INTRODUCTION

Resurrection (1899) is Tolstoy's final novel, his most contemporary and political, written over a ten-year period filled with personal unrest and national turmoil. While Tolstoy felt it contained a joy born of the justice of revolt against bad laws, *Resurrection* is often regarded as among his darkest works. This no doubt stems from the novel's unremitting seriousness. The assassination in 1881 of Alexander II, the Tsar Reformer who emancipated the serfs, and instituted some press freedoms as well as trial by jury, ushered in the ultra-conservative policies of his successors. In its totality of plot, characterization, and setting *Resurrection* can be read as Tolstoy's response to the reactionary desperation of Alexander III and, from 1894, Nicholas II, which he vocally criticized as the 'horror of autocracy'.

Because the destiny of its characters is thoroughly enmeshed in the social reality of the period, *Resurrection* stands fully in the tradition of the Great Russian Novel. The themes of adultery, the gentry family, country life, agricultural productivity and high society were nowhere better treated than in *Anna Karenina* (1873–7). Tolstoy fully kept pace with his time. More than twenty years later, at the turn of the twentieth century, the equivalent concerns treated in *Resurrection* are about sexuality, capitalism and inequality, institutional corruption, and prison reform; and while the novel contains some beautiful nature writing and evocations of country estates, it is interior spaces such as court rooms, prisons and bordellos that dominate, a world away from the aristocratic and bourgeois haunts of his earlier masterpieces.

The book tells the story of an individual caught up in a spiritual dilemma for whom redemption through love proves elusive. The source of the plot outline for *Resurrection* came from a story that the liberal lawyer and man of letters A. F. Koni told Tolstoy in June 1887. Koni, at the time a district prosecutor, had been petitioned by a young man of respectable standing who felt aggrieved because the prison authorities refused to allow him to correspond with a female inmate. During service on the jury that convicted her of theft, he had recognized her as a girl he

had seduced. She was now a prostitute. Stricken by conscience, he took measures to help her, even proposing marriage; however, she died of typhus shortly after being sentenced. Subsequently, Koni lost sight of the remorseful seducer.

Tolstoy initially encouraged Koni to write his own account. The lawyer struggled with the project and in 1888 responded to Tolstoy's request to allow him to use the plot, which he called 'very good and necessary' for his own purposes; the sentiment was entirely at odds with that of his wife Sophia Andreyevna who even when working for her husband as a copyist as late as 1898 still felt moral revolution at the thought that an 'old man of seventy, with the relish of a gourmet tasting delicious food, would describe scenes of physical ecstasy between a maid and an officer'. Fully occupied with completing his novella *The Kreutzer Sonata*, the revenue of which was sorely needed for his family's finances, Tolstoy returned to the idea only at the end of 1889.

While Tolstoy had fixed 'Resurrection' as the final title around 1890, writing the novel was a sporadic business even within the main phases of work during the years 1889–90, 1895–96, 1898, and finally 1899. In a diary entry early in 1891, one of the last references to this work until 1895 and noted down out of frustration with the halting start, Tolstoy expressed his wish to write a large artistic work, a novel, because 'my first earlier novels were thoughtless creations. Since what seems to be more than ten years since *Anna Karenina*, I have deconstructed, divided, analysed; now I know what I can once again put together and then in this confusion make sense.' Despite these ambitions for fiction, somewhat channelled into shorter works like the marvellous story 'Master and Man', ethical and religious writings such as 'On Passive Resistance' (the kernel for the much longer *The Kingdom of God is Within You*) absorbed Tolstoy's energies. Because of the long hiatuses, sometimes caused by the distraction of other commitments, sometimes the result of uncertainties about the novel that Tolstoy recorded in his diaries, his immediate concerns about political and social issues increasingly influenced drafts and revisions, nowhere more substantially than in all of Book Three, the ending of which he radically altered more than once. A work Tolstoy regarded essentially as a love story had grown very considerably in its scale and scope.

In its emphasis on redemption as a spiritual struggle with no guaranteed reward, *Resurrection* resembles other sombre works written from the late 1880s to around 1900 such as 'Father Sergius', *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, and 'Master and Man', also reflecting Tolstoy's troubled relationship with institutional religion. Despairing that the Orthodox Church had lost its way, Tolstoy produced his own version of the Gospels, intended to recover in Christianity an ethical system of universal application (quoted extensively in the final pages of *Resurrection*). This set him on a path of conflict with the Orthodox Church, culminating in expulsion in 1903. His view of religion as a matter of personal belief led him to support the Doukhobors, a beleaguered religious sect. Their pacifist rejection of military conscription brought about the arrest of their leaders and further reprisals by the government. After international criticism, the Doukhobors were given permission to leave the country and resettle in Canada but only at their own expense. Tolstoy pledged the royalties of *Resurrection* as aid.

The years during which he wrote *Resurrection* formed a tumultuous period creatively and domestically in Tolstoy's life, even by the standards of someone whose character had been long divided by contradictory tendencies to believe, on the one hand, that absolute principles were knowable and applicable to individuals and societies; and, on the other hand, that the plurality and diversity of the world were its essence and irreducible. For artistic purposes, that world was Russia in all its vast extent and social and historical turbulence. In *War and Peace*, a national epic about Russia in the Napoleonic Wars and perhaps the greatest of all historical novels, Tolstoy refracted national history through the family histories of the gentry, his own class. *Anna Karenina* moves closer to his own time, mirroring changes to the legal and economic position of women and the peasantry. Still later and now decades after the Great Reforms of the 1860s had emancipated the serfs, *Resurrection* explores more inclusively than ever their profound economic and social consequences across classes, institutions, and marginal populations.

