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Introduction

New readers are advised that this Introduction makes details of the plots explicit

Marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures.
Samuel Johnson

The four stories in this volume are all about love, but they take such different attitudes towards it that it is hard at first to believe they were written by the same person. Their author, Count Leo Tolstoy, wanted to believe when he was young that people could be both sexually virtuous and happy. Virtuous happiness meant marriage and fidelity for him, and in Family Happiness (1859), his first love story, he attempts to domesticate sexuality. In his later life, when he was writing the other three stories in the volume – The Devil, The Kreutzer Sonata and Father Sergius – he no longer believed this to be possible.

At the time he wrote Family Happiness Tolstoy had limited experience of family life: he had lost his mother before he was two, and his father at eight, after which he and his four siblings were raised mostly together by benevolent relatives. He did not yet have a wife and children of his own, leaving him free to dream up a perfect family life without memories or experience to contradict it. Family Happiness was a dress rehearsal for courtships depicted in the great novels War and Peace (1865–9) and Anna Karenina (1875–8). He wrote both of these during the first twenty, happy years of his marriage to Sofya Andreyevna Behrs. Tolstoy’s most detailed sympathetic description of marriage itself, as opposed to courtship, is in Anna Karenina, which also describes both open infidelity and married bliss and many states in between. In this novel, Kitty and Konstantin Levin get to have their wedding cake and eat it
too, but Anna is not so lucky. She has to choose either love or virtue, and pays the price for her choice.

After *Anna Karenina* Tolstoy mentioned happy marriages from time to time, but never again made one a major subject in his fiction. In the 1880s, he and his wife began to quarrel seriously about the radical simplification of their lives that Tolstoy believed necessary for moral reasons. Although Tolstoy was a titled member of the landed gentry, he wanted the family to live like the peasants around them who, as he saw it, so unjustly supported their idleness and luxury. By now the mother of a large family, Sofya Andreyevna defended its interests against her husband’s utopian dreams. There was another, related source of tension as well, one which resonates ironically with *Family Happiness*. Early in the 1880s, the Tolstoy family began to winter in Moscow for the sake of the older children. For the first time, Sofya Andreyevna was able to lead the society life of which she had been deprived when her husband had brought her, in 1862, as an eighteen-year-old bride to his country estate, Yasnaya Polyana. Tolstoy was very dependent on his wife, and disliked the socializing that took her away from her role as wife, mother and, not incidentally, his helpmate. Like Sofya Andreyevna, moreover, he suffered from extreme jealousy. These tensions and Sofya Andreyevna’s resolute opposition to Tolstoy’s preferred way of life undermined his earlier hope of happiness and virtue within marriage. The three late stories in this volume – written around the same time (1886–91) – are all connected to one another, and to this struggle: they are modern morality tales intended to shock with their brutal realism about sex.

Tolstoy’s definition of love, once formed, did not change substantially over his lifetime. As is typical of him, even as he was debunking clichés about love in his early writings he was replacing them with a new, complex definition crafted out of personal experience and his reading of the few but great writers who were his primary mentors on this and many other subjects in his youth. These included his Russian predecessors Alexandr Pushkin and Mikhail Lermontov, as well as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (*Emile and Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse*), Laurence
Sterne (A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (The Sorrows of Young Werther) and Plato (the Symposium). Like Sergey in Family Happiness, Tolstoy loved women but wanted to manage their extraordinary power over him. He was ashamed of his own sensuality and feared the loss of self that occurred in sex. At the same time, he craved an intimacy so complete that two selves might dissolve into one, and he found a model for this in the idea of eros expounded in the Symposium. As a social critic and moralist, Tolstoy also understood from his own case that sexual desire, as the most potent passion, had to be restrained if the needs of the individual were to be subordinated to those of society. As long as he thought this was possible, he was one of the great poets of love and married life. When he ceased to believe that sexual love could be tamed enough to make it serve virtue, he turned against sex and even marriage itself.

