

5



Tolstoy, Ge, and Two Pilates

A Tale of the Interarts

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In Lev Tolstoy's folktale "Where Love Is, There God Is Also" (1884), the protagonist, a pious shoemaker, hears what he believes to be Christ's voice one night in his sleep: "Martin, Martin! Watch outside tomorrow, I'm coming."¹ The next day Martin sees passing before his window an old man struggling through the snow, a soldier's wife out begging with her newborn, and an elderly market woman quarrelling with a boy thief. One by one, Martin invites these guests into his home, listens to their troubles, and assists them however he can. At the end of the day, disappointed at not having seen Christ in person, he opens his Bible to a telling passage: "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Matt. 25:40).² Martin understands at last that "the Savior did, in fact, come to see him."³ Through this surprise ending, Tolstoy thus frustrates the conventions of the Jesus redivivus tale, a popular nineteenth-century genre that had attracted such predecessors as Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Balzac, and Flaubert. Tolstoy's Christ has much to say to the modern world, but he need not return in the flesh to do so. In less schematic form, this pattern is repeated in many folktales that Tolstoy wrote from the 1880s onward: Christ becomes manifest not through his image and likeness, but through the enduring truth of his teaching. Indeed, nowhere in Tolstoy's voluminous literary output, either

before or after his celebrated "conversion," does the Word ever become incarnate as a literary character.

For Tolstoy, the Christ figure was foremost a problem of words, not images. This does not mean that his image could not be misrepresented. Tolstoy was, in fact, seldom satisfied with how painters portrayed Christ in their own medium. After securing a permanent place among Russia's cultural elite with the serial publication of *War and Peace* (1865–1869), Tolstoy pronounced judgment on one painting of Christ after another over the next four decades. In private letters, he dismissed Fritz von Uhde's popular series of gospel scenes in modern settings as "meaningless genre," while the historicism motivating such works as Vasily Polenov's *Christ and the Adulteress* (1886, GRM) and Vasily Vereshchagin's *Execution on a Roman Cross* (1887, private collection) he found misguided, tendentious, or both.⁴ In *Anna Karenina* (1878), one character criticizes Gustave Doré's celebrated biblical illustrations for being "too realistic";⁵ in a letter, Tolstoy claims that Doré "worried only about beauty" in creating the same illustrations.⁶ As for the Old Masters, for whom he had little patience as a rule, Tolstoy was especially indignant at the grotesqueries of Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* (1541).⁷ Tolstoy's dissatisfaction with existing representations of Christ extended to Russian iconography, both traditional and

revisionist. There is no room for a Russian Christ in Tolstoy's personal canon.⁸ is satire of Orthodox liturgy in *Resurrection* (1899), in which he mocks priests for worshipping the image of a god whose body they also eat, was one of the contributing factors behind his excommunication in 1901. In Tolstoy's view, the Old Russian icon reflected "the religious worldview of the people in the midst of which it arose," and in that sense it was authentic "Christian art." The Russian icon had nevertheless always been based on "corruption of Christ's teaching."⁹ Tolstoy was less sympathetic toward the efforts of Viktor Vasnetsov and Mikhail Nesterov to modernize Russian iconography. He responded coolly to Nesterov after the painter forwarded him an illustration of his *Holy Russia* (1905, GRM); Nesterov's Christ, for Tolstoy, looked like an "Italian tenor."¹⁰

Instead of turning to the face of the Russian icon, Tolstoy strives to hear and understand the words of the Teacher. Already in *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy subtly undercuts the preeminence of the Christ image in the arts through a minimally ekphrastic portrayal of *The Admonition of Pilate*, a painting by the character Mikhailov. The significance of Mikhailov's painting is not exhausted by its metapoetic function in Tolstoy's novel, moreover. This fictive *Admonition of Pilate* has intermedial ties to a number of paintings that had provoked polarized reactions in the Russian press, notably Aleksandr Ivanov's *Appearance of Christ to the People* (1858, GTG), Nikolai Ge's *Last Supper* (1863, GRM), and Ivan Kramskoi's *Christ in the Wilderness* (1872, fig. 5.1). In such paintings, the aesthetics of modern realism are brought to bear on the sacred iconography of the True Face. Beyond his role within the novel, then, the character Mikhailov constituted a critical intervention by a writer into a major controversy in the art world. A decade later, Tolstoy intervened even more directly in the production and reception of yet another painting of Christ in a realist style, this time Ge's scandalous *What is Truth?* (1890, GTG). For Tolstoy, Ge alone had resolved a critical impasse in the history of Christian art, portraying Christ neither as a god nor as a mere historical figure, but, with unmatched success, as a teacher.

Tolstoy's reactions to two very different paintings of Christ before Pilate—Mikhailov's fictive *Admonition of Pilate* and Ge's *What is Truth?*—form the outline of a remarkable chapter in the modernization of the Christ image in late imperial Russia. Given his unique social position as both a religious figure and a leading tastemaker, Tolstoy's extended dialogue with painters,

critics, and curators on the subject of how best to paint Christ provides an unusually fruitful opportunity for stepping outside the hermeneutic enclosure of an individual artist's oeuvre and into what can be termed the "politics of the interarts"; that is, the ways in which different types of cultural producers interact over a common set of artistic problems. On the one hand, without detracting from the visual sophistication of his own poetics, it can be said that Tolstoy was less prone to fetishizing "the image" as an ideal model of creative process than were most major nineteenth-century novelists. In this sense, Tolstoy's peculiarly nonpictorial staging of Mikhailov's *Admonition of Pilate* serves as a foil to the ekphrastic impulse pervading the novels of many of his contemporaries. On the other hand, the priority of word over image in Tolstoy's Christology bore iconographic consequences for actual painters. For Ge, whose career had been launched by a revisionist depiction of the Last Supper, the Tolstoyan Christ presented an artistic challenge. Rather than fabricating his own literary portrait of Christ, Tolstoy drew on his outside authority to consecrate those rare Christ images that he felt satisfied the twin demands of art and religion. Yet the task of producing such an image, as Tolstoy understood, ultimately belonged to the painter.