By the 1890s, the outcome of the perpetual battle in Tolstoy's heart and mind between the creative and didactic impulses had largely if not entirely favoured the latter. In his role as a public

intellectual and prophet, Tolstoy used myriad genres (sermons, pamphlets, essays, fables, petitions) to advocate positions on pacifism, vegetarianism, redistribution of wealth, and religion. These put him in direct conflict with the government, a state of affairs summarized aptly by Alexey Suvorin, Chekhov's publisher and friend: 'We have two tsars: Nicholas II and Lev Tolstoy. Which of the two is the stronger?' The 'real' tsars tried to gain the upper hand by censoring more subversive statements, largely to no avail since they circulated in manuscript. And Alexander III was little match for Tolstoy's wife, Sophia Andreyevna, who in 1891 requested an audience in which she sought permission to publish a blocked volume of his collected works and gave the monarch reason to believe that Tolstoy's later work would be more to his liking. Even after being anathematized a decade later following the censored publication of *Resurrection*, Tolstoy was hardly repentant. Intent on killing off his unruly imagination in the treatise *What is Art?* (1897), he denounced the likes of Shakespeare, Goethe, and Beethoven as geniuses blind to their own misperceptions. Yet he did unto others what he could not do to himself. The monolithic Tolstoy was unable to suppress the pluralist and richly experiential writer whose creative and sympathetic imagination resorted to fiction. In a letter of 1898, the author confessed that he saw *Resurrection* as a throwback to a style of writing he had tried to renounce, rationalizing that the greater good would be sales dedicated to the cause of the Doukhobors.

For *Anna Karenina* Tolstoy constructed an elaborate narrative architecture to tell the parallel stories of two protagonists who, although connected through class and kinship networks, meet only once. In *Resurrection* the lives of the two protagonists are intertwined almost from the start. An orphaned daughter of a peasant woman and a gypsy, Katerina Maslova is taken in as a young girl by a pair of landowners, the maiden aunts of young Prince Dmitry Nekhlyudov. The entire plot evolves out of the mutual attraction which arises between the young people over a summer visit of the student Nekhlyudov to his aunts' country estate. After its initial depiction of his callow youth and later of his dissipated life as an army officer, which leads him to seduce Katusha on the second visit, the novel lays out Nekhlyudov's

fantasies of a spiritual redemption through marriage. The destiny Tolstoy plots for Prince Dmitry Nekhlyudov's penitential journey proceeds through encounters with characters drawn from the criminal underclass and revolutionary groups hardly found before in his fiction. It counterpoints Nekhlyudov's spiritual growth and quest to right the wrong he did to Katerina Maslova, exposing as well the wrongs the state has perpetrated against whole swathes of the population. Pressing predicaments, individual and national, are folded into the romantic saga of *Resurrection*.

Each part of the book has some overriding theme such as the problem of innocence (Book One), the problem of justice (Book Two), and finally salvation through love (Book Three). Each has a distinct approach to time, space, and action, and these divisions generate a certain narrative suspense about the outcomes of a trial, the hero's commitment to a struggle that is voluntary, and the question of whether there is a reward. The successive draft versions of Book One show that Tolstoy exercised the greatest novelistic care in his creation of Nekhlyudov's inner world. Relatedly, one of the most notable features of Book One is an oscillation between past and present. Episodes from earlier and later phases of Nekhlyudov's life and their respective moods of idealism and remorse are interspliced, often through use of interior monologue, thus giving a context to the radical changes the hero will make to his life. For Tolstoy this represents a belief that Nekhlyudov can recover his moral intuition; it also opens up an ironic gap that distances the author slightly from his character. The plot intrigue provides the test of this ethical aspiration when Maslova and Nekhlyudov meet some years after her seduction. The thirty-one-year-old Nekhlyudov, serving on a jury, recognizes her in court, one of three defendants accused of involvement in the murder of a merchant. The trial scenes reveal how Maslova's seduction, pregnancy, and homelessness led her to prostitution and then a criminal record. Dramatic irony is a further effect. The reader is already aware of their tangled history well before Nekhlyudov identifies her as the peasant girl he seduced. The court case sets in motion Nekhlyudov's remorse and acceptance of a self-made punishment. From this point many chapters in Book One will show

how guilt colours his attempts to continue as usual in society salons and on the country estates that are his milieu. The effect is to create a sense that the Tolstoyan hero, unlike many figures from his class, is always in the process of becoming. Nekhlyudov is convinced that Maslova has suffered a miscarriage of justice because she was duped by her co-defendants and was innocent of the murder charges.