It is clear from diaries and letters as well as fiction that Tolstoy believed that the psyche contained several 'voices'. Among these were the body, the mind, the conscience and the will, which may speak for any of the other three. In his opinion, what we call love was a product of those several voices, and at times he simply broke it down into its constituent parts. On 19 October 1852, for instance, he declared in his diary that 'there is no such thing as love. Instead there is the physical desire for intercourse and the demand of reason for a partner.' When separate, physical desire corresponds to lust and the rational demand for a partner to friendship-love, which Tolstoy later associated with Christian agape. But when he depicted it in fiction, Tolstoy almost never defined love out of existence by simply equating it with one of its parts. For better or for worse, for the major characters in his stories it usually involves both body and mind, and perhaps the conscience as well. What he could not decide upon was the relation between body and mind, between lust and agape, whether one should be sacrificed for the other, whether this was even possible, or whether there was some way that the two might work together harmoniously. This last alternative was the most desirable, and, starting with Family Happiness, Tolstoy tried to depict it.
The story has autobiographical roots. In 1856 the twenty-eight-year-old Tolstoy began a brief courtship of Valeriya Arsenieva, who was seventeen. We know about the relationship from correspondence in which Tolstoy preaches to her about everything from her dress to her vocation as a woman. In the story, Tolstoy debunks romantic stereotypes, replacing them with the virtuous love that he advocates in his letters to Arsenieva. The story also offers a polemic response by the young writer to the love stories of his rival and more famous contemporary Ivan Turgenev. These never describe married life in any detail, and Tolstoy now claimed this subject for himself. *Family Happiness* went unnoticed by the literary critics, and Tolstoy himself turned against it so quickly that he tried to prevent the publication of its second part. Yet just three years after its publication, in 1862, contemporary critic Apollon Grigoriev recognized Tolstoy’s subtle handling of its subject matter and praised it as a forgotten gem, which successfully depicted ‘the transition from the feeling of passion into another feeling’.

*Family Happiness* is partly an idyll of a love animated but not corrupted by sensuality, and partly the tale of its inevitable unravelling. In the love affair between Sergey and Masha, sexual desire is sublimated so as to serve the higher aims of eros. As lovers, each character wants to give himself or herself entirely to the other, and each fears to do so. Sergey appears first as Masha’s guardian and a friend to her late father. He struggles to maintain that role, but he is the first to fall in love, and she is seduced by her power over him. Over the summer Sergey visits frequently and treats her as a ‘young and favoured companion’, so that friendship comes before sex. At this stage though, Masha still feels that he has not admitted her to his ‘entire alien world’, and this tantalizes her. She knows that he loves her – in what way she is not yet sure – but she wants to please him so she pretends to be better than she is, and while practising this pretence she becomes better. In the process she studies him so closely that she is finally able to anticipate his moral advice. For Tolstoy, this is a crucial moment of bonding for both man and woman, because Sergey, like Rousseau’s Emile, has projected his moral self into the beloved woman,
who now can act out the impulses of this self better than he can. In this Rousseau-inspired version of Platonic eros as described in the Symposium, love makes two incomplete souls whole and one.

The moral lesson that Masha absorbs during the courtship — crucial for the merger of virtue and happiness — is that one should live for others. While in love, one painlessly and spontaneously gives oneself to another. This state of soul will not last, but through the memory of it it will have an enduring influence on the psyche. Meanwhile, the peak of ‘wild delight’ (dikii vostorg), Tolstoy’s code for sexual energy, precedes actual consummation, and is unselfconscious, at least for Masha. The two lovers, Sergey as well as Masha, are repeatedly compared to children at this stage in the courtship, the ‘wildness’ of eros having been thoroughly tamed in the ideal romance that Tolstoy is constructing.

Masha stands at the apex of her power in the episode in the walled garden. When Sergey goes to get the cherries, she clandestinely follows him and hears his murmured endearments. Angry that she has breached his last defences, Sergey attacks the very notion of romantic love in a rearguard and unsuccessful attempt to re-establish distance between himself and Masha, who recognizes that he continues to love her.

