

# **A Psychological and Mystical Commentary on Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and How It Portrays the Law of Predestination and Free Will**

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## **Abstract**

Leo Tolstoy's underlying message in *War and Peace* is that no singular, great historical figure or event can be designated as a historical causal force, not even Napoleon or Tsar Alexander in 1812. This idea runs contrary to the notion of free will. For Tolstoy, we do not possess as much free will when acting among others as when we are able to act alone. Rather, all events, whether in peacetime or in war, arise from interconnected, unconscious forces that move life to an inevitable endpoint. Tolstoy's idea of predestination in *War and Peace*, as highlighted by Amy Mandelker in her introduction, is a masterpiece of everyday human psychology, showing the wisdom of the ancient injunction to "Know Thyself." There is mercy behind the law of cause and effect, an idea known to mystics and Rosicrucians as the law of karma or compensation for human behavior, despite the seeming indifference of events leading to suffering. Tolstoy's seeming indifference or plain submission to some Divine Will arriving in one's life is proposed here to be the manifestation of this universal law of cause and effect or karma. It is seen as guiding human evolution through its effects on the individual's evolving inner self, aiming for balance and continuing freedom to choose. Tolstoy's assertion of unconscious forces parallels what modern-day physics recognizes as forces that exist and operate outside the limits of human consciousness. Jungian psychology speaks to this too.

Keywords: Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, predestination, law of karma, Napoleon, Tsar Alexander, fate, destiny, mysticism, Jungian Psychology, Individual Psychology, Rosicrucian, quantum consciousness, entanglement, Observer Effect, nonlocality, Holographic universe

## **Un commentaire psychologique et mystique sur *Guerre et Paix* de Tolstoï et la manière dont cet œuvre dépeint la loi de la prédestination et du libre arbitre**

### **Résumé**

Le message fondamental de Tolstoï dans *Guerre et Paix* est qu'aucun personnage ou événement historique unique ne peut être désigné comme une force causale historique, pas même Napoléon 1er ou le tsar Alexandre en 1812. Cette idée va à l'encontre de la notion de libre arbitre : en effet, selon Tolstoï nous ne possédons pas autant de libre arbitre lorsque nous agissons parmi les autres que lorsque nous pouvons agir seuls. Au contraire, tous les événements, qu'ils soient en temps de paix ou en temps de guerre, proviennent de forces inconscientes interconnectées qui refoulent la vie vers une fin inévitable. L'idée de prédestination de Tolstoï dans *Guerre et Paix*, ainsi que Amy Mandelker l'a souligné dans sa préface, est un chef-d'œuvre de psychologie humaine quotidienne, qui met en valeur la sagesse de l'ancienne exhortation « Connais-toi toi-même ». Il y a de la miséricorde derrière cette loi de cause à effet - un concept connu des mystiques et des

Rosicruciens comme loi « du karma » ou « de compensation » - malgré l'indifférence apparente aux événements conduisant à la souffrance. Cette indifférence apparente de Tolstoï ou soumission à une certaine volonté divine survenant dans la vie, est ici proposée comme la manifestation de cette loi universelle de cause à effet, ou karma. Elle est perçue comme guidant l'évolution humaine à travers ses effets sur l'évolution intérieure de l'individu, visant l'équilibre et la liberté constante du choix. L'existence selon Tolstoï de forces inconscientes fait écho à ce que la physique moderne reconnaît comme des forces existant et opérant en dehors des limites de la conscience humaine. La psychologie jungienne en parle également.

Mots-clés : Tolstoï, *Guerre et Paix*, prédestination, karma, Napoléon 1er, tsar Alexandre, destin, destinée, mysticisme, psychologie jungienne, psychologie individuelle, Rosicrucien, conscience quantique, intrication, effet d'observateur, non-localité, univers holographique

## **Un comentario psicológico y místico sobre *Guerra y Paz* de Tolstói y cómo retrata la ley de la predestinación y el libre albedrío**

