECTION". Its function is the exposure of Tolstoy's authority as "the greatest of all living social reformers" who, as opposed to the accepted practice on the publishing market, refused to accept any royalties from the staging of his novel, while the fee he received for this work he donated to the Doukhobors sect that settled in Canada (a group of 8 thousand people). This sect was persecuted in Russia for their consistent refusal of the military service due to religious reasons, therefore it practiced pacifism actively. Thanks to Tolstoy, many thousands of pounds found their way to the newly established settlement which now blossoms and develops under the British flag. It was also pointed out that the translator of Tolstoy's novels followed the writer's example by donating his fee to the same cause. It has to be said that this advertisement was nonstandard, and the "defence" of Tolstoy that was employed in it was intelligent and well-timed. In the British Empire, after the end of the Boer War, pacifism was no longer identified with a lack of patriotism, becoming a "regenerated" (to use a term from the advertisement) category of morality. Between February and March 1904, the show *Resurrection* is often advertised in journals published in Sydney (*Australian Star*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Evening News*), but opinions about the production were rare, like the two sentence-long text about the success of the "the dramatisation" of Tolstoy's great work and the acting of the leads, skilfully supported by the remaining actors (*Sunday Sun* 28.02.1904 in the "Music and Drama" column).

In August and in the following months of 1909, in Australian cinemas called "theatrescopes", "photo-play theatres", or "photo-plays", there were screening of a 12 minute-long film adapting *Resurrection* for the screen, produced by the New York Biograf Company in the same year. Journals advertised the film as a "Pictorial Representation of Tolstoy's book" (*The Herald* 07.08.1909), "Great Dramatic Work" (*The Star* 14.08.1909), "GREATEST DRAMATIC MASTERPIECE", which achieved an "unprecedented success", met with ovation and applause from the audience and excellent opinions in journals, a fragment of which was quoted; the conclusion was: TRIUMPH – ABSOLUTELY (*The Daily Telegraph* 11.08.1909). There also appears the expression "The Greatest Picture Drama ever staged" and the following



words encouraging the readers to see it: "This beautiful story has appealed to millions throughout the civilised world and every dramatic situation in the great work will be reproduced with striking fidelity to detail" (*Evening Telegraph* 29.09.1909). Advertisements also informed about the musical setting of the show: "Music specially written by the accompanist, Mr. H. Hawkins" (*The Ballarat Star* 06.08.1909), "Full Orchestra and Mechanical Effects" (*The Northern Miner* 02.10.1909). The audience gathered in the cinema did not come to see just one film, so *Resurrection* was screened alongside a production whose content was lighter, suspenseful or humorous. In comparison with the advertisement of the play, the film advertisements did not mention the names of the actors. Stars were only just being born, such as Florence Lawrence, the leading actress in *Resurrection* in 1909 (her name in connection to this film appears in the Australian press with a considerable delay). The name of the American actress Blanche Walsh is, however, already present in the advertisement for the next film adaptation of *Resurrection* from 1912, produced by The Famous Players Film Company (*Truth* 09.03.1913), just as the names of another American actress, Pauline Frederick, in yet another adaptation, produced by Paramount Pictures in 1918 (*Daily Mail* 23.11.1918 in the review section).

### Conclusion

Tolstoy's public biography in the Australian press seems to enter into the dimension of a myth telling the story of a great writer, permeated by the moral concern about ordinary people, driven in his actions by the imperative of doing good. It is a myth in which the writer gains the superhuman features of the heroism of virtues and of zealous, actively professed altruism. The images of a good man who decided to change the world for the better and magically reform it bring to mind a fairy-tale hero. Tolstoy himself expressed this faith in the realisation of good in a fabulous (naïve) way, for instance in the letter to Alexander III, in which he fashioned himself into an innocent from the country wilderness, asking the tsar to become a man of revolutionary fight who fulfils the commands of Christ. The writer's letter to Nicholas II also ends with a familiar expression; he asks the tsar for forgiveness for the chance that he might have saddened him with his letter, but he is concerned with the good of the Russian nation and of the tsar himself. However, there is also the other side of this public biography, a side revealing Tolstoy's works and achievements from an utterly different perspective, as those of a person who can perfectly and sophisticatedly present, motivate, and promote his ideas, not letting the world forget about them. The Russian writer proved to be a star of media communication, thoroughly aware of the mechanisms behind the functioning of telegraph agencies and the press. He gave numerous interviews, wrote open letters, answered surveys, sometimes responded in a telegram, like the one sent at the end of February 1904 to the Philadelphia paper *The North American*, in which he put forward his view on the Russo-Japanese War in literally one sentence (it was a splendid mental shortcut). He knew perfectly

well where lay the power of the telegraph. The writer's charisma was generated not only on the basis of the views he expressed. In themselves, they would not have been able to so continuously and consistently absorb the world's public opinion, also in the antipodes. For this charisma was created by the modern way of communicating with the press and the writer's excellent embodiment of the role of a publicist and a reformer (a cliché like "the famous Russian novelist and social reformer"). No influential person born towards the end of the 1820s found their place in the communication conditions of the beginning of the 20th century with such success. Indeed, the press published in the antipodes is a reliable confirmation of this truth, all the more so since it was reaching Tolstoy as well. In 1906, he showed one of his interlocutors a translation of an article by the American economist and reformer Henry George (who fascinated the writer), printed in the journal *Standard* published in Sydney<sup>9</sup>. The issue of the periodical, its subtitle being "a journal to advocate the rights of the people in the land", did reach the writer. It can be presumed that the editorial staff knew perfectly well how close a thinker Henry George was to him (Tolstoy hosted his son as a guest). It must be added that the publishers of the journal were, among others, Henry George League of N.S.W. and Henry George Union for Social Justice (N.S.W.). As is evident, also in Australia ideas of social reforms were expressed in a press title specialising in this subject (the journal was founded in 1905).

Furthermore, Tolstoy created a very specific forum of international communication, which was Yasnaya Polyana. This name was known around the world much better than the name of any Pan-Slavic congress. The writer was not a Pan-Slav, and Yasnaya Polyana was not an agenda of this imperial ideology. The residence of the Tolstoy clan was the Mecca of knowledge about the Slavic world for the people of the West who were visiting it in great numbers<sup>10</sup>. There, they found the real Russia, looking upon the hospitable host as a guru who explained to them illuminating truths about this country and the people who live in it. Tolstoy did not need travel; one vantage point in Russia was enough for him to observe and, by means of the media, comment on what was happening in the world. And as for the international media, if this point was not enough for them, at least it appeared very important.

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<sup>9</sup> *Interviu i besedy s L'vom Tolstym ...*, p. 485.

<sup>10</sup> See: previously mentioned anthologies *Interviu i besedy s L'vom Tolstym* and *Americans in Conversation with Tolstoy* and the article by R.F. Christian: *The Road to Yasnaya Polyana. Some Pilgrims from Britain and Their Reminiscences*. "The Slavonic and East European Review" Vol. 66, No 4 (Oct. 1988, pp. 526–552).

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