Later, when Masha aggressively pushes Sergey towards a declaration of love, he hides behind narrative — the story of A. and B. — but Masha breaks out of the storyline to declare her love for him. Even once they are engaged, the couple are ambivalent about giving themselves up completely to their feelings for one another: Sergey seems afraid ‘to give in to the enormous, harmful tenderness that was in him’, and Masha has similar misgivings. At one point, Sergey looks at her with his ‘attentive, magnetic gaze’.

I made no reply and involuntarily looked into his eyes. Suddenly something strange happened to me: first I stopped seeing what was around me, then his face disappeared before me, and only his eyes shone, it seemed, facing my own, then it seemed to me that these eyes were inside me; everything grew dark, I could see
nothing and had to screw up my eyes in order to tear myself away from the sense of pleasure and fear which that gaze was producing in me . . . [emphasis mine].

The subsequent night walk in the garden, with its magical contrasts of light and shade, is emblematic of their romantic love as both pleasurable and frightening. Tolstoy’s lovers wish for this perfect union, but they also want to preserve their individuality, and this tension persists even beyond their marriage. The wedding day coincides with the first frost, and the bride feels fear rather than passion as Sergey hands her into his carriage at the end of Part One of the story. Part Two begins with the two-month honeymoon, a decline from the heights of happiness before the wedding as Tolstoy charts the transition away from romantic love. The pre-marital merger of self-sacrifice, duty and erotic love gives way now to ‘merely a selfish feeling of love for each other, a desire to be loved, a constant gaiety that had no apparent cause, and a forgetting of everything in the world’.

The rest of the story illustrates the fact that being in love cannot survive habituation and must yield to other feelings. Having won Sergey, Masha begins to feel enslaved by him because they are too close. Realizing that she is bored, Sergey takes her to Petersburg, where she sets out to conquer society. In a series of subtly described moments, she pushes Sergey away until he closes the door to his heart, never again fully to open it to her. As this happens, Sergey begins to parody the language of love: he speaks bitterly of Masha’s ‘sacrifice’ in giving up the Prince’s praise to go home to the country with her husband, and, most cruel for Masha, he uses the term ‘family happiness’ ironically.

In *Family Happiness* lust is tamed by friendship so that the two co-exist at least temporarily, and furthermore sexual desire encourages self-sacrifice, at least during the courtship. (True, Masha’s attraction to the sexy Marquis suggests something lacking in her relationship with her husband, and only coincidence – the summons from her friend – saves her from disaster.) The ‘family happiness’ that the couple supposedly achieve at
the end of the story seems too rational to be a satisfying substitution for the romantic love that precedes it, and therefore the title retains an ambiguity that its author surely did not intend. This is especially true because Tolstoy did not yet fully understand the powerful and even erotic bond between mother and child that could keep a woman interested in family life, and that he depicts so magnificently in *Anna Karenina*. The two babies in *Family Happiness* are merely stage props.

Tolstoy may have turned against this story because he sensed something forced about his heroine’s retreat from her quest for sexual satisfaction. While spinning his own male fantasy about the perfect wife, perhaps he had given short shrift to her needs. And it is possible that Tolstoy realized this shortcoming in his characterization because, in the midst of writing the work, he himself fell truly in love for the first time. Embarrassingly for the young theoretician, his beloved was a married woman, Aksinya Bazykina, a local peasant whose husband worked in the city. The affair lasted for four years, until his marriage in 1862, and in 1860 he wrote in his diary about Aksinya that ‘it’s no longer the feelings of a stag, but those of a husband for a wife’. When his young bride Sofya found these lines and others in the diary that her bridegroom insisted she read, she became very jealous of Aksinya, who occasionally worked as a cleaner in the house. Many years later, the love affair with Aksinya and his wife’s reaction to it provided autobiographical material for *The Devil*.