### **Resumen**

El mensaje subyacente de Tolstói en *Guerra y Paz* es que ninguna gran figura o gran acontecimiento histórico puede ser designado como una fuerza causal histórica, ni siquiera Napoleón o el zar Alejandro Magno en 1812. Esta idea contradice la noción del libre albedrío. Para Tolstói, no poseemos tanto libre albedrío cuando actuamos entre otros como cuando actuamos solos. Más bien, todos los acontecimientos, ya sea en tiempos de paz o de guerra, surgen de fuerzas inconscientes interconectadas que conducen la vida a un final inevitable. La idea de la predestinación de Tolstói en *Guerra y Paz*, como destaca Amy Mandelker en su introducción, es una obra maestra de la psicología humana cotidiana que muestra la sabiduría del antiguo mandato de "Conócete a ti mismo". Existe misericordia detrás de la ley de causa y efecto, una idea conocida por místicos y rosacruces como la ley del karma o compensación por la conducta humana, a pesar de la aparente indiferencia de los acontecimientos que conducen al sufrimiento. La aparente indiferencia o simple sumisión de Tolstói a la voluntad divina que llega a la vida de uno se propone aquí como la manifestación de esta ley universal de causa y efecto o karma. Se considera como una guía para la evolución humana a través de sus efectos en el ser interior evolutivo del individuo, buscando el equilibrio y la libertad continua de elegir. La afirmación de Tolstói sobre las fuerzas inconscientes es paralela a lo que la física moderna reconoce como fuerzas que existen y operan fuera de los límites de la conciencia humana. La psicología Junguiana también toca este tema.

Palabras clave: Tolstói, *Guerra y Paz*, predestinación, ley del karma, Napoleón, Zar Alejandro, destino, misticismo, psicología Junguiana, Psicología Individual, Rosacruz, conciencia cuántica, entrelazamiento, efecto del observador, no-localidad, universo holográfico

## **Um Comentário Psicológico e Místico sobre *Guerra e Paz* de Tolstói e como a Obra Retrata a Lei da Predestinação e do Livre-Arbítrio**

### **Resumo**

A mensagem subjacente de Tolstói em *Guerra e Paz* é que nenhuma figura ou evento histórico singular e grandioso pode ser designado como uma força causal histórica — nem mesmo Napoleão ou o Czar Alexandre em 1812. Essa ideia contrapõe-se à noção de livre-arbítrio. Para Tolstói, não possuímos tanto livre-arbítrio quando agimos coletivamente quanto quando somos capazes de agir sozinhos. Em vez disso, todos os eventos, seja em tempos de paz ou de guerra, surgem de forças inconscientes e interconectadas que movem a vida em direção a um desfecho inevitável. A concepção de predestinação de Tolstói em *Guerra e Paz*, como destacado por Amy Mandelker em sua introdução, é uma obra-prima da psicologia humana cotidiana, revelando a sabedoria do antigo preceito "Conhece-te a ti mesmo". Existe misericórdia por trás da lei de causa e efeito — uma ideia conhecida por místicos e Rosacruzes como a Lei do Carma ou da Compensação pelo comportamento humano —, apesar da aparente indiferença dos eventos que levam ao sofrimento. A aparente indiferença de Tolstói, ou sua plena submissão a uma vontade divina que se manifesta na vida de alguém, é proposta aqui como a manifestação dessa lei universal de causa e efeito ou carma. Ela é vista como guia da evolução humana por meio de seus efeitos no eu interior em evolução do indivíduo, visando ao equilíbrio e à liberdade contínua de escolha. A afirmação de Tolstói sobre forças inconscientes alinha-se ao que a física moderna reconhece como forças que existem e operam além dos limites da consciência humana. A psicologia junguiana também se alinha a essa perspectiva.

Palavras-chave: Tolstói, *Guerra e Paz*, predestinação, lei do carma, Napoleão, Czar Alexandre, fado, destino, misticismo, psicologia junguiana, psicologia individual, Rosacruz, consciência quântica, emaranhamento, efeito do observador, não localidade, universo holográfico

### **Zum Tolstoi Krieg und Frieden: eine psychologische und mystische Erläuterung sowie eine Schilderung des Gesetzes der Vorbestimmung und des freien Willens**