Book Two follows his attempts to obtain an act by the Senate to override the court and set aside Maslova's conviction (already recognized to have been a mistake). There are two major transitions in time and setting from the trial to the penal colony, and from the past to the present. In following the aftermath of the verdict from Nekhlyudov's first visit to Maslova in detention to the moment of deportation, the narrative also explores the psychological tensions he experiences in resolving to accept the personal consequences. Readers will quickly register that in Book Three chapters are much shorter. The change to the structure may be intended to connect the reader's experience of time with penal space. Insofar as the convicts are cut off from their past lives and focused on survival, their relation to both their past, and also to the future, is curtailed. The form gives the impression of people locked into their own subjectivity as they journey into exile. While the number of portraits may add variety (and the character sketch of the radical Nabatov compresses a remarkable amount of adventure and intellectual verve into a single chapter), it may also represent Tolstoy taking a leaf from Dostoevsky's remarkable prison autofiction, *Notes from the House of the Dead* (1862), a pioneering work of Gulag literature. At the stage of correcting proofs for the first Russian publication, when his attention was completely sustained, Tolstoy comprehensively revised the entire novel, refining elements of characterization (while overlooking inconsistencies in chronology such as age and internal co-ordination of dates), expanding much of its topical content about the penal system, political prisoners, and religious persecution of sectarian groups. For example, it was only at the third stage of revision (of about six before the proofs) that Tolstoy added the prison church service in Book One. This scene, one of many that provoked the censor, demonstrated how far institutional religion had departed from the

simplicity of Jesus' teachings by satirizing all aspects of ritual from the priest's 'inconvenient garb of gold cloth' to the sacrament of the eucharist ('bits of bread cut up by the priest and put into the wine').

Tolstoy seems to have given up here on the technique, famously put to use in *War and Peace*, of defamiliarizing daily life in order to show it in a new light. Instead, *Resurrection* is one of those later literary works that relies on satire dished out more for the reader than the benefit of Nekhlyudov and even the political radicals of Book Three who waste no time and show no cynicism about reforming the unreformable because they are in the grips of an *idée fixe* that engages them in philosophical questioning about morality, identity, and justice.

The more linear approach to storytelling we see in Book Three is certainly a feature of some later works on a religious theme such as the story 'Father Sergius'. Tolstoy's moral fictions favour a clear arc from dissipation to conversion in order to focus intensely on a lived drama of temptation. Still, what can work in a short story would be excessively schematic in a novel, and he avoids this pitfall by making Nekhlyudov and Maslova's backstories reference points for their ensuing acts of self-determination. What we learn about Nekhlyudov's youth when he was an 'honest, unselfish lad' before military service turned him into the unbridled egotist who ruins Maslova, provides the key to his moral rebirth. The story of Nekhlyudov's early life and career given in Book One (chapters 12 and 13) counterpoints the story of Maslova's debauchery. Inevitably, Nekhlyudov forgets his ideals and succumbs to laddish peer pressure. That Tolstoy conceived Nekhlyudov as a fallen man in the Rousseauean mode contains the meaning of the authorial assertions made in the opening pages of *Resurrection*: namely, that modern urban and industrial life, ruinous to the beauty of nature, has corrupted man's natural instincts to good; that humans nonetheless continue to have within them an inner voice that reminds them of their ethical potential; and, finally, that the effort to change oneself involves relinquishing egotism and self-love for the sake of some greater social good. Maslova's own development also fits within this scheme. From innocent to outcast to prisoner, she is finally socialized and more fully human as a literary character

once she finds love within a community of exiles in Book Three. Ultimately, Maslova's own story moves more convincingly in the direction of love for her fellow man, and love for another man, whereas Nekhlyudov struggles to recover the emotional honesty of youth so lauded at the opening. He intellectualizes the sacrifices he must undertake in order to exonerate himself, and by treating love symbolically as a means of redemption he acts programmatically rather than naturally.

Tolstoy's fame as perhaps the supreme realist of the age rests on his mastery of two narrative methods: a third-person omniscient voice that can seem detached from any one viewpoint and offer a larger perspective, and, more sparingly, free indirect discourse in which the prose converges with the language and viewpoint of a particular character. This latter technique offers a form of listening to private thoughts at which the novel excels. For that reason, when the author stops to offer his own thoughts about life and death, civilization and his discontent, the voice of the commentator may feel intrusive. Yet there is nothing particularly new about these interventions since they had long been Tolstoy's practice, and in *Resurrection* he retains his customary capacity to delve into characters' innermost thoughts. To the characterization of Nekhlyudov Tolstoy brings to bear both the perspectives of the omniscient narrator and that interior discourse. By contrast, the characterization of Maslova is more one-sided, largely focalized through the narrator or external speakers and rarely illuminated from within. While Maslova can voice her feelings in her own language in conversations with Nekhlyudov or the political prisoners who take her under their wing, the narrator processes her thoughts and dreams through his own language. This sets Maslova's style of characterization somewhat apart from Nekhlyudov, who remains a familiar kind of Tolstoyan hero, endeavouring to clarify an ideal way to live, and to consider what the balance between self-control and self-perfection and altruism and civic virtue should be. The question is whether this imbalance between Maslova's absent interiority and Nekhlyudov's greater dimensionality is a flaw or a deliberate strategy. Arguably, it might be constructive to consider that the narrator shares Nekhlyudov's limited understanding of Maslova whose social origins

preclude him from crediting her with an inner world of her own.