*The Devil* has alternate endings (see Appendix 2) because it is unfinished: it appeared only posthumously in 1912. Tolstoy concealed its existence from his family, probably because he knew that his wife would recognize Aksinya Bazykina in Stepanida, though of course Stepanida and Liza are not intended as exact equivalents to Aksinya and Sofya Tolstaya: Tolstoy’s works are never crudely autobiographical in this way. The actual plot of the story is based on the real-life murder by a man called N. N. Frederikhs of his married peasant lover Stepanida Munitsina, whom he shot three months after his marriage while she was at work threshing grain in a barn. Irtenev, the hero’s last name in *The Devil* (though not his first
one), is a variant form of the protagonist’s name in Tolstoy’s early trilogy *Childhood—Boyhood—Youth*. In notes and letters, Tolstoy referred to the story variously as ‘The Story of Frederikhs’ or ‘Irtenev’, and named it *The Devil* only on a fair copy of the manuscript produced after he had written the story in 1889. The change in titles indicates the process by which Tolstoy transforms raw material from life into a story shaped by artistic and moral considerations.

Tolstoy was struggling to control his own sexual appetites when he wrote *The Devil* in November 1889. The hero of the story loves two different women, one for her body and the other for her mind. Stepanida’s bedroom eyes radiate the energy that animates her whole body. She is not ashamed of her sexual appetite, which she also indulges with other lovers, and there is no suggestion that she has any other reason for coupling with Irtenev than lust. In turn, he imagines her through his various bodily senses, freely mixing his memory of her with that of the places in which they have had sex. The spiritual, but angular and rather sickly Liza is represented mostly by her ‘clear, gentle and artless’ eyes, and her love for her husband is said to give her an ability ‘to see into his innermost thoughts’. Readers of *War and Peace* will recognize her as a rewriting of Marya Bolkonskaya, without Marya’s strength of soul.

In *The Devil*, in a pale echo of the Platonism of *Family Happiness*, both Irtenev’s love for his wife and his lust for Stepanida are presented as legitimate and natural needs of the human soul. Perhaps if Tolstoy had continued to work on the story he would have depicted his hero as more corrupted by his milieu. In any case, Irtenev’s friendship—love for Liza does not satisfy him sexually, because he finds himself desiring his former mistress even though he imagines that it is not he, but ‘someone else’ (*kto-to*), who lusts after Stepanida. The depiction of lust as irresistible may reflect the influence of the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, whom Tolstoy began reading in the later 1860s and who equated sex with the amoral and overwhelming life force from which one could free oneself only by suicide. The moral goal in *The Devil* is freedom rather than the perfect intimacy of love. This is also consistent with Tolstoy’s new-
found devotion to the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, according to which the truly human is the rational, and freedom from passion is the primary desire of the reason. In the story sexuality and spirituality are seen as separate, and reason must cage desire rather than harness it.

Tolstoy had interrupted his work on the final drafts of *The Kreutzer Sonata*, which he had started in 1887, to write *The Devil*. *The Kreutzer Sonata* was banned in 1890 for its explicit sexual content until his wife received special permission from the Tsar to include it in the collected works that she edited (and that provided the principal income for the family). The so-called frame narrative, in which the hero Pozdnyshev tells his story to another narrator, repeats the structure of several of Turgenev’s love stories, such as *First Love* (1861) and *Spring Torrents* (1871). In these stories Turgenev depicts failed romantic love and opportunities that his narrators usually lacked the courage to pursue. By contrast, *The Kreutzer Sonata* attacks romantic love, and even associates it with murder. The opening is a modern version of the *Symposium*, in which characters, rather than gathering at a feast as in Plato, meet as strangers on a train. They discuss the nature of love, but none of them provides a satisfactory definition of it. The old merchant defends the old-fashioned double standard according to which women stayed faithful and men strayed. Meanwhile, the modern woman and her lawyer companion argue in favour of free love. For Pozdnyshev such ‘love’ is nothing but physical attraction, and therefore cannot be the basis of marriage, because it cannot last.