#### **Zusammenfassung**

Die zugrundeliegende Botschaft von Tolstoi im Krieg und Frieden zeigt uns, dass weder eine Einzelperson noch eine wichtige historische Persönlichkeit oder Ereignis als eine historische ursächliche Kraft bezeichnet werden kann. Dies gilt auch für Persönlichkeiten wie Napoleon oder Zar Alexander in 1812. Diese Vorstellung steht im Widerspruch zum Begriff des freien Willens. Gemäß Tolstoi verfügen wir bei Aktionen zusammen mit anderen eher über einen eingeschränkten freien Willen, nicht aber bei alleinigen Aktionen. Vielmehr sind alle Ereignisse, ob nun in Friedenszeiten oder im Krieg, das Ergebnis von ineinandergreifenden unbewussten Kräften, die das Leben zu einem zwangsläufigen Endpunkt steuern. Amy Mandelker betont in ihrem Vorwort, dass die Idee der Vorbestimmung von Tolstoi in seinem Buch Krieg und Frieden ein Meisterwerk der menschlichen Beziehungspsychologie ist und die Weisheit des alten Ratschlags „Erkenne Dich Selbst“ zeigt. Das Gesetz von Ursache und Wirkung beinhaltet Gnade, was bei Mystikern und Rosenkreuzern als Gesetz von Karma und Ausgleich für menschliches Verhalten wohl bekannt ist, ungeachtet um welche Ereignisse es auch geht. Für

Tolstoi scheint Gleichgültigkeit oder komplette Unterwerfung einem Gottheit gegenüber in unserem Leben erweckt zu werden. Er betrachtet diese als eine Manifestation des universalen Gesetzes von Ursache und Wirkung oder Karma. Sie lenkt die Entwicklung der Menschheit durch ihre Wirkung auf die Entwicklung des individuellen Inneren Selbst wobei sie nach Balance strebt und die freie Wahl weiterhin gewährt. Die moderne Physik bestätigt die unbewussten Kräfte, die Tolstoi erwähnt als Kräfte, die tatsächlich existieren und außerhalb der Grenzen des menschlichen Bewusstseins wirksam sind. Die Psychologie gemäß C.G. Jung redet ebenfalls davon.

Schlüsselworte: Tolstoi, Krieg und Frieden, Vorbestimmung, das Gesetz von Karma, Napoleon, Zar Alexander, Schicksal, Bestimmung, Mystik, Jungsche Psychologie, Individualpsychologie, Rosenkreuzer, Quanten Bewusstsein, Verschränkungen, der Beobachtereffekt, Nichtlokalität, das holographische Universum

## Introduction

*War and Peace* (1869) is Count Leo Tolstoy's historical and psychological Russian masterpiece in which he questions ideas of free will, fate, and Divine Will during the Napoleonic era, proposing the existence of a Divine Law of predestination that guides human history (Tolstoy 2017). Just below the surface of this narrative lies the sense that all Tolstoy's characters act as though they are linked by threads of fate and destiny. Planned early on to be a psychological history of Tsar Alexander and the Emperor Napoleon, one early draft was entitled "The Year 1812." Hailed by many from Ivan Turgenev to Virginia Woolf as the greatest novel ever written, it has been referred to by some as Russia's *Iliad* (Homer, ca. eighth century BCE) and *Odyssey* (Homer). Some have seen Tolstoy as the embodiment of nature and pure vitality, whilst others saw him as the incarnation of the world's conscience (Morson 2025). Tolstoy made a gigantic effort to capture the entirety of a period in history in one huge book, a huge task indeed.

Tolstoy himself said it was not a novel, even less was it an epic poem or historical narrative. Tolstoy said he saw all the meanness, madness, and contradictions of the people around him, as well as in the two Emperors themselves. He decided that he had to write his book and devoted five years to it. The task, as originally envisaged, proved too daunting for this fledgling author until he found the artistic freedom and courage to write within his own Russian literary tradition. This was outside the norms and accepted literary genres of European novels, unleashing distraction after distraction on his readers. Was it a philosophical essay, a family chronicle about the Rostóvs and Bolkónskys, or a historical novel about the Napoleonic wars? Lacking coherence, critics like Henry James declared *War and Peace* "a loose, baggy monster."

Amy Mandelker in her revised introduction to the novel wrote that Tolstoy was so impressed with *A Sentimental Journey* (1768) by Anglo-Irish author Laurence Sterne that he worked to improve his English by translating it into Russian. But it was Sterne's plotless psychological novel, *Tristram Shandy*, which has been described as the first "stream of consciousness" novel, that resonated most with this aspiring Russian author. Tolstoy's *A History of Yesterday* (1851) has been viewed as a Shandean account of infinitely unfolding stories within stories, including the wandering inner thoughts of all the characters, each moment revealing endless possibilities for storytelling. Mandelker characterizes Tolstoy's entire piece here as dealing with the

impossibility of ever drafting a “true and authentic” account of one minute of time, giving us a foretaste of the underlying theme to come in *War and Peace* (1869).