Readers of classic nineteenth-century Russian fiction will recognize in Nekhlyudov a generational kindred spirit to the classic type of hero: this is the superfluous man most familiar from Pushkin's protagonist Evgeny Onegin and Pavel Petrovich Kirsanov in Turgenev's *Fathers and Children* (1862), a man of the 1840s consumed and ruined by passion and idleness. Nekhlyudov's genealogy is also specifically Tolstoyan (and like most Tolstoyan heroes borrows some traits from identifiable figures, here thought to be the rakishness of Tolstoy's brother Sergey and the convert's religious zeal of Tolstoy's disciple V. G. Chertkov). While his earlier novelistic heroes tend to come in pairs of dreamers and activists, Nekhlyudov combines elements of both types, perceiving the world of the senses before he comes to understand it through ideas. Readers of late Tolstoy will also recognize a kinship with other beleaguered heroes, perhaps most strikingly with Father Sergius, a nobleman who undergoes something of an Augustinian conversion, renouncing his wantonness and withdrawing from the world into an extreme form of monasticism. The psychological intrigue concerns the temptations that test his chastity; the moral of the story lies more in the conclusion Tolstoy reaches that while, as he says elsewhere, 'the kingdom of God is within', it is an illusion to think one can either shut out the real world or totally transform one's character for, as he wrote in his journal of 1895, 'people are subjected to economic, political, religious deception'. *Resurrection* and 'Father Sergius' have obvious similarities as the stories of kindred spirits who seek redemption through Christianity. Tolstoy insists on physicality as the basis of a unified identity. In 'Father Sergius' the hero takes extreme measures to control his desire and maims himself. In *Resurrection* the same body that pursued passion experiences physically the awakening of remorse:

> Nekhlyudov thought of what he had seen the day before while waiting in the hall, and now understood that the punishment was then being inflicted; and the mixed feeling of curiosity, depression, perplexity, and moral nausea, that grew into physical nausea, took hold of him more strongly than ever.

From the start, then, the novel notes the competing impulses of the body and will. Tolstoy devised the perfect structure for making Nekhlyudov as a member of the jury confront his younger self, the 'depraved, refined egoist caring only for his own enjoyment'. This pithily summarizes a life-long preoccupation Tolstoy had with the loss of innocence and quest to regain it. As early as the 1850s Tolstoy was working on *The Cossacks* (1863), a novel about a Russian soldier on duty in the Caucasus who lives out an escapist fantasy, convinced that life among simple peoples could purge the effects of a decaying society. The experiment fails in a fable that lays bare, first, the flawed notion that civilization can be reversed and, second, the limitations of a Romantic myth of primitive innocence (deriving from Rousseau's Noble Savage). From his youth an ardent reader of Rousseau's *Confessions*, Tolstoy accepted the view of Jean-Jacques (and also St Augustine) that the self was permanently fallible. For all that one could achieve transparency about one's motives and impulses through regular scrutiny, a process Tolstoy pursued in his famously self-lacerating diaries, self-knowledge and control were ineluctably unstable. The question of how one might gain knowledge of one's innermost motivations and amend one's conduct runs through all his fictional works, early and late, from *The Cossacks* to *Resurrection*.

He never surrendered his belief that in their youth people are closest to an uncorrupted ideal that exists in the state of nature, and the association of the good and the beautiful is planted early in the book. This is why *Resurrection* opens with a sermon-like denunciation of mankind that links moral deprivation and destruction of beauty represented by the exploitation of nature. Behind the eco-warrior language is Rousseau's vision of the cost of progress as individuals and groups sought greater wealth, exercising power over others, spoiling the beauty in nature that conduced to harmony and love. Love and nature once imbued Nekhlyudov with a sense of 'all the beauty and significance of life'. This elevated feeling carries over into a set of humanitarian impulses to improve the economic management of his estates, to reduce the poverty of the peasantry, and to redeem Maslova. On that much larger scale, Nekhlyudov, also like Conrad's heroes Lord Jim and Nostromo, seeks deliverance

from worldly delusion to spiritual redemption through sacrifice.

Tolstoy the great Realist had gone head-to-head with Flaubert and produced in *Anna Karenina* a rival for *Madame Bovary*. *Resurrection* negotiates the boundaries between society fiction (of which *Anna Karenina* was to prove a supreme example) and an attention to poverty, prostitution, and radicalism worthy of the period's more Naturalist writers such as Emile Zola. As a society novel, *Resurrection* treats courtship diplomacy and the usual forms of hypocrisy that oil the wheels of salon culture. Broken engagements are the stuff of the Victorian novel, frequently to be found on the pages of the likes of Anthony Trollope whom Tolstoy admired. Tolstoy's treatment of marriage as a means of social advancement and strategizing marked by hypocrisy and selfishness, makes *Resurrection* one of his most powerful satirical works. *Resurrection* is also unprecedented in Tolstoy's oeuvre in the extent of its social inclusiveness and double focus on the ruling classes and marginal peoples. In *Notes from the House of the Dead* Dostoevsky had captured unsparingly the population of the penal colony, both its criminals and political prisoners, where he had spent a ten-year exile. These stories had an electrifying impact on readers and the book was singled out by Tolstoy for special admiration (it was, in fact, the only work by Dostoevsky he admitted to revering). In *Resurrection*, with the observational candour and the skills of a Zola, Tolstoy the Naturalist came into his own and attempted to lay bare the fundamental political, scientific, and social causes of Russia's decay into inequality and injustice.