Beyond the Metapoetics of the Christ Image

Near the midpoint of *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy introduces the character Mikhailov, an impoverished painter from the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts now working in a small town in Italy. While living abroad, Anna and Vronsky, along with the medievalist Golenishchev, visit the artist's studio in the hope of seeing his unfinished masterpiece, *The Admonition of Pilate*. Significantly, Golenishchev first mentions Mikhailov to Anna and Vronsky after reading an unfavorable review of the painting in a Russian newspaper. According to Golenishchev, the painting represents "Christ as a Jew, with all the realism of the new school." Before Anna or Vronsky even have a chance to see the painting, Golenishchev becomes a veritable compendium of clichés in denouncing its "realism." None of the other characters, least of all the painter himself, ever actually use this word. Yet it is clear that a public controversy of the sort typical for realist paintings of Christ is already brewing around Mikhailov's *Admonition of Pilate*. Golenishchev, a nobleman like Vronsky, expresses his concern that



5.1. Ivan Kramskoi, *Christ in the Wilderness*, 1872. Oil on canvas, 180 x 210 cm, State Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow.

the painter, due to his provincial origins and lack of education, had succumbed during his studies in St. Petersburg to “unbelief, negation, and materialism.” In particular, Mikhailov has followed the “false direction” of the “Ivanov-Strauss-Renan relation to Christ and religion painting”: “if they don’t want to portray God, but rather a revolutionary or a wise man, why don’t they take Socrates, Franklin, or Charlotte Corday instead, only not Christ.” Later, in Mikhailov’s studio, Golenishchev takes the artist to task for having painted a “Man-God” instead of a “God-Man”: “in front of Ivanov’s [*Appearance of Christ*] a question arises both for the believer and for the unbeliever—is he God or not?” In a rare articulate moment, Mikhailov replies that he had not thought that this would be “an issue for educated people.”¹¹

Through the voice of the unsympathetic Golenishchev, Tolstoy attacks several different trends in modern Christology, from the historical Jesus of David Strauss and Ernest Renan to Vladimir Soloviev’s philosophy of Godmanhood. Perhaps most directly, Golenishchev’s comments parody the responses that Dostoevsky’s characters make in *The Idiot* (1869) before a reproduction of Hans Holbein the Younger’s *The Dead Christ in the Tomb* (1521). On seeing the original in Basel, Dostoevsky himself had told his wife that “one could lose one’s faith from that picture,” a remark later repeated by Myshkin in *The Idiot*.¹² Set ekphrases of Renaissance religious paintings—not least Ippolit’s harrowing description of Holbein’s *Dead Christ* from the same novel—perform central metapoetic functions in numerous Russian, French, and English novels of the period. In *Daniel Deronda* (1876), after the eponymous hero discovers the secret of his Jewish background, George Eliot discusses at length Titian’s *Tribute Money* (1518), dwelling on the painter’s portrayal of a Jewish Christ. In *Là-bas* (1891), to note one last example, Joris-Karl Huysmans devotes pages to the gruesome details of the Isenheim Altarpiece (1515) by Matthias Grünewald, an artist whom the novelist praises as the “most frenzied of realists.”¹³ In place of a Renaissance masterpiece, Tolstoy in *Anna Karenina* tellingly supplies his own fictive painting. Yet where he departs most from other novelists lies in his resistance to the Christ image as a master model for the interarts. In contrast to the ekphrastic metapoetics of Dostoevsky, Eliot, or Huysmans, Tolstoy does not describe the content or composition of Mikhailov’s painting other than to note the placement of two key figures: Christ in the foreground, and John in the background. Even these minimal details are refracted

through the perspective of Mikhailov, whose internal monologue is more central to Tolstoy’s own metapoetics than are the details of his painting.

Instead of re-creating Mikhailov’s painting in words, Tolstoy focuses on how other characters misinterpret it. Like Golenishchev, Vronsky and Anna fare poorly in their responses to Mikhailov’s *Admonition of Pilate*. During the couple’s brief sojourn in Italy, Vronsky dabbles in painting imitative of the early Italian Renaissance. Like a German Nazarene, he even takes to wearing a hat and scarf “in the medieval manner.” For Vronsky, Mikhailov’s painting demonstrates great “technique,” a catchword that the artist does not consider particularly flattering or original. To his credit, Vronsky does notice a “charming” painting of two boys fishing among the scattered works in Mikhailov’s studio. Mikhailov himself had forgotten about this genre painting, which had been a source of “suffering and delight” for several months straight only three years before. Even Golenishchev, Mikhailov’s harshest critic, is “sincerely” taken by this second picture. Anna, in contrast to Vronsky, is concerned with the content of *Admonition of Pilate*, as she praises the “remarkable expression of Christ.” Yet Mikhailov finds her words no more insightful than others’: “It was one of a million true things that could be said. . . . Of course there’s the expression of the bureaucrat in Pilate, and of charity in Christ.”¹⁴

Anna, who views Christ as the “center of the picture,”¹⁵ becomes herself the subject of a portrait by Mikhailov. As Amy Mandelker argues, Mikhailov’s portrait of Anna represents the most successful of his three paintings in the novel.¹⁶ Conversely, Mikhailov’s *Admonition of Pilate*, while it does “make an impression” on his visitors, finds the least receptive audience of his works. While Mikhailov considers Christ “the greatest theme open to art,”¹⁷ this is not necessarily a view he shares with Tolstoy, who in *Anna Karenina* and elsewhere tends to devalue the choice of subject matter—long a standard criterion in the academies—as a principal measure of a painting’s worth. In *What is Art?* (1897), for example, a genre-like illustration trumps religious painting in a comparison between two works from the same artist:

We have a painter named Vasnetsov. He painted icons for the [Vladimir] Cathedral in Kiev; he is praised as the founder of some sort of great new Christian art. He worked over these icons for more than ten years. They paid him tens of thousands [of rubles], and all these icons are the vulgar imitation of an imitation of

imitations, without a single spark of feeling. And this same Vasnetsov, for Turgenev's story "The Ostrich," sketched an illustration [. . .] in which a sleeping boy is depicted [. . .] with an ostrich over him. And this picture is a sincere work of art.¹⁸

Like the first-generation Peredvizhniki, Tolstoy rejects the academic hierarchy of religious and historical painting over genre. The illustration of an ostrich or of two boys fishing may well represent true "Christian art" (a recurring term in *What is Art?*), while realist religious paintings (Mikhailov) or modernized icons (Vasnetsov) turn out to be mere imitations. Yet Tolstoy's iconoclasm extends even further than the controversy over high and low styles. Even within *Admonition of Pilate*, Christ is not necessarily the most remarkable figure. Mikhailov remains painfully aware that the "foreshortening of Christ's leg is not correct"; in another passage he frets that his Christ is simply a "repetition of those endless Christs of Titian, Raphael, Rubens." In contrast, he is disappointed that none of his guests notice the figure of John "in the background," which he knows to be the "height of perfection." It would be a mistake to take the inner thoughts of the highly impressionable Mikhailov at face value. Yet it does seem that the Christ figure in *Admonition of Pilate* has not yet emerged as an adequate expression of what had once been a sincere and ecstatic "discovery."¹⁹ Through the staging of Mikhailov's painting, Tolstoy thus decenters the Christ image in two ways—as a subject of the highest importance in Christian art generally and as the focal point of one painting in particular. In both cases, Mikhailov's Christ is undercut by the same criterion of aesthetic judgment: true Christian art is that which provokes a sincere response in others.