Pozdnyshev, following Rousseau, blames excessive lust on the effects of civilization on man, and he then illustrates his arguments by recounting his own courtship and marriage. Before he gets to this reminiscence, he puts forward a series of outrageous propositions. Too much rich food and too little physical labour inflame sexual desire among the upper classes. The main sin in our society is the possibility of physical relations without moral ones; men just pay women off, thereby avoiding human interaction. With a concentration exclusively on bodies and bodily satisfaction, ‘brotherly’ relations between the sexes
are impossible after childhood; in fact there is no real difference between prostitutes and married women, who are just prostitutes paid for the long haul. Like Jews, women take revenge on men for the injustices done them. They use male sensuality to capture men, and their demands for luxury are a source of the great injustices and inequalities of society. Pozdnyshev then advances his most shocking claim, that the human race should end, because if celibacy became universal the goal of human life would be achieved, and there would be no reason for life to go on.

Tolstoy's contemporaries were scandalized by Pozdnyshev's advocacy of total celibacy, and many could not believe that Tolstoy would take such a position himself. In response, in 1889, even before he had finished The Kreutzer Sonata, Tolstoy wrote a Postface (see Appendix I) to it in which he declared that he agreed with Pozdnyshev. Tolstoy had borrowed some of his ideas about chastity from American Shakers and the American gynaecologist Alice B. Stockham (1833-1912), whose book, Tokology, which Tolstoy had read in 1888, recommended sexual continence (intercourse no more than once a month, and never during pregnancy or menstruation) in marriage. He did make a subtle distinction between himself and his hero, however. Pozdnyshev calls for celibacy now, while in the Postface Tolstoy presents it as an ideal, rather than a realizable goal. At one point in the text itself, the frame narrator offers a counter-argument to Pozdnyshev's perverse idealism by saying that the purpose of life can only be life itself, rather than, as Pozdnyshev maintains, the pursuit of a goal, no matter how lofty. And Tolstoy was aware that though his argument has merit, Pozdnyshev's extreme position is counterintuitive, and unnatural for a healthy man. Hence it is adopted by a character who, having committed murder, has lost the will to live.

Pozdnyshev's discussion of music in Chapter XXIII is clearly related to his concerns about the dangers of romantic love. As the purest form of art, music is the most 'infectious', to use the term by which Tolstoy described art's effect in his book What is Art? Pozdnyshev argues that, since music induces such a
receptive mood, it should always be placed within a moral setting; otherwise, it arouses listeners without guiding their conduct. The actual performance of Beethoven’s Kreutzer Sonata by his wife and the violinist Trukhachevsky at the home concert makes Pozdnyshev feel joyful and conciliatory. The murder itself, however, with its ominous rhythms – ‘the laws of fury’ – and its ‘crescendo’, is described using musical terminology, as if later the memory of the sonata focuses Pozdnyshev’s later rage.

Tolstoy himself passionately loved music, and often wept when he heard it. He seems to have chosen Beethoven’s Kreutzer Sonata as the catalyst to the murder because he regarded it as especially infectious and therefore dangerous. He may have experienced the relationship between the violin and the piano, especially in the presto, as sexual; in any case, for the later Tolstoy morality requires that we stay in touch with ourselves, so vulnerability to the influence of others in love or art can be risky. Yet both remain immensely attractive, even to Pozdnyshev and surely to his creator. Pozdnyshev’s murderous rage must be stoked by the unity that he observes between his wife and Trukhachevsky as they perform the sonata. He must recognize that while he rules his wife by intimidation, his rival conquers her with music-making. In reacting so violently to the harmony of their performance, even the hero of The Kreutzer Sonata does not simply lust after women. Just as in Family Happiness and other positive accounts of love, he yearns for intimacy that is more than physical.