In its scepticism about the moral integrity of institutions, the novel represented yet another of Tolstoy's interventions on the challenges of modernity. The 1860s and 70s were a time when the ideal of 'going back to the people' gripped the imagination of socially active university students and inspired the social-revolutionary radicalism that followed in the 1890s. The role of literature in the development of progressive agendas was complex, and the novel had already served as a forum for debate on the pedagogical ambitions, and limits, of art. Forty years before *Resurrection*, Turgenev in *Fathers and Children* had created a hero seemingly equipped to bring light – in the form of medicine and reason – to rural serf populations on the eve of the Great

Reforms. This was Yevgeny Bazarov, a man of science committed to improving the life of the peasantry. He was Turgenev's answer, a negative answer, to the question posed by one of the radical critics adamant that literature could provide progressive answers to social problems: 'When will the real day come?' asked Nikolay Dobrolyubov in 1860. Bazarov's death showed that the mission the intelligentsia had assumed of enlightening the people was doomed to failure, a Promethean tragedy. It is a mark of Tolstoy's different position that Nekhlyudov follows rather than leads the common folk.

It is only when he comes to sell his estates and distribute land to the peasants that Nekhlyudov understands 'such great poverty and so bare a life as the peasants had come to' (Book Two, chapter 9). While there were no convulsions for the governing classes comparable to 1848 in Europe, the consequences of the Emancipation Act of 1861 produced social, political, and economic disruptions that would rock and then topple the imperial edifice in 1917. The flawed economic settlement created hardship for landowners and greater poverty for the peasantry. Discontented peasants, unable to survive on the inadequate land distributions they received in the 1860s, fled to the cities, creating a new underclass and proletariat in plain sight of both the Russian bourgeoisie and the radical intelligentsia. For all the efforts of university students on a mission to the countryside, the period was often called the Era of Small Deeds because the intelligentsia, frustrated by the suppression of radical movements and the slow progress made by 'going to the people', aimed to improve daily life of the masses by working in the countryside as teachers, doctors, and nurses. Literature also retreated from the radical ambitions of earlier decades, and especially, after the death of Dostoevsky in 1881, works tended to focus on the lives of more modest figures of provincial life memorably described by writers like Anton Chekhov and Alexander Kuprin. These writers caught the rise of a new class, the children of the former serfs and the clergy, the so-called mixed-estates who were educated, urban, and socially conscious. Teachers, déclassé landowners, artists, and idlers, they are often dreamers more than activists. It took a work on the scale of *Resurrection* to weigh how the policies of the Age of Reforms could be felt in the 1890s across the

larger population. A nation on a pathway of modernization and expansion remained on the edge of crisis from its heartlands to its periphery. The novel presents a cross-section of the vast plurality of religious sects, social identities, and ethnic groups that made up the Russian Empire, and the book's geographic extent captures its eastward growth, relevant to the movement of its characters. Not only did the novel's literary ambition fill this vacuum, its large cast of characters from its metropolitan hero at the apex of the social scale to the prison population made up of political detainees as well as criminals, captured a nation on the brink of unrest.

So much for the hero. By the 1850s, the figure of the fallen woman was taken up in the poetry and fiction of any number of Russian authors. The most celebrated literary prostitutes in the canon were among Dostoevsky's most striking heroines. In *Crime and Punishment*, Sonya Marmeladova is one of the 'Magdalenes' of nineteenth-century literature, incarnating the repentant sinner who sacrifices herself for love. In *The Idiot*, the fiery Anastasya Barashkova is the embodiment of the 'hellish woman', a type increasingly taken up in *fin-de-siècle* writing. A fully conceived character, Maslova is neither the sentimentalized prostitute nor vamp, and the spiritual emancipation she achieves through her affinity with a group of political prisoners sets her on a path of emotional autonomy. For all Tolstoy's evident debt to Dostoevsky, what drives Maslova's story, like the story of the revolutionary women she meets, is Tolstoy's interest – much less psychological and individual than in Dostoevsky – in the injustices that determine her fate, and also condition the formation of the ideology of the radical intelligentsia. Full of exploitation, violence, and poverty, Maslova's story was highly contemporary. Such stories were also the stuff of newspaper articles and cheap fiction (neither Dostoevsky nor Tolstoy was aloof from drawing plots from the popular press). Maslova also represents a new chapter in Tolstoy's long preoccupation with the challenge sexual desire presented to elements of his moral code and his social theories. The issue of women's sexual propriety had been part of the cultural environment of *Anna Karenina* as an adultery plot. Anna faces genuine dilemmas yet for all the excruciating constraints placed on her by the patriarchal pressures of

marriage and divorce, she is also archetypal and serves Tolstoy as the embodiment of an erotic tension between procreative and desirous sexuality that Schopenhauer and others had conceptualized philosophically. It is in this spirit that his later novella *The Kreutzer Sonata*, a work of literature surrounded by a new flood of popular publications about perversion and prostitution, contributed to a public discussion of the 'sexual question'.