Over the past few decades more than a half dozen critics have leaned on Mikhailov's *Admonition of Pilate* as a metapoetic tool in their own readings of *Anna Karenina*. Thus the painting has been called "the emblem of the book"; "the key that opens the basic principles of the novel's poetics"; "an episode with intense metapoetic and hermeneutic qualities"; "a focal point in the novel's debate on visual aesthetics"; and the "point" at which "the general philosophical and aesthetic conception of the novel rises to the surface."²⁰ Several critics have further explored the apparent contradiction between Tolstoy's outspoken criticism of mixed media, especially Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*, and his own no less frequent metapoetic use of musical

and visual media in his fiction.²¹ Beyond contradictions internal to Tolstoy's theory of art, the use of one artistic medium to articulate the rules of another nevertheless involves relations of power. In *Anna Karenina*, the novelist reserves for himself the final word on whether the work of a painter serves as a suitable model for his own prose. This hierarchal relation of novelist-as-critic over painting-as-model is characteristic of the ekphrastic metapoetics that pervade the realist novel in Russia, France, and Britain. Furthermore, these power relations operate not simply between words and images within individual novels but between novelists and painters as cultural authorities in the social sphere. The power imbalance between the novelist and the painter in the nineteenth century belies any deference that the former may pay in their fiction to the images of the latter. In surveying the field of cultural production in nineteenth-century France, Pierre Bourdieu emphasizes the substantial and enduring disparity in social prestige between painters and writers, "despite their increasing exchange of symbolic services."²² As Elizabeth Valkenier has shown in the Russian context, the predominantly noble-born tastemakers of the cultural elite often complained of a lack of education among painters admitted to the St. Petersburg Academy, the latter usually the sons of the petty bourgeoisie, provincial priests, or liberated serfs; Russian painters, Valkenier writes, were often "saddled with a sense of social, cultural, and legal inferiority."²³ This imbalance between novelist and painter was often maintained on both sides, moreover. When Iliia Repin learned of the character Mikhailov in *Anna Karenina*, for example, he could barely contain his joy: "Lev Tolstoy himself (our idol) chose to write about us!!!"²⁴

In terms of cultural capital, the lower-class Mikhailov finds himself similarly at a disadvantage before his aristocratic visitors. Although displeased with their responses, he is "unable to say anything in defense of his own thinking."²⁵ At a biographical level, Mikhailov bears a certain resemblance to the painter Aleksandr Ivanov. Like Ivanov, to whom Golenishchev twice refers, Mikhailov lives in Italy in near poverty and devotes years to a painting of Christ that generates controversy before its completion. Yet it is Kramskoi who arguably serves as the most immediate model for the character Mikhailov. Kramskoi painted two portraits of Tolstoy while living at the latter's estate in the fall of 1873; at that time the artist also first conceived *Mockery*, a large-scale, unfinished painting in which Christ is scorned by the people of Jerusalem

in the presence of Pilate (GRM).²⁶ Without insisting on a complete identification of Mikhailov with Kramskoi, the relationship between Tolstoy and the real-life painter is indicative of the politics of the interarts at the time. Tolstoy, as one of Russia's foremost cultural figures in the 1870s, honored Kramskoi with a much sought-after commission for his portrait; in return, Kramskoi served Tolstoy as a tertiary character whose artistic productions help propagate the writer's own views on art. Kramskoi, like Repin, was for his part highly deferential to the authority of Tolstoy. Twelve years after he painted Tolstoy's portrait, Kramskoi confessed in a letter that he was still haunted by the writer's words about Christ: "In conversation, you once declared that 'Christ and his teaching were no more than a historical moment in the development of humanity.' Many times I've heard similar judgments, but never did it seem so devoid of hope."²⁷

For all their similarities, Kramskoi, unlike Mikhailov, was nevertheless a profoundly articulate interpreter of his own work. As Valkenier has documented, Kramskoi, a self-educated son of the petty bourgeoisie, was acutely self-conscious about his origins. In letters he confessed that he "envied" no one "so much as an educated person," and he often criticized fellow artists on the grounds that they "could not talk, could not behave, and were insufficiently well educated."²⁸ Kramskoi mounts an especially sophisticated defense of *Christ in the Wilderness* in his letters. Realist painters across Europe—from William Holman Hunt to Edouard Manet to Max Liebermann—were often criticized for focusing on the human as opposed to the divine aspect of Christ's dual nature. Few artists defended their humanizing of the Christ image with as much rhetorical flair as did Kramskoi, who wrote to a number of his supporters in the wake of his painting's debut at the first Peredvizhnik exhibition in St. Petersburg in 1872. In Kramskoi's revision of the Temptation, Christ is no more than human, as he confronts not the Devil, as in the gospels, but his own inner demons. Facing the choice between continuing or abandoning his still nascent mission, Christ experiences, as Kramskoi writes in a letter, "despondency" (*otchaianie*) and "moral disintegration" (*nravstvennoe razlozhenie*). In the painting, this psychological state is visually reinforced in a number of ways, including Christ's downcast eyes and the desolate desert background. In the same letter, Kramskoi resorts to literary means, including free and indirect speech, as he dares to imagine Christ's thought process in the first person: "to go right? to go left? If I

go to the left, all that will be mine, it all could be mine, I feel in myself the presence of a terrifying mental power, talent, and, in the end, I have passions."²⁹

In conservative reviews, paintings of Christ that did not conform to established iconographic norms were also frequently dismissed as being "not Christ." Realist paintings, in departing from long-standing traditions, depicted Jesus in ways that rendered him unrecognizable, literally or figuratively, to viewers. This situation underscores a dilemma common to any attempt at iconographic revision: a Christ not recognizable as such is no longer Christ. Kramskoi's response to such objections was uncompromising: "many have told me, 'it's not Christ, how do you know that he was like that?' I allowed myself the temerity to answer that even when he was alive they did not recognize him."³⁰ His compatriot Vasilii Vereshchagin, whose *Palestinian Sketches* were banned in Russia and caused a major scandal in Vienna, further sought to defamiliarize the Christ image in writings on his own paintings. The historical realism of his paintings—including his notorious *Execution on a Roman Cross* (1887)—was admittedly speculative. Yet they were necessarily closer to the truth than the academic and Renaissance models that conservative critics held as normative. In a manifesto on "realism," written to coincide with an exhibition of his *Palestinian Sketches* in New York in 1891, Vereshchagin declares that "we are different from [the old masters] in many respects; we think differently, we are more daring in our synthesizing of facts about the past, present, and future. . . . Is it really possible in the present age to accept the traditional understanding of God in a literal sense?"³¹ Many painters in fact admitted their nonconformity to accepted beliefs. To return to Kramskoi, he prophesizes in the same letter that "a time will come when it will be necessary for art to review and revise its former premises, because in the end Christ is, in essence, a great and most sublime atheist."³² Here Kramskoi indeed anticipates one of Nietzsche's major heresies in *The Antichrist* (1889).