Of the four stories in this volume, Father Sergius is the only one that is not primarily about love, but all three crises in the life of its hero involve sex. Tolstoy at first associated the story with The Devil, but in 1891 he wrote about it to his friend Chertkov that “[t]he battle with lust is an episode or rather, one step, the main battle is with something else, with human glory”. The chief vice of Stepan Kasatsky, who as a monk takes the name Sergius, is ambition or vainglory (tscheslavie), and he also possesses to a very high degree the life force that fuels sexual desire. He is enormously tall with gleaming eyes, charismatic and volatile: at military school his perfect
behaviour is spoiled by ‘animal’ fits of temper. Like Irtenev in *The Devil*, he tries to control his passions, with imperfect results. Having become a monk, he is tempted by ambition as his reputation as a holy man and healer spreads. Eventually he also succumbs to lust. Although the story’s narrator does not address this theme, it is worth asking why Sergius is so ambitious: it indicates pride, of course, but also a need for the love and praise of others. When Sergius was twelve, his father died, and Tolstoy, perhaps drawing on his own experience, may see this as one source of Sergius’s vulnerability. It has a more universal cause as well, which may underlie love and ambition alike. Tutored by Plato in this respect, Tolstoy believed that both love and ambition are reactions to our knowledge of our own mortality and the resultant sense of incompleteness and insecurity. Recurrences of ‘fleshly desire’ in Father Sergius are invariably paired with religious doubt: Tolstoy seems to suggest that belief in God will heal the wound of mortality and thereby curb desire. Tolstoy underscores the connection between erotic love and vainglory by having Stepan Kasatsky fall in love with both Tsar Nicholas I, closeness to whom is the ultimate goal of his ambition, and Countess Korotkova. The discovery that Korotkova has been the mistress of Nicholas discredits both passions at once because Kasatsky ceases to love both figures, but the passions resurface in Sergius’s later religious life. Eventually Sergius learns that the only way to control them is to avoid temptation. This is one reason why he eventually chooses to become a wandering beggar among the peasant masses where, it may be, he can leave behind his imperfect mortal self by truly living for others anonymously, without personal reward or recognition.

By the time Tolstoy wrote *Father Sergius* he knew the Russian hagiographic tradition well, and his story borrows motifs from medieval lives and legends. Like *The Devil*, however, it is written from the perspective of an ethical Christianity that rejects mysticism and assimilates the language of saints and demons to ethical concerns. Sergius’s final choice of a beggar’s life signifies a rejection by Tolstoy of the life of hermit saints and those who perform spectacular acts of self-abasement such
as chopping off a finger. According to Tolstoy, a saintly man practises charity and commits no miracles other than the reform of his own sinful life.

Father Sergius’s flight can also be understood as a projection of Tolstoy’s own desire to flee his family as he argued with his wife about their luxurious way of life. (Eventually, of course, in 1910, he did leave home to live among the people, only to die of pneumonia a few days later at the Astapovo railway station.) The depiction of Sergius’s struggle with the consequences of fame may also reflect Tolstoy’s desire to resist the temptations of fame as his own mounting literary reputation in the later 1880s and especially the 1890s brought him admirers and disciples from all over the world. In Chapter VII, Sergius has come to think of himself as a ‘burning light’ (goriaschchii svetil’nik), and this metaphor links the holy man to the poet in Tolstoy’s conception: both have an inner intensity that comes from their connection to transcendental truth and that is the source of their charisma. Fame, however, dampens the intensity, and, as happens to Sergius, prophets of truth lose their connection to the Divine when they become proud. Psychologically, holy man and poet share the same dilemma in Tolstoy’s poetics. Their authenticity and power depend upon their freedom from the need for fame.