In *Resurrection* Tolstoy has moved off philosophical turf and onto the social causes of sexual exploitation. The so-called women's questions about gender roles and opportunities in the modernizing society of late Imperial Russia inevitably add to the social context. Life in the countryside remained strongly shaped by religious and parental values; and sexual misconduct was closely policed and criticized. By the end of the nineteenth century the migration of peasant women from rural communities to urban centres had increased markedly, prompted by the decline in agricultural wages and increase in opportunities in service industries. Herself a foundling dependent on the care of Nekhlyudov's aunts, Maslova forfeits their charity after giving birth out of wedlock. Maslova's plight is tethered to Tolstoy's social rather than philosophical considerations. Her conduct follows the pattern of peasant migration to the city. Thwarted in their search for economic opportunity, many women turned to prostitution out of sheer economic need, a reason commonly cited in the questionnaires the Russian government administered as part of its official regulation of prostitution from 1843. Fewer than one percent of prostitutes married their way out of a way of life marked by illness and poverty. Hers is 'a very common story' (chapter 2), we are told. Maslova's trial reveals another typical feature, namely that most prostitutes lived by joining an established whorehouse and in this case the establishment would probably have been a medium-quality brothel. This was the sort of house that features in another contemporary work, Alexander Kuprin's sensational novel *The Pit* (1909–15), which chronicled the life of 'working girls' in red-light districts. Tolstoy takes the issue of sexual exploitation in a new direction of enquiry by putting it in relation to criminality, producing a classic coupling of decadent literature. Poverty, criminality, and prostitution were seen as forms of degeneration that not only blighted the present

but were possibly hereditary characteristics passed on from one generation to the next. Yet the same principles can be adopted for the opposite political ideology: in the final part, the political prisoners debate revolution as a 'process of development' requiring adaptation.

In her diary for 17 January 1899, his wife Sonya records that Tolstoy hosted at home the inspector of the notorious Butyrki prison from whom he received much technical information, 'all for the sake of *Resurrection*'. Convinced that Tolstoyans were trying to infiltrate prisons and indoctrinate populations, the authorities banned him and his publications from entering prisons.

That was no deterrent to Tolstoy when it came to gathering information about actual conditions since he had a wide, sympathetic acquaintance among the legal class. The use and location of the penal system had changed visibly within Tolstoy's working life. From 1861, the same year as the emancipation of the serfs, the establishment of a free trade zone at the Russian–Chinese border led to a boom in commerce. Between 1891 and 1904, the immediate backdrop to Tolstoy's novel, the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway created its own inward migration patterns. New trade and new settlements required more labour and the government increasingly preferred to export rather than incarcerate prisoners as a way of populating the frontier. The practice of displacing political opposition, criminality, and social deviancy to the periphery is amply attested in the descriptions in Books Two and Three of transportations and prison conditions comparable to the study Chekhov produced in 1891–3 of the penal colony on Sakhalin Island in the Far East. The more accepting mores of the political prisoners in Book Three (especially in relation to children born to mothers in detention) stand in contrast to the establishment mores depicted in Book Two, above all. In its depiction of how a bureaucracy deals with its own administrative injustice (for not only is the narrator convinced of Maslova's innocence; the presiding officials of the court know it too), Book Two undoubtedly situates individual plights in a larger matrix of attitudes and behaviours that reveals the coercive power of the state. Criminals are treated in a way that inevitably hardens rather than reforms them. Judges, senators, prison

wardens, prison guards, railwaymen – all lose sight of the effect their actions and decisions have on the lives of human beings. It was a rare fiction that explained to its readership how the government was relying on demography and industrial growth to solve social problems and contain criminality. The Russian government itself treated Tolstoy's interventions as a writer and public intellectual as subversive.

Later in life Tolstoy had lost none of his shrewd capacity to represent human conduct sociologically and psychologically. When the trial of Maslova and her fellow defendants reaches the verdict stage, the jury's deliberations are tracked for group-think; yet a 'fierce dispute' about Maslova breaks out, abetted by the arguments of Peter Gerasimovich who voices objections Nekhlyudov is too inhibited to raise. Even then, the execution of justice is rarely seen as solely a matter of legal principle and usually involves patronage. The chapters devoted to the appeals process show how even the more fair-minded individuals Nekhlyudov approaches are motivated by friendship rather than any genuine concern for the case, and all are compromised by respect for hierarchies; they wish to appear to be helping rather than to help in actual fact. The sympathy of the general population lining the road as the convicts make their way to the railway carriages contrasts with the brutality of the prison guards whose disregard for the physical duress their charges experience leads to a death. Routinization and bureaucratization of governmental institutions shields most of these actors from accountability or even from expressions of conscience. The critic V. S. Pritchett, revolted by Tolstoy's 'Messianic impulse', pronounced the prison chapters dreary. This is to sell short their role as a counterweight to the 'brilliant, ironical, immensely wily and experienced descriptions of fashionable life and the back ways of the law' that Pritchett lauds. Yet without any didacticism they convey a positive message about the possibility of virtuous social bonds very much akin to the theory of mutual aid that Peter Kropotkin, the anarchist philosopher, set out in his writings of the same period.

The apathy that Nekhlyudov encounters when he takes charge of Maslova's appeal is not merely the result of bureaucratic inertia. Penal servitude as depicted in *Resurrection* affords

no possibility of regeneration because it generally aggravates decline now and in the future. The period was rife with anxiety about decay, visible in the tendency to see individual crimes as hereditary pathologies that risked contagion in the absence of effective social control. For instance, Book One, chapter 2 creates a link between Katusha Maslova's early life – she becomes an unwed mother at an early age – and her parentage. She herself is the sixth child of 'an unmarried daughter' who had a baby every year, all of whom died of neglect. Consistent with the tendency to see bad conduct as pathological, the information about Maslova's birth-mother provided at the beginning of the novel looks highly deliberate: namely, to suggest that Tolstoy's heroine has inherited a tendency to wantonness. Despite the advantages she has enjoyed as the ward of spinster sisters, whether for innate or acquired reasons, Maslova falls into a pattern leading to social disgrace and prostitution.