## **Tolstoy and Free Will**

Tolstoy’s subliminal message in *War and Peace* is that no singular historical figure or event can be designated as a historical causal force, not even the Emperor Napoleon himself. Rather, all historical events are seen in this Russian epic as resulting from an infinite number of interweaving, unconscious forces that work together to an inevitable endpoint. It is this infinite interweaving of Reality that makes life seem confusing and not guarded by the laws of karma necessarily. Tolstoy is certainly extraordinary at capturing the swirling confusions of life. All of us are wound up in our own web of reality, making it difficult to perceive actuality or Divine Purpose.

The more Tolstoy read detailed historical accounts of military battles, the more convinced he became that historians were not able to portray the fullness and individual realities of war, in line with his reading of Victor Hugo that he who would paint a battle scene must have chaos in his paintbrush.

In an appendix to *War and Peace* published in 1868 in the journal *Russian Archive*, Tolstoy wrote that there are two kinds of actions: “some that do, and some that do not depend on my will.” When he is alone, he says he can do various things through his will like raising his arm, starting to write, or stopping writing. But when he is “in action, I cannot refrain from attacking with my regiment or from running when all around me run—I cannot.” Likewise, he said, “I cannot help blinking when a blow is directed at my eye” (Tolstoy 2017, 1316).

The well-documented life of Napoleon alongside his soldiers adds credibility to Tolstoy’s observations (Schom 1997; Caulaincourt 2008). There is a bond between them, a dependency which goes both ways, yet Napoleon always used his troops as he saw fit. It is easy to say, as historians have, that Napoleon had power over his troops and ordered them to cross the river Niemen into Russia in 1812, which they did. But from many historical accounts of his interactions with his own soldiers, it is evident that he was less free with them than when he was on his own: he connected with the common soldiers and was dependent on them. There was a resonating collective, as he took risks with them, suffered with them, and led them into battle. He felt at home with them, and they loved him, along with some of his generals (Schom 1997, 380).

The importance to creative leadership of always trying to uncover and understand those unseen forces at play on the battlefield was well understood and practiced by Napoleon. However, it is equally important in the everyday modern world of business where change and uncertainty may resemble a battlefield for a company’s survival. Its importance to creativity was touched on by Ed Catmull (president of Pixar Animation and Disney Animation) in his insightful book *Creativity Inc.* Tolstoy’s point is that the same law of predestination applies in wartime as in peace and that great leaders may need to improvise in the moment under the constraints of limited options and conflicting external demands:

Change and uncertainty are part of life. Our job is not to resist them but to build the capability to recover when unexpected events occur. If you don't always try to uncover what is unseen and understand its nature, you will be ill-prepared to lead. . . . Similarly, it is not the manager's job to prevent risks. It is the manager's job to make it safe to take them. (Catmull 2014, 224, 317)

Napoleon could have written the above as he practiced this credo in peacetime and in war. He is quoted as saying: "Impossible is a word to be found only in the dictionary of fools" (Caulaincourt 2008; Schom 1997).

Towards the end of the appendix (1868), Tolstoy writes:

We cannot but see that the more abstract and therefore the less connected with the activity of others our activity is, the more free it is, and on the contrary, the more our activity is connected with other people, the less free it is. Having wrongly or rightly become fully convinced of this in the course of my work, I naturally was unable—when describing the historical events of 1805, 1807, and especially 1812 in which this law of predestination is most prominently displayed—to attribute importance to the actions of those who thought they controlled the events, but who introduced less free human activity into them than did all the other participants.

To help facilitate an understanding of this theory of free will and destiny in both peacetime and war, Tolstoy gives highly detailed accounts of the comings and goings of the Russian nobility in their social gatherings and soirées, along with their inner thoughts during each moment and event. These illustrate Tolstoy's thesis that when together their individual freedom to act diminishes. These overly detailed accounts prove a real burden to the average reader's ability to keep up with new characters being introduced while looking to find the theme and hero of the story being told. Yet they help to set the scene in the reader's mind for the chaos and behavior of the battles being waged when Tolstoy contrasts historians' accounts with soldiers' actual lives on the battlefield. In his early writings like *The Raid* (1852), Tolstoy shows that he is more interested to know in what way and under which influence of what feeling one soldier kills another, rather than knowing how the armies were arranged at Austerlitz and Borodino.