In short, Kramskoi, at least in his letters, is much less tongue-tied than his supposed avatar Mikhailov. In *Anna Karenina*, the only part of Kramskoi's defense of *Christ in the Wilderness* that Tolstoy echoes is the painter's peculiar confession that he had actually seen a vision of Christ. In an 1876 letter to Vsevolod Garshin, Kramskoi describes in detail what he calls a "hallucination": "Once, at a time when I was especially busy . . . I suddenly saw a figure sitting in profound

thought. I very carefully began to watch him, to walk around him, and during all that (quite long) time that I was observing him he didn't move or seem to notice me."³³ In *Anna Karenina*, Mikhailov insists he could not paint an image of Christ that "was not in his soul": "If a small child or a cook could see what was revealed to them, then they would be able to portray what they saw."³⁴ Tolstoy thus infantilizes what Kramskoi pathologizes: revelation as the source of true art.

As these parallel passages indicate, Mikhailov and Kramskoi do share an understanding of the need for sincerity in artistic vision. From the Nazarenes and the French realists to the pre-Raphaelites and the Peredvizhniki, sincerity was a rallying cry for virtually every major secession movement in the nineteenth-century art world. On the one hand, critics and artists pushed the concept of sincerity backward in time toward the pre-Renaissance painter, a sort of artist-priest figure who works in selfless anonymity and only from genuine inspiration. On the other hand, such midcentury critics as John Ruskin and Jules Champfleury co-opted the term sincerity for the new movement of realism.³⁵ The sincerity of the realist consists in remaining faithful to nature, or to social reality, without embellishing that which might be harsh and ugly yet undeniably true. In *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy follows the first of these two tendencies, allying sincerity not with an outward fidelity to reality but rather with inward vision. There are three very different medieval figures in Tolstoy's staging of Mikhailov's painting in *Anna Karenina*: the medievalist Golenishchev, who is writing a book about Russia's Byzantine heritage; Vronsky, a false medieval artist who simply imitates the style of early Italian painting; and Mikhailov, who, like a stereotype of the authentic medieval artist, labors to uncover all the layers of a "revelation" that unfolds before him.³⁶ Given how often nineteenth-century novelists as a group ally themselves with the "brother of the brush"—in Henry James's phrase³⁷—the erudite yet pretentious Golenishchev seems at an inevitable disadvantage before the inarticulate yet sincere Mikhailov. What is a deficiency for Kramskoi (or Mikhailov) becomes an advantage for Tolstoy.

In *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy follows a well-worn path of realist novelists who exploit the mimetic immediacy of the painted image in their struggle against the abstractions of the philosopher. In Mikhailov's workshop, painter is privileged over scholar, the artist's painting over its critical reception, and his

inner vision over the false meanings attributed to him. Tolstoy indeed seems concerned less with Mikhailov's *Admonition of Pilate* in itself than with undercutting the ability of his audience to say anything meaningful at all about the work. This deference of the novelistic word before the painted image forms a peculiar chapter in the ancient *paragone* between poet and painter. Mikhailov's *Admonition of Pilate*, whatever its flaws may be, preserves an aura of authenticity denied to the word environment in which it is found, from the characters' clichéd responses to the narrator's minimalist ekphrasis. Yet in *Anna Karenina*, as in so many other novels, the price of the image's power is the painter's silence.

Toward an Iconography of the Tolstoyan Christ

Mikhailov's *Admonition of Pilate* was hardly Tolstoy's last foray into the subject of the Christ image. Shortly after the publication of *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy started work on *Confession*. In terms of cultural history, it is difficult to overestimate the authority that this seminal yet often misunderstood document conferred on Tolstoy, not least in the realm of Christian iconography. In his comprehensive study of Tolstoy's fiction and theology, Richard Gustafson persuasively challenges the notion that there are "two Tolstoys, the pre-conversion artist and the post-conversion religious thinker and prophet."³⁸ At no stage of Tolstoy's career were religion and art far from one another in his thoughts. Yet it certainly seemed to Tolstoy's contemporaries that he had made a radical break from literature when he began distributing manuscript copies of *Confession* in 1879 (the censors delayed its publication until 1884). Here the text's first readers followed its spirit, if not its letter. In his autobiography, Tolstoy structures his ongoing search for truth as a series of Buddha-like renunciations: "Faith in the significance of poetry and in the evolution of life was indeed a faith, and I was one of its high priests." He had "naïvely" thought he could "teach everyone, not knowing myself what to teach."³⁹ As the hagiographic tone of *Confession* itself suggested, Tolstoy was experimenting with new forms for teaching beyond the merely poetic. Even more so than his rejection of Church or State, his avowed loss of faith in literature provoked strong reactions among his contemporaries.

To borrow Bourdieu's terms, what changed from *Anna Karenina* to *Confession* two years later was less Tolstoy himself than his "position-taking" in the field

of cultural production. Specifically, Tolstoy's *Confession* initiated a public rite of passage from his secure status as a novelist in Russia to his highly contested role as the founder of a religious movement. Here Tolstoy's status in Russia parallels that of Zola in France to a remarkable extent. As Bourdieu suggests, not only did the literary field attain its apex of autonomy from the field of power in the second half of the nineteenth century; in the process, new and highly unstable position-takings for professional writers also emerged, including the "intellectual," a position that Zola helped to "invent."⁴⁰ As for Tolstoy, he was able to build on the autonomy and prestige of an imaginative writer to become not just an intellectual or cultural critic but—improbably and largely beyond his own control—the figurehead of a modern, global religion based on the "teachings" of Christ, Buddha, Confucius, Socrates, and Schopenhauer, among others. From the early 1880s till his death in 1910, Tolstoy's interactions with painters were complicated by the extraordinary level of charismatic authority that he commanded across the social sphere.

In *Confession*, Tolstoy also made public his renunciation of Russian Orthodoxy. As with Luther before him, one of Tolstoy's immediate tasks as the leader of a nascent schismatic movement was a new translation of the gospels. During the years 1880–1885, Tolstoy devoted considerable labor to *A Harmony and Translation of the Four Gospels*, a work that stirred debate long before its publication in Geneva in 1891. In this work, Tolstoy includes passages from the four gospels in the original Greek, in the canonical 1821 Russian version, and in his own translation, all laid out in parallel columns. Through extensive glosses he further compares his work with contemporary translations into other European languages. Most importantly, for each thematically organized section he provides his own "exposition"; that is, retellings of select gospel passages that together comprise a unified narrative of the life and teaching of Jesus. His expositions were later published separately in multiple languages. Ironically, he defined this thoroughly exegetical undertaking through an analogy with the art of icon restoration: "the life and teaching of Jesus [is] like a wondrous painting that, for temporary purposes, has been covered over with a layer of dark paint [. . . which] one must scrape off."⁴¹ He repeats this analogy in various forms throughout his commentary to illustrate his opposition to the false deification of Christ by the major churches. Yet in his own retelling

of the gospels, Tolstoy, like an overly enthusiastic icon-restorer, scrapes off so much doctrinal palimpsest that only the thinnest layer of original image survives. Thus he jettisons much of the staple material of Christian iconography, including the birth of Jesus, all of his miracles, and the Resurrection. Unlike Strauss and Renan, moreover, Tolstoy shows no interest in piecing together the life of the historical Jesus according to "the useless manner of science and the history of religion."⁴² As a result of such exegetical iconoclasm, what remains are mostly the *logia* of Christ—his sermons, sayings, and parables.