In this way, *Resurrection* is entirely contemporary in how it treats criminality, alcoholism, and prostitution as pathologies linked to conditions, hereditary or socio-economic, that must be contained or distanced from metropolitan life. If its early pages employ the language of Rousseau to note the decline of civilization from the innocence of a state of nature, the novel squarely identifies economic exploitation and cruel penal regimes as the causes for misery. As an example of penal attitudes that do not rehabilitate, Tolstoy early on identifies the use of isolation to punish rather than reform in a scene describing how 'the chief criminal, a woman' is being segregated from others. Later on in chapter 38 female prisoners are threatened with the 'solitary cell', a measure that is implemented in chapter 46 when the jailer, determined to teach a certain Vasilyev the law, provokes a fight and then has him put in solitary confinement. Detailed descriptions of legal and forensic procedures, at one level conventions of realism, are manifestations of mentalities. Consider the argument of the prosecutor at Maslova's trial who maintains that the crime bears 'the specific features of that very painful phenomenon, the corruption to which those elements of our present-day society – which are, if I may say so, particularly exposed to the scorching rays of this process – are subject'. The pseudo-scientific mechanisms of criminology are closely allied to

an underlying premise about crime as evidence of civilizational disease. Tolstoy had first-hand experience of these legal stratagems: from 1870 into the mid-1890s, when he was engrossed in revisions to Book One of *Resurrection*, he attended a number of trials, jotting down details and reactions ('a shameful comedy'), and closely observing the machinery of justice, although in 1883 out of religious conviction he refused to serve as a registrar in a session of the local court of assize. The phenomenon of decadence, manifested in governmental malaise and personal tragedy everywhere in *Resurrection*, is in the eyes of officialdom the product of misdeeds by people – and fallen women, above all – who contain in themselves 'the germs of criminality' and 'all the signs of degeneration'. The biological determinism of the prosecution is not mere rhetoric. It taps into social thinking of the time amply attested by the presence in *Resurrection* of the now obscure names of influential contemporary criminologists such as Jean-Martin Charcot, Cesare Lombroso, and Gabriel Tarde. Together with references to other thinkers like Herbert Spencer, Henry George, and Charles Darwin, they contribute to the construction of the novel's thought-world:

> 'Of course, there is a good deal of truth in Darwin's teaching', said Kolosov, lolling back in the low chair and looking at Sophia Vasilyevna with sleepy eyes; 'but he over-stepped the mark. Oh yes.'
>
> 'And you? Do you believe in heredity?' asked Sophia Vasilyevna, turning to Nekhlyudov, whose silence annoyed her.

While Nekhlyudov demonstrates his belief in personal agency and redemption, in high society and in the law courts we find a world in which social Darwinism coloured understanding of the ills of modern society that had become more visible with the growth of industrialization and urbanization. Tolstoy's fiction reflects without endorsing the tendency of nineteenth-century thought to systematize, whether we look at the philosophies of history in *War and Peace*, theories of sexuality in *Anna Karenina* or the causes of criminality in *Resurrection*. The Italian Lombroso (found 'disappointing' by Nekhlyudov) and his Russian disciples established in their work on criminal anthropology links between criminal predisposition and various categories of

peoples defined by ethnicity and gender, and their views had seeped into the popular press and shaped public opinion.

From this position the step to criminality was not far. Attitudes to male and female bodies were not egalitarian at the time. They were gendered, tending to assess the social standing of women in terms of sexual respectability and damning over-sexed women such as prostitutes as irretrievably bad. It is no wonder then that there is no real will to re-open Maslova's case and she remains a victim of a careless system and a set of newer views on the causes of degeneration in society at large that appears in the language of the privileged ruling classes. In Book Two, Nekhlyudov examines the corpse of one of the convicts. He reaches two conclusions: the first is that in the proportional design of the body there is evidence of something 'beautiful, strong', that exceeds man's 'animal' existence, the body providing the earthly basis for spirituality; the second is that the forces of destructiveness are not innate here but rather political coercion represented by the shackles on the man's feet. 'One could see that possibilities of a higher life had been destroyed in this man . . . He had been done to death.'