Mandelker quotes Tolstoy's biographer, Andrew Norman Wilson, as having said that no book seems more real or whole than *War and Peace*. He recalled how Tolstoy's overly detailed writing in it resonated with soldiers in the Second World War, who read the book whilst on their own battlefield. Many apparently found reading Tolstoy's accounts of the campaigns of Kutuzov and Napoleon to be more real and engaging than the explosions and dying going on all around them in their own war against Hitler. This must have proved a welcome distraction for them when they could recognize themselves in Tolstoy's descriptions of what soldiers were doing or not doing during the chaos of their own battle going on around them.

## Tolstoy's Use of French in *War and Peace*

Tolstoy has his Russian nobles sometimes speaking French amongst themselves instead of Russian, having effectively given themselves over to the French customs and values of the *ancien régime* before the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era, thus cementing a distance between them and their own serfs who spoke only Russian. This would have stood out especially to Tolstoy's Russian readers since Russian words are constructed using a Cyrillic alphabet and are not Latin-based like French words. Some nobles are described as returning to Russia for the first time after being fully educated abroad. Mandelker points out that the astute reader will notice that a predilection for speaking French is frequently for Tolstoy an indictment of character, spoken preferentially by his most superficial and manipulative characters that often implies a false, immoral, or insincere communication, as in not being true to one's authentic self.

One obvious example of this indictment of character in the book occurs when Pierre Bezúkhov declares his love to Héléne with "*Je vous aime*," which leads to a disastrous marriage. Tolstoy tells us that French is spoken to Sonya to indicate her lower social status as a poor relation to the Rostov household, and that Sonya speaks French only when trying "and failing" to be polite to her rival, Princess Marya Bolkónsky.

When Natasha Rostóva goes to the opera in Moscow, Tolstoy takes the trouble to inform us through Natasha's inexperienced eyes of the artificiality of everything that she sees, from wooden boards to painted faces and exaggerated poses and gestures. Not knowing herself, she is portrayed by Tolstoy as stepping unwittingly into the seemingly harmless, but false and insincere façade of Russian society. Here at the opera is the only time in the novel that she speaks French, emulating Héléne and falling in love with the social world of the Kurágin. She writes in French only once too when breaking off her engagement to Prince Andrei Bolkónsky. This makes the reader wonder what perhaps predestined consequences will come back to Natasha in due time. During the absence of her betrothed Prince Andrei Bolkónsky, when the marriage is delayed for a year by his father, she is courted and seduced by the elegant but deceptive Anatole Kurágin, who is already married. Considered by Tolstoy to be the crux of *War and Peace*, he takes up this theme again in his next book, *Anna Karenina* (1875). Mandelker says this sets the theme for subsequent historical novels such as Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*.

Natasha's authentic spiritual resurrection follows most clearly when, spontaneously, she decides to give away her family's possessions on the streets of Moscow to help injured and dying soldiers. Among the injured soldiers she helps is her former betrothed Andrei Bolkónsky, who seemingly never healed from losing Natasha.

These Russian nobles are portrayed by Tolstoy as behaving like the cast of some divine production from Mount Olympus, acting out their preassigned roles to some predetermined end, as if things could not be otherwise. This is what Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) called "Olympian distance" on the part of the author. C. S. Lewis (1898 – 1963) in his *Letters* (1979) describes this idea as "that sublime indifference to the life or death, success or failure of the chief characters, which is not a blank indifference at all, but almost like submission to the will of God [the Divine]."

## **A Mystical Interpretation – The Law of Compensation or Cause and Effect**

This seeming indifference or plain submission to some Divine Will arriving on one's doorstep is proposed here to be the manifestation of the universal law of cause and effect or karma, known to some mystics and Rosicrucians as the law of compensation for individual human actions. It is seen as guiding human evolution through its effects on each individual's evolving inner self, aiming for balance and continuing freedom to choose. These universal and impersonal divine laws that govern humanity and the universe are a part of the Cosmic, and show how the Divine Mind, Divinity, or Supreme Intelligence manages the universe while keeping open the possibility of a more intimate personal contact when judged as appropriate by the Divine Mind (Lewis 2015, 107-123; Lewis 1962, 1-18). The law of cosmic justice is viewed as being able to reward nobility of purpose, as well as mitigate the effects of the lesson to be learned when the individual consciously recognizes the justice of the law in reaction to past behavior. This cosmic law is not a law of vengeance or revenge, and not "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," as some have seen it. This law can be understood to continue to operate through reincarnation when the soul of a given individual is attracted to a new mother and family in a coming life that will give it the appropriate opportunity to continue to develop the inner personality through compensating for past behavior, as the law requires. The individual outworkings of this law of compensation is thus seen as the great school of personal experience whereby individuals, as well as countries, can learn first-hand of their powers and limitations, and their weaknesses and strengths (Lewis 2015, 107-123).