Such parsimony in matters of iconography from the world's most famous religious dissenter at the time prompted more than one painter to reexamine their artistic assumptions concerning the Christ image. In the wake of *Confession* and the religious tracts that followed in quick succession in the early 1880s, members of Russia's cultural elite tended to frame their own praise or criticism of Tolstoy as a choice between competing social positions: following the example of Turgenev's deathbed open letter imploring Tolstoy to "return to literature," many refused to recognize in him any other legitimate position than that of novelist; others, such as the young Chekhov, succumbed with varying degrees to the charisma accompanying his newfound position as prophet. Among painters, Kramskoi belonged to the former camp. In 1885 he wrote to Tolstoy—with whom he had not otherwise communicated for more than a decade—to urge him to reconsider the path he had selected:

I don't know whether it is possible to be a prophet in an age of the telegraph. . . . If you want to stir "charity" in the human heart, if you are a teacher, don't try to prove what is necessary [. . .] but simply command. But if you aren't a teacher, but rather a human being who is preoccupied and deeply worried about personal, irresolvable moral questions, then wait a little, step back, and form them into images. . . . Christ is not a myth and not the creation of a poet, but a real person. The artist gives real, living images.⁴³

In this letter Kramskoi offers a textbook rendition of the Christ image as a model for artistic process. Kramskoi further points to Dostoevsky and to Tolstoy's own novels—which had previously "lacked an emphatic moralizing tendency"⁴⁴—as exemplars of such intermedial alchemy, that is, the poet's reduction of words into images.

Kramskoi thus articulates precisely the type of literary project that Tolstoy had come to regard with deep suspicion. For Tolstoy, it was no longer enough to picture the Christ image; new art forms, both verbal and visual, had to be found to convey Christ's teaching in ways that effect real social change. Max Weber defines the role of the prophet in terms not unlike those of Kramskoi: "the genuine prophet [. . .] preaches, creates, and demands new obligations."⁴⁵ Tolstoy was indeed preoccupied with the neglected genre of the "commandment." At the conclusion of *Resurrection* (1899), for example, the protagonist Nekhliudov condenses the Sermon on the Mount into five core "commandments" (*zapovedi*).

Having read the Sermon on the Mount, which he had always found moving, [Nekhliudov] saw in its teaching now for the first time, not beautiful abstract thoughts, presenting largely exaggerated and unrealizable demands, but simple, clear, practical commandments, which, if obeyed (and this was fully possible), would establish a completely new foundation for human society.⁴⁶

For Mikhail Bakhtin, these gospel passages at the end of *Resurrection* represent a "dead quotation, something that falls out of the artistic context."⁴⁷ Bakhtin's well-known objection is valid in an aesthetic sense, yet ultimately one-sided. Tolstoy's experiments with the "commandment" as a literary genre, if not always successful, represent a remarkable development in their own right. As a matter of cultural history, Tolstoy's "practical commandments," especially his injunction "do not resist evil with evil," did in fact reverberate across the field of power in late imperial Russia.

In contrast to Kramskoi, Nikolai Ge, a cofounder of the Peredvizhniki, sought to develop an iconography that would correspond to Tolstoy's aesthetically minimalist Christology. Indeed, Ge's evolving artistic collaboration with Tolstoy from 1882, when the two first met, until Ge's death in 1894 provides a compelling counter-model to the ekphrastic metapoetics of the realist novel. After becoming a full-blown disciple, Ge spent large amounts of time at the writer's country estate Iasnaia Poliana, where he taught the writer's daughter drawing, an approved Tolstoyan visual art. He also avidly read Tolstoy's theological works with an ear for their practical instruction: he adopted vegetarianism and even abandoned the use of oil paints for a time.⁴⁸ As if commenting on his own conversion experience, Ge's 1884 portrait of Tolstoy represents the writer in

thought over a manuscript of the banned tract *What I Believe*. As an established artist, Ge was also well positioned to serve as an illustrator in Tolstoy's populist endeavors. In 1886 Ge agreed to illustrate a new version of Tolstoy's "What do Men Live By?" (1881), the first work of fiction the writer had published since *Anna Karenina* and one that had especially enchanted the painter. In this folktale, a shoemaker assists a stranger whom he finds lying naked and motionless near a shrine. The stranger, who is invited to live with the shoemaker's family, turns out to be an angel. Like Tolstoy's later "Where Love Is, There God is Also," this tale rehearses a common plotline in hagiographic literature; namely, either Christ or an angel appears on earth as a man in great material need in order to test the charity of Christians.

Tolstoy's choice of an angel over Christ in both tales is not an incidental one. The rules for portraying imaginary agents, which are not real yet serve a moral purpose, differ from those for the teacher Jesus, who is a genuine historical figure. Such, at least, is the manner in which Tolstoy treats the miraculous elements in the sacred texts of Buddha and his followers: "excluding its miracles, looking at them as fabula that express thought, this teaching opened the meaning of life to me."⁴⁹ The key term "fabula" helps distinguish the iconography of Tolstoy's own folktales, where angels and miracles are common, from the cult of image more commonly encountered in the mainstream realist novel. Rather than distilling the essence of religious experience into a single and culminating image of Christ, Tolstoy disperses the morals of his often fantastic tales throughout the length of their storyline. Appropriately, Ge sketched not one but twelve illustrations for "What do Men Live By." Tolstoy's numerous folktales likewise break from the nostalgia characterizing the Jesus redivivus tale, that is, stylized legends involving Christ's return to earth. Unlike Balzac in "Jésus-Christ en Flandres" (1831) or Flaubert in "La légende de Saint Julien le Hospitallier" (1877), Tolstoy is not restoring legends from a simpler past for the edification of an educated readership; on the contrary, the Russian novelist wrote and self-published tales for mass distribution to Russia's culturally disenfranchised peasantry. As if confirming their contemporary relevance, two of Ge's illustrations for "What do Men Live By?" were blocked by the censor. Tolstoy further waived copyright for his tales, a decision that facilitated their rapid dissemination to an international audience.

