

Title: The “Resonance” and “Wonder” of Lev Tolstoy’s *New Historicism*
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The topic of history is no stranger to Tolstoy scholars. Indeed, countless critics from Isaiah Berlin to Gary Saul Morson, Andrew Wachtel, and Jeff Love, to name but a few, have published excellent studies devoted to Tolstoy’s idiosyncratic view of history not only as it pertains to *War and Peace*, but other works in his creative and personal oeuvre as well. While the problem of history is hardly terra incognita to Tolstoy studies, the same certainly cannot be said about historicism. Simultaneously, this is an inexplicable, yet entirely understandable dilemma. On the one hand, given the narratological, generic and philosophical approaches that underpin most studies devoted to Tolstoy and the problem of history, historicism’s absence seems odd. This is all the more striking when one considers that not only is the historicist project from its roots in the work of Vico, Herder, and Hegel inherently narrative, but that it also springs from the same German intellectual and cultural fountainhead as Formalism, long the dominant critical approach in Slavic literary studies. On the other hand, this is not too surprising given Tolstoy’s rejection of abstract philosophical systems that seek to assert narrative hegemony over their readers, as well as his fiction’s resistance to any sense of formal closure.

Rather than employ a historicism that neither Tolstoy would accept, nor his work support, I propose something akin to a *new* historicism, an approach that in the language of Stephen Greenblatt harnesses the formal “resonance” of interpretation while preserving the phenomenological “wonder” of the historical moment. While I do not believe that the New Historicism is necessarily all that “new,” especially in regards to Tolstoy, whose approach to history makes him, to some degree, the first new historicist, Greenblatt’s language particularly his definitions of “resonance” and “wonder” provide readers with a means of appreciating Tolstoy’s unique, if not narratively progressive, perhaps even, post-modern historicism. Although I believe that Tolstoy the *new* historicist is present in much of his writing, particularly his personal and non-fictional works, for the sake of clarity and brevity I shall draw the majority of my examples from *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, and *Hadji Murat*.