## **Quantum Physics and the Law of Karma**

Further, this law of compensation can be reinterpreted through quantum entanglement as representing how each thought and action collapses quantum probability waves into specific realities that then constrain future possibilities—what physicist John Wheeler (1994) describes as "observer-participancy." This interpretation is directly pertinent here, since during the year 1812, when Napoleon invaded Russia and later delayed his retreat after arriving in a burning, almost-deserted Moscow, it was seen by Tolstoy as a manifestation of a law of predestination whereby Napoleon learned first-hand of the limitation of his powers. That is, prior actions create an inevitable result. It is our awareness of our own participation in such events that, according to traditional karmic law, mitigates further karmic actions or results.

The memoirs of Armand de Caulaincourt, who rode constantly at Napoleon's side, have been hailed by historians as the most accurate and best written eyewitness account of Napoleon's disastrous attempt to conquer Russia (Caulaincourt 2008). Born a French nobleman, he was one of the highest officials in the French Empire and was constantly with Napoleon. He recorded Napoleon's comments in 1812 to those in the emperor's intimate circle that Moscow was a bad situation for him that could only get worse if Tsar Alexander kept on rebuffing his overtures for an armistice. Napoleon acknowledged that he could only stay in Moscow long enough to reorganize his army, since the Austrians and Prussians, who were entrusted with the defense of his rear, would become dangerous enemies if he met with the slightest reverse of fortune from the Russians just fifty miles from Moscow. On realizing from a communique that "the die was already cast," Caulaincourt said, Napoleon paused, thought for a moment, and then added: "*Du*

*destin qui fait tout, telle est la loi suprême*” (“Such is the supreme law of destiny, it commands everything”) (Caulaincourt 2008, 125). This statement could be a reference to Napoleon’s awareness and understanding of the law of compensation for human behavior. His awareness can thus be characterized as “a quantum moment of insight, wherein multiple potential realities collapse into a single inspired vision” (Schwartz and Begley 2002).

### **Self-Realization and Karma**

Tolstoy portrayed Napoleon here as a writer having scripted his response ahead of time, expecting to be greeted in Moscow by a welcoming delegation of Russian nobles whereupon he would show his gracious nature in an eloquent speech about the charitable institutions he would build as a conquering hero on foreign soil. Instead, with no congratulating welcoming committee showing up to render homage, and in a torched city with almost no inhabitants, Tolstoy painted Napoleon and his *Grande Armée* as leaving Moscow despondently, but not as foolish and inept. Tolstoy ended the chapter with his own words in French aimed at Napoleon: “*Le coup de théâtre avait raté*” (“the theatrics did not come off”). Tolstoy ridiculed Napoleon not as an incompetent general, but as a failed artist whose planned self-aggrandizing artistry did not happen. This happening can be compared to what Schwartz and Begley (2002) describe as “a quantum moment of insight where multiple potential realities collapse into a single inspired vision.”

Throughout history and across the world, authors have referenced this divine law of compensation or cause and effect through their exploring of the human condition and the elements involved in self-realization. One such author is American novelist and poet Herman Melville (1819-1891), who not only understood this mystical law, but recognized that we are all connected through invisible threads that transcend physical distance. Melville (1885) stated, “We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow men [humans]; and amongst those fibers, as sympathetic threads, our actions run as causes, and they come back to us as effects.”

The connection between this mystical law and self-realization brings to mind Shakespeare’s advice in *Hamlet*, when the author has Polonius say to his son: “This above all, to thine own Self be true. And it must follow as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man [person]” (Act 1, Scene 3). In other words, above everything else (it is the supreme cosmic law as Napoleon recognized), if we are not true to ourselves, then we are being dishonest, lying to ourselves while also deceiving others, actions for which appropriate consequences can be expected to follow. These consequences teach us a lesson, and at a time when the lesson can best be learned.