Ge's participation in Tolstoy's populist endeavors

did not end with his illustrations for “What do Men Live By?” In 1884 Tolstoy, along with the leading Tolstoyans Vladimir Chertkov and Petr Biriukov, founded *Posrednik* (The Intermediary), a populist publishing house that was to prove highly prolific over the next few decades. Aside from Tolstoy’s many folk stories, *Posrednik* published annotated illustrations on “gospel themes” as part of its broad intervention in the moral education of the Russian peasantry. In each of these planned publications—“The Temptation of Our Jesus Christ,” “The Last Supper,” and so forth—a gospel passage appears above an illustration with an editorial gloss explaining this passage’s meaning underneath. None of the illustrations or texts was signed, despite the involvement of such well-established artists and writers as Repin and Garshin. In the summer of 1886, Ge sent Tolstoy a detailed plan for gospel illustrations of his own. In the first of eight illustrations, Ge intended to portray the following “vision”: “John the Evangelist with a book. He’s writing and sees John [the Baptist], who points to a crowd of people; in the middle is the Savior holding the hand of a child. [. . .] Behind the Savior are Elijah and Isaiah; behind them are Socrates, David, Buddha, and Moses, and behind them are Abraham with his son and Moses. The sky is covered with two flying angels.”⁵⁰ In John’s vision, Ge incorporates three major figures of Tolstoy’s *Confession* (Christ, Socrates, and Buddha) into a modified version of the Annunciation. That John is portrayed writing his gospel further reflects Tolstoy’s interpretation of Christ as teacher. It is not clear whether Ge ever executed this illustration.⁵¹ Yet its uneasy conflation of traditional Christian iconography and post-Christian ecumenicalism reflects the kinds of artistic challenges that the Tolstoyan Christ posed.

Perhaps not surprisingly, it was not as an illustrator of Tolstoyism that Ge most impressed Tolstoy. In addition to collaborating over gospel illustrations, Ge communicated frequently with Tolstoy about his plans for a series of large-scale paintings devoted to the events of the Passion. Ge’s early letters to Tolstoy are distinguished by an almost mystical tone of reverence and intimacy.

I work with delight, all the time planning to come to you [. . .] what I am making, I will take with me to show you. There’s no such thing as space, and not because railroads exist, but because true love destroys all distance. I am all the time with you; I live at one with you in thought, I even see you in visions: I’ve seen you in my dreams

already twice, and today, having had a vision of you, I wanted to write you several words of love.⁵²

In response to such letters, Tolstoy generally urged Ge not to neglect actual work on his paintings. Tolstoy even wrote to Repin that he feared the words Ge used to describe his planned Passion series would prove “more forceful and artistic than the impression”⁵³ made by the paintings themselves. In a lengthy homage to Ge after his death, Repin echoed Tolstoy’s thought, lamenting that no one had ever “stenographed” the painter when he spoke of his own work.⁵⁴

Ge’s own heady approach to Christian iconography placed him in a unique position—after the initial euphoria of conversion had subsided—to develop a compelling image of Christ as teacher. By the end of the 1880s, as Repin’s reminiscences make clear, Ge had fallen under the influence of yet another master of biblical hermeneutics, namely, the Church father Tertullian. As Tertullian argues in his anti-docetist treatise *De Carne Christi Libre*, written in 206, “[men] despised [Christ’s] outward appearance, so far was his body from being of human comeliness, not to speak of celestial glory”: “it was precisely the non-marvellous character of his terrestrial flesh which made the rest of his activities things to marvel at.”⁵⁵ The first of Ge’s paintings with a Tertullian-inspired Christ was *What is Truth?* (1890, fig. 5.2). As Repin records, Ge intended to portray a Christ who, “in protest against the pagan ideal,” assumed the “most humble and insignificant human image in order to demonstrate to people that what was important was the soul.”⁵⁶ In *What is Truth?* Ge indeed presents a shockingly unattractive Christ. Pilate, in the pose of a Roman orator, stands in the light of a palace door. The question “What is truth?” (John 18:34) has become purely rhetorical, as Christ remains silent and in shadow. Short, wispy-haired, purse-lipped, and steely-eyed, Ge’s Christ has no peer in nineteenth-century Russian religious painting. The furor that *What is Truth?* provoked at the eighteenth Peredvizhnik exhibition in 1890 exceeded in intensity the controversy surrounding Ge’s own *Last Supper* (1863) nearly three decades earlier. Alexander III could barely contain his disgust in ordering *What is Truth?* to be taken down from exhibition, calling the picture “repulsive.”⁵⁷ After being forced into exile, Ge’s painting caused further controversy in several German and American cities. According to Repin, one American critic wrote a whole book condemning it.⁵⁸

Despite himself being wary of what he called Ge’s “exceptionally unattractive” Christ,⁵⁹ Tolstoy—in



5.2. Nikolai Ge, *What is Truth?*, 1890. Oil on canvas, 233 x 171 cm, State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

a reversal of the roles of master and apprentice—placed his own formidable influence at the service of the painter’s much-besieged masterpiece. After the painting’s removal from the St. Petersburg exhibition, Tolstoy wrote letters to critics abroad in an attempt to guarantee the painting’s safe passage through the foreign press. In advance of the painting’s exhibition in Boston, for example, he explained its meaning to an American journalist:

Here a conversation takes place (John 18:33–38) in which the magnanimous governor wants to descend *en bon prince* to the level of the barbaric interests of his subjects. . . . Jesus is tormented, and it takes only one look at [Pilate’s] well-groomed, self-satisfied, smug [. . .] face for him to realize the abyss separating them as well as the impossibility and terrible difficulty of making Pilate understand his teaching. . . . The merit of the picture, in my opinion, consists in the fact that it is true (realistic, as is now said) in the most authentic sense of the word. Christ is not such, as would be pleasant to look at, but precisely as someone must be who has been tortured all night and is still being tortured. And Pilate is such as any governor must be [. . .] even in Massachusetts.⁶⁰

Given his own outspoken rejection of beauty as a criterion of truth in art, Tolstoy—almost alone among Ge’s Russian or international critics—was able to look past the shock of Ge’s Christ in order to analyze the painting’s surface realism and, more importantly, its rich ideational texture. For most of Ge’s viewers, neglect of Christ’s beauty, an entrenched iconographic signifier, was tantamount to a rejection of his divinity. Ge’s Christ is indeed all too human. Yet the unsightly appearance of Christ serves to accentuate the rigors of his uncompromising teaching. The Christological insights of Tertullian and Tolstoy are thus harmonized in an iconography that is entirely Ge’s own. In *What is Truth?* Ge had dared to invoke the wrath of public opinion by tarnishing the beauty of the Christ image. It is a testament to Tolstoy’s acumen as a critic that he recognized, even exaggerated, the importance of Ge’s innovation.