As I have tried to demonstrate in this introduction, Tolstoy’s fiction is both confessional and didactic, and if it were one without the other it would be much less profound. He tells all, leaving out nothing he has felt or understood, but moral considerations shape the telling. All four controversial stories in this volume balance these two imperatives. In *Family Happiness*, Tolstoy celebrates healthy sexuality within moral boundaries and makes the complete though temporary spiritual union of lovers psychologically convincing. And yet this happiness – and the success of the story – is precarious and ultimately unconvincing because it does not take full account of the problem of female sexual desire. For related reasons, the structure of the work is not entirely successful: although Masha narrates the work, Sergey seems closer to the author’s point of view because he, unlike the naive heroine, understands what is
happening to the two of them. The later tales are grimmer than *Family Happiness*. Even in old age Tolstoy cannot honestly depict pleasure in total abstinence, so he provides instead a chilling account of the pains of surfeit. He nudges his readers towards virtue by frightening and disgusting them with the consequences of vice. What the later stories lack is the sympathetic account in *Family Happiness* and other earlier works of love between men and women. In them the tender battle of the sexes has turned into all-out war without a winner.

At the same time, these later stories do not fence sexual desire within a domestic and marital relationship and therefore it ranges with all its natural force and attraction. Contemporary reaction to *The Kreutzer Sonata*, the only one of the three to appear during Tolstoy’s lifetime, may be gauged from a letter from the provincial city of Voronezh about responses to readings of the work there:

‘The Sonata’ has had an extraordinary effect on everybody, struck them like the blow of a club. Furious discussions flame up; some are for, some against. Most adherents are women. The common reaction to ‘The Sonata’ is: ‘strong stuff, very strong stuff!’ [ . . . ] Some women have said that they could not sleep the night after they heard it the first time."

Even today Pozdnyshov’s description of the murder of his wife is hard to take. By it Tolstoy showed that he could depict sex and violence as well as any Zola (or Scorsese). Tolstoy’s rhetorical strategy in his fiction in general depends upon his readers’ tacit agreement that he is writing truly about emotional states that they themselves have experienced or imagined. The strategy is tested most seriously when the reader is made to recall the bitter and shameful rather than the sweet. If readers have been in love but fallen out of it; if they have wanted to kill their loved ones; if they have lusted vigorously; or desperately sought the approval and even worship of others: Tolstoy depends upon our own memories to entangle us in his later tragic stories. Since such states can feel enslaving and to that extent shameful, even readers who consider Tolstoy moralistic
cannot wholly reject his ambivalence towards them. Violent though the narratives of the later Tolstoy may be, he scandalizes today’s readers even more thoroughly with his uncompromising moral stances. These would be rejected out of hand as politically incorrect if they did not emerge with such inevitability from his stories.

Donna Tussing Orwin

NOTES

1. In 1896, for instance, Sofya Andreyevna became infatuated with the pianist and composer S. I. Taneyev, Tchaikovsky’s favourite student and twelve years her junior. Taneyev was homosexual and the friendship, which continued over four years, was platonic. Nonetheless, Tolstoy, who was sixty-eight in 1896 and had supposedly renounced sexual love, in his jealous rage more than once contemplated leaving home.

2. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* [PSS], vol. 46 (Moscow, 1937) p. 146.

3. The word is a Greek one that in Christian usage came to mean unselfish brotherly love.


5. This whole history of the course of the love between Sergey and Masha must be what Grigoriev had in mind when he praised the story.

6. Princess Marya Bolkonskaya is the daughter of old Prince Bolkonsky and the sister of Prince Andrey. In the course of the novel she discovers and satisfies her own need for a husband and family life.

7. In 1887, Tolstoy read Kant’s *Critique of Practical Reason* and was so impressed that he started to translate it.

8. The Shakers were founded by Ann Lee in 1772 in Manchester, England, but soon emigrated to America and settled in 1776 in Watervliet, New York. They practised total celibacy, so they depended upon conversions and adoptions to maintain
membership. At its height around 1850, the movement had about six thousand members in communities from Maine to Kentucky.

9. A presto is a very quick part in a piece of music. Readers might want to listen to the presto in Beethoven's sonata to see if they agree with Tolstoy's judgement of it.


12. It is no accident that all three of the later stories have been made into excellent films. For a list of film adaptations of works by Tolstoy, see www.tolstoystudies.org.