This divine law of compensation for human behavior is taken up in the mystical philosophy of the book from the Rosicrucian Library *Unto Thee I Grant*, whose authorship is unknown, but which claims to be written in part in the time of the Pharaoh Amenhotep IV (ca. 1380-1336 BCE) in Egypt. This pharaoh (who, in modern eyes, is a divine king to his subjects) is said to have established a secret mystery school and then proclaimed publicly and boldly to his people his new monotheistic mystical religion after changing his name to Akhnaton.

But this pharaoh was not like Napoleon, who successfully extended himself to his troops and subjects as their emperor, earning their affection. The old Egyptian deities and habits fought back through their many well-positioned adherents at court, and this new monotheistic religion failed to survive in Egypt outside the secret mystery school when his reign ended. The failure was a testament to the adage that “old habits die hard,” and that you need “disciples” to prepare the way, or a military-like campaign to change ideas long-held by the public on life and religion. The introduction in *Unto Thee I Grant* suggests that this new, monotheistic religion found its way overseas to become the basis of the Essene movement in Israel to which the Master Yeshua (Jesus in Greek) is said to have belonged and which spawned future mystical movements.

At the end of Part One in Book Seven on Religion of *Unto Thee I Grant*, it reads:

Hath he established His [Its] laws in goodness and mercy, and shall He [It] not punish the transgressors thereof? O, think not, bold man [person], because thy punishment is delayed that the arm of God [the Divine] is weakened; neither flatter thyself with hopes that He [It] winketh at thy doings. (40)

In Chapter 5 of Book Six of *Unto Thee I Grant* under “Sincerity,” the potential consequences of insincerity and hypocrisy are blatantly spelled out as we overcompensate when trying to hide our real nature:

O, fool, fool, the pains which thou takest to hide what thou art, are far more than would make thee what thou wouldst seem; and the children of wisdom shall mock at thy cunning when, in the midst of security, thy disguise is stripped off, and the finger of derision shall point thee to scorn. (37)

This law of cause and effect is seen by Rosicrucians to evolve the inner personality and the outer character of the individual back toward balance and choice. According to this mystical viewpoint, all human beings make their own individual destiny by their thinking and actions, guided by conscience and governed by the universality and immutability of this impersonal divine law that with mercy and direction requires compensation for human behavior. H. Spencer Lewis put it succinctly: “Character is Fate! Certainly, as we build our character in the NOW, we decree our fate in the future. The forcefulness of the truth of this statement needs no amplification” (Lewis 1954, 117).

This idea is recognized by American poet and diplomat Henry van Dyke when he wrote that we build our future thought by thought, but know it not:

I hold it true that thoughts are things;  
They're endowed with bodies  
and breath and wings:  
And that we send them forth to fill  
The world with good results, or ill.  
That which we call our secret thought  
Speeds forth to earth's remotest spot,

Leaving its blessings or its woes  
Like tracks behind it as it goes.

We build our future, thought by thought,  
For good or ill, yet know it not.  
Yet so the universe was wrought.  
Thought is another name for fate;  
Choose then thy destiny and wait,  
For love brings love and hate brings hate.

Rosicrucian poet Ella Wheeler Wilcox wrote in a similar vein: “You never can tell what a thought will do in bringing you hate or love/ For thoughts are things, and their airy wings are swifter than carrier doves” (Nordhaus-Bike 2025).

The year 1812 that saw Napoleon’s invasion of Russia and the delayed French retreat from a deserted Moscow on fire was viewed by Tolstoy as a manifestation of such a Divine Law, impersonal like the law of gravity. Hence, the indifferent acceptance on the part of Tolstoy to the success or failure and life or death of his characters in *War and Peace*, which bolsters Tolstoy’s conclusions regarding what he is believed to have seen as a law of predestination.

### **The Role of Suffering**

In Book Twelve of *Unto Thee I Grant*, the manifestations of karma are mentioned under the headings of “Prosperity and Adversity,” and then under “Pain and Sickness.” They speak to the value of being guided by the opposites or contraries of human life to ensure consistency:

Good and ill are the tests by which thou art to know thy constancy; nor is there aught else that can tell thee the powers of thine own Soul; be therefore upon the watch when they are upon thee. . . . Adversity is the seed of well-doing: it is the nurse of heroism and boldness; who that hath enough, will endanger himself to have more? who that is at ease, will set his life on the hazard? (89)

Modern psychology recognizes the adage that “old habits die hard.” They are not easily replaced, especially when these ideas and habitual ways of behaving go back to our formative years and early childhood upbringing