Tolstoy may not have been able to prevent *What is Truth?* from being removed from public exhibition, but he did ensure that it would return to Russia by pressuring Pavel Tretiakov, who disliked the painting, to purchase it. In a letter to Tretiakov of July 1890, Tolstoy argues that Ge’s painting comprises no less

than “an epoch in the history of Christian art.” Prior to the modern period, Tolstoy explains, “Catholic art had predominantly portrayed saints, the Madonna, and Christ as gods.” More recently, artists across Europe had begun to portray Christ as a mere “historical figure,” needlessly alienating Christian viewers who, albeit falsely, still view him as God. Tolstoy proceeds to break down the diverse attempts of artists in Russia and Europe to escape this double bind into five broad categories: (1) painters who “polemicized directly” against the divinity of Christ, including “the pictures of Vereshchagin and even Ge’s *Resurrection*”; (2) painters who “tried to produce treatises of these subjects as historical—among them, Ivanov, Kramskoi, and again Ge’s *Last Supper*”; (3) painters who “wanted to ignore any controversy [. . .] (Doré, Polenov); (4) painters, such as “[Fritz von] Uhde,” who attempt “to bring Christ God down to earth, as well as from the pedestal of history onto the soil of [contemporary] life. [. . .] Christ in the guise of a priest, barefoot, in the presence of children, etc.” Tolstoy reserves the fifth category exclusively for Ge’s *What is Truth?*: “Christ and his teaching not in words alone, but in word and deed, in confrontation with the teaching of the world.”⁶¹ Tolstoy elaborates on this fifth category in a letter to his American contact: “In our era there have been attempts to portray a moral understanding of the life and teaching of Christ”; until Ge’s *What is Truth?*, Tolstoy asserts, “these attempts had not been successful.”⁶² In the end, it is to Ge that the honor goes for rendering the Christ image viable in modernity.

In this remarkable series of letters, Tolstoy surveys the controversies surrounding realist paintings of Christ in Russia and Europe with a rhetoric as authoritative in tone as it is dazzlingly reductive. The writer-turned-prophet does not necessarily interpret *What is Truth?* in a persuasive manner. Even in Tolstoy’s own terms, Ge’s painting proved as alienating as any listed in his first category above, and there remains a seeming disconnect between the silence and stillness of Ge’s Christ and Tolstoy’s emphasis on this figure’s “teaching in word and deed.” Tolstoy and Ge continued to exchange views on religious art in their correspondence as the latter worked on other paintings in his series on the Passion, including *Golgotha* (1893, GTG) and *Crucifixion* (1894, location unknown). And Tolstoy continued to defend Ge in letters to critics in Russia and abroad. As the writer explains to Tretiakov on the occasion of Ge’s death in 1894:

The run-of-the-mill public wants Christ-icons to which they can pray, but [Ge] gives them a Christ who is a living person; this produces disenchantment and dissatisfaction, just like a man, who had been expecting to drink wine but is given water instead, spits out the water in disgust, even though water is healthier and better than wine. Last winter I went three times to your gallery and each time I involuntarily stopped before *What is Truth?*, completely independently of my friendship with him and even forgetting that it was his picture.⁶³

Curiously, in this same letter, Tolstoy claims that he “knows no better Christ” than the one in Kramskoi’s *Christ in the Wilderness*, a work that he had four years earlier consigned to his second, “historical” category.⁶⁴ It is hard not to wonder how Tretyakov must have reacted to this apparent about-face. The collector already owned Kramskoi’s masterpiece, so at least he was not being asked for more money.

For the purposes of understanding Tolstoy’s undeniable impact on the fate of Ge’s *What is Truth?*, what is most crucial is not the merit of his judgments but rather the charismatic authority that empowered him to make and even enforce them. Tolstoy’s engagement with Ge, Kramskoi, and others over the problem of the Christ image presents an extreme yet illustrative case of the role that writers often assumed in the production and reception of art works beyond their ostensible area of expertise. Over the final decades of imperial Russia, Tolstoy’s charisma constituted a sociological fact. The high level of charismatic authority that he commanded across the social sphere—unmatched in Russia and rivaled only by Zola’s globally—does not diminish or delimit Ge’s accomplishment. Thus Ge is not simply the official illustrator of the Tolstoyan Christ, as if he were a real-life Mikhailov. Yet neither must Tolstoy be viewed as a meddling dilettante burdened by the irresolvable contradictions of his own worldview. Rather, the value of *What is Art?* ultimately derives from social processes involving the interaction of multiple cultural producers. Ge’s much-disparaged Tolstoyism helped guide him toward one of the most original and provocative Christ images in a highly competitive artistic environment. Tolstoy’s most important role nevertheless lay in the value that he conferred on the finished product. That *What is Truth?* is still on permanent display in the Tretyakov gallery, and in the canons of Russian art history, is due, at least in part, to Tolstoy’s timely intervention.

Notes

1. L.N. Tolstoi, “Gde liubov’, tam i bog,” in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* [hereafter PSS] (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1937), 25:38. Unless otherwise noted all translations are mine.
2. New Revised Standard Version used here and throughout.
3. Tolstoi, “Gde liubov’, tam i bog,” 45. For further analysis of this folktale, see Wolfgang Kasack, *Christus in der russischen Literatur: Ein Gang durch die Literaturgeschichte von ihren Angängen bis zum Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Otto Sagner, 1999), 60–62.
4. Tolstoi, letters to P.M. Tretyakov, 30 June 1890 and 19 June 1894, in *L.N. Tolstoi i khudozhniki: Tolstoi ob iskusstve: pis’ma, dnevniki, vospominaniia*, ed. I.A. Brodskii (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1978), 96, 119.
5. Tolstoi, *Anna Karenina*, in PSS 19 (1935): 275.
6. Tolstoi to Tretyakov, 30 June 1890, in *Tolstoi i khudozhniki*, 98.
7. See Tolstoi, *Chto takoe isskustvo?*, in PSS 30 (1951): 130.
8. For a recent discussion of the Russian Christ in nineteenth-century painting, see Laura Engelstein, “Between Art and Icon: Aleksandr Ivanov’s Russian Christ,” in *Slavophile Empire: Imperial Russia’s Illiberal Path* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 151–91.
9. Tolstoi, *Chto takoe isskustvo?*, 70.
10. Tolstoi, in conversation with Iu. I. Ugumenova, July 1907, quoted in A. Mikhailov, *Mikhail Vasil’evich Nesterov: zhizn’ i tvorchestvo* ([Moscow]: Sovetskii khudozhnik, 1958), 214.
11. Tolstoi, *Anna Karenina*, 34, 35, 43, 44.
12. See Anna Dostoevskaia, *Vospominaniia* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1981), 175, 437.
13. J.K. Huysmans, *Là-bas* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), 37.
14. Tolstoi, *Anna Karenina*, 34, 41, 42, 43.
15. Tolstoi, *Anna Karenina*, 45.
16. Amy Mandelker, *Framing Anna Karenina: Tolstoy, the Woman Question, and the Victorian Novel* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1993), 110.
17. Mandelker, *Framing Anna Karenina*, 41, 43.
18. Tolstoi, *Chto takoe isskustvo?*, 146.
19. Tolstoi, *Anna Karenina*, 40, 44.
20. Richard F. Gustafson, *Leo Tolstoy, Resident and Stranger: A Study in Fiction and Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 143; V.E. Vetlovskaia, “Poetika ‘Anny Kareninnoi,’” *Russkaia*