Yet the conclusion of the novel suggests that the reform of the self can prevail, whether or not decadent tendencies are biologically determined. Always wary of totalizing systems that exclude individual character, Tolstoy acknowledges evolutionary and biological factors and sees them also as fashions in thought open to criticism. The answer to the question whether redemption or the resurrection of the self is available to all can most likely be found in the final version of the novel's conclusion. For these purposes it is useful to note that in the original sketches of the ending, Nekhlyudov, on the rebound after Maslova refuses to marry him, moves to Central Asia, dedicating himself to agricultural reform and to the education of the peasantry. After these activities provoke the hostility of the government, Maslova finally relents and the couple flee abroad and settle in London where Maslova can hide her past and Nekhlyudov can continue to write about the evils of property ownership. In 1896 as Tolstoy increased the amount of political and legal content, somewhat diminishing the love plot, he became disenchanted with this denouement, and a number of trusted friends who had

attended private readings of the manuscript agreed that it was far-fetched. Prompted by the persecution of the Doukhobors, in 1898 Tolstoy resumed work on the novel. In the same period he wrote *What is Art?*, 'Father Sergius' and one of his greatest works of fiction, *Hadji Murad,* an anti-colonial and imperial celebration of a Caucasus warrior. In the context of works full of scepticism about established, institutional values, the idea of a happy ending looked false given his conviction that it was the duty of this novel to expose how quickly people fall back onto illusions at the expense of social ideals. The divergent paths on which the conclusion sets Maslova and Nekhlyudov therefore carries a message to be weighed against a sense of frustration about the novel's lack of emotional closure.

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Resurrection is a novel of modernity for all its specifically Russian circumstance. The challenges its characters face about the environment, religious dissent, exploitation, penal reform, and economic inequality, remain elements of the human condition universally. Constance and Edward Garnett, the famed translator and her literary editor husband, wrote in 1901 about Tolstoy that great writers 'will speak for their age to posterity, not because they have followed present-day paths and tendencies, but because the light which they raise aloft [. . .] lights up the path on which the generation is actually going'. The novel's global reception on publication bore out the claim. In Russia, it was serialized in the popular family-oriented journal *Niva*. The highly censored proofs that Tolstoy revised were sent to his disciple V. G. Chertkov in London and in 1899 a second Russian version, much closer to the final authorized text, was brought out by his publishing house Free Press (*Svobodnoe slovo*). This text became the basis for translations: two French versions came out in 1900 while in Germany about twelve different renderings appeared over two years. Serialized 1899–1900 and then published in book form in print-runs of 20,000, the cheap editions of its first English translation by Louise Maude, the authorized and most enduring of the many versions to have appeared, outsold both *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* in the United Kingdom and the United States. The work also entered the

public imagination and popular culture. A long article of 1924 in the *New York Times*, albeit rather fixated on vegetarianism, paid tribute to the Tolstoy vogue and publicized a Hollywood adaptation of *Resurrection.* Released in 1927, this was co-scripted by Tolstoy's son Ilya, filmed at a cost of $410,000 and starred the showgirl Dolores del Rio as Maslova (with a cameo by Tolstoy's daughter-in-law who was pursuing a 'grease-paint career'). By the mid-Twenties, as the article reports, the novel had appeared in eleven different languages.

If *Resurrection* divided Tolstoy's contemporaries in Russia, over the longer term it has sometimes struggled to win over posterity. Its status as a major work is a given, but even lovers of Tolstoy have struggled with its occasional righteousness. Does that quality of moral searching make it necessarily didactic as a novel? Or, to put the question differently, does *Resurrection* actually have a lesson to teach? In a famous dictum, Chekhov, an admired and admiring younger friend of Tolstoy, stated that 'it is the role of the artist to ask questions, not answer them'. A spirit of inculcation natural to Tolstoy's pedagogical works, his treatises, and sermons for which he achieved global renown, certainly spills over into the fictions of these years. Yet precisely what prescriptions they offer is unclear, somewhat undermining the view that his didactic ends betrayed his artistic gifts. Arguably, the final outcomes presented by his later works urge the reader to wrestle with imponderables that must be pondered or, in his own metaphor, doors that the writer cannot walk through. Chekhov spoke for many in expressing frustration with the end of *Resurrection*, asking ironically why Tolstoy finished it with 'writing from the Gospels but not from the Koran?' Tolstoy's reaction was to affirm that he had written the entire novel 'for the sole purpose so that this final chapter be read'.

If we take that seriously as a critical observation, then the importance of the conclusion is not to be judged solely or even mainly as a device to complete the plot. Tolstoy has taken Nekhlyudov to a point of no return in relation to his past but only to put him on an uncertain path. This is where *Resurrection* ends, with Nekhlyudov in a prayerful state reciting a mantra, facing beyond the book and still in search of redemption. That provisional, suspended position fits into a pattern of the late fiction.

RESURRECTION

At the end of *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, a novella that considers whether the moment of death can salvage an ordinary life, the hero sees the light – but it is unclear whether the light is blinding pain or a metaphor for transcendence. In the 'Afterword' to *The Kreutzer Sonata*, a confessional novella about adultery and passion gone wrong, Tolstoy advocates that humanity adopt complete abstinence as the only solution to the problem of sexual jealousy. This looks logical and absurd and to be taken in the same spirit as Swift's 'modest proposal' that the Irish eat their own children to ease hardship. Universal chastity is more plausibly a *reductio ad absurdum* than a proposed solution. And finally, to return to the end of *Resurrection*, here the reader is faced with a hero whose chosen path of redemption and exoneration through love falls short. He is left reciting to himself excerpts from Tolstoy's rewriting of the Gospels and therefore in a new place spiritually even while in limbo emotionally. In all these cases, if there is any lesson to be learned, it is that it would be better to live thoughtfully in the hope of avoiding the temptations that lead us to do harm. For Ivan Ilyich it is already too late. For Nekhlyudov, there is the chance that his despair represents a step toward renunciation of a dogma that he mistook for love. For Maslova there is exoneration, community, and love – and that is something.

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