- literatura*, no. 4 (1979): 17; Svetlana Evdokimova, "The Drawing and the Grease Spot: Creativity and Interpretation in *Anna Karenina*," *Tolstoy Studies Journal* 8 (1995–1996): 33; Justin Weir, "Tolstoy Sees the Truth but Waits: The Consequences of Aesthetic Vision in *Anna Karenina*," in *Approaches to Teaching Anna Karenina*, ed. Liza Knapp and Amy Mandelker (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2003), 175; Kupreianova, "Vyrzhenie estetcheskikh vozzrenii i nrvstvennykh iskanii L. Tolstogo v romane 'Anna Karenina,'" *Russkaia literatura*, no. 3 (1960): 124.
21. See Mandelker, *Framing Anna Karenina*, 49–51, 105; Rimvydas Silbajoris, *Tolstoy's Aesthetics and His Art* (Columbus, OH: Slavica, 1991), 153. On ekphrasis in Tolstoy, see also Mack Smith, *Literary Realism and the Ekphrastic Tradition* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 115–56.
22. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 47.
23. Elizabeth Valkenier, *Russian Realist Art. The State and Society: The Peredvizhniki and Their Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 10–17.
24. I.E. Repin to V.V. Stasov, 12 April 1878, in *Tolstoi i khudozhniki*, 68.
25. Tolstoi, *Anna Karenina*, 43.
26. On the connection between Mikhailov and Kramskoi, see especially Kupreianova, "Vyrzhenie estetcheskikh vozzrenii i nrvstvennykh iskanii L. Tolstogo," 124–25.
27. I.N. Kramskoi to Tolstoi, 29 January 1885, in *Ivan Nikolaevich Kramskoi: Pis'ma, stat'i*, ed. S.N. Goldshtein (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1965–66), 2:170.
28. Kramskoi, "Zapiski po povodu peresmotra ustava Akademii khudozhevstv," in *Kramskoi: Pis'ma, stat'i*, 2:297–98, quoted in Valkenier, *Russian Realist Art*, 14.
29. Kramskoi to A.D. Chirkin, 27 December 1873, in *Kramskoi: Pis'ma, stat'i*, 1: 218.
30. Kramskoi, letter to Chirkin, in *Kramskoi: Pis'ma, stat'i*, 1:219.
31. V.V. Vereshchagin, "Realizm," in *Povesti. Ocherki. Vospominaniia*, ed. V.A. Kosheleva and A.V. Chernova (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1990), 197; Vereshchagin, *Realism*, trans. B. MacGahan (New York: American Art Galleries, 1891).
32. Kramskoi, letter to Chirkin, in *Kramskoi: Pis'ma, stat'i*, 1: 219.
33. Kramskoi to V.M. Garshin, 16 February 1878, in *Kramskoi: Pis'ma, stat'i*, 1:446–47.
34. Tolstoi, *Anna Karenina*, 42.
35. See Jules Champfleury, *Le Réalisme* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1967), 3; John Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (London: J.M. Dent, 1929), 3:60–65.
36. Tolstoi, *Anna Karenina*, 42.
37. Henry James, "The Art of Fiction," in *The House of Fiction: Essays on the Novel*, ed. Leon Edel (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), 29.
38. Gustafson, *Leo Tolstoy, Resident and Stranger*, xiv.
39. Tolstoi, *Ispoved'*, in *PSS* 23 (1957): 6.
40. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 129.
41. Tolstoi, *Soedinenie i perevod chetyrekh evangelii*, in *PSS* 24 (1957): 797.
42. Tolstoi, *Soedinenie i perevod*, 12.
43. Kramskoi, letter to Tolstoi, in *Kramskoi: Pis'ma, stat'i*, 2:170, 171.
44. Kramskoi, letter to Tolstoi, in *Kramskoi: Pis'ma, stat'i*, 2:171.
45. Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, ed. Talcott Parsons, trans. A.M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York: The Free Press, 1964), 359–61.
46. Tolstoi, *Voskresenie*, in *PSS* 32 (1936): 443.
47. Mikhail Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Carol Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 344.
48. Vsevolod Dmitr'ev, "Nikolai Nikolaevich Ge," *Apollon*, no. 10 (1913): 32.
49. Tolstoi, *Ispoved'*, 52.
50. N.N. Ge to Tolstoi, 14 July 1886, in *Nikolai Nikolaevich Ge: Pis'ma, stat'i, kritika, vospominaniia sovremennikov*, ed. N. Iu. Zograf (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1978), 128.
51. At least one of Ge's gospel illustrations, "The Last Supper," was prepared for publication. It was not permitted by the censor and has since been lost. Ge submitted a second set of planned illustrations to Chertkov in 1891. Zograf, *Ge: Pis'ma, stat'i*, 340n27–28.
52. Ge to Tolstoi, 26 October 1893, in *Ge: Pis'ma, stat'i*, 128.
53. Tolstoi to I.E. Repin, 15 April 1892, in *Ge: Pis'ma, stat'i*, 169.
54. Repin, "Nikolai Nikolaevich Ge i nashi pretenzii k iskusstvu," *Niva* 11 (1894): 540.
55. Tertullian, *Tertullian's Treatise on the Incarnation*, ed. Ernest Evans (London: S.P.C.K., 1956), 37–39.
56. Repin, "Nikolai Nikolaevich Ge," 540.
57. Alexander III, quoted in *Ge: Pis'ma, stat'i*, 352n57.

58. Repin, “Nikolai Nikolaevich Ge,” 540. I have not been able to identify any book fitting Repin’s description.

59. Tolstoi to Ge, 5 November 1893, in *Ge: Pis’ma, stat’i*, 184.

60. Tolstoi to George Kennan, 8 August 1890, in *Ge: Pis’ma, stat’i*, 149, 150.

61. Tolstoi to Treťiakov, 30 June 1890, in *Tolstoi i khudozhniki*, 98–99.

62. Tolstoi to Kennan, 8 August 1890, in *Ge: Pis’ma, stat’i*, 150.

63. Tolstoi to Treťiakov, 19 June 1894, in *Tolstoi i khudozhniki*, 122.

64. Tolstoi to Treťiakov, 30 June 1890 and 19 June 1894, in *Tolstoi i khudozhniki*, 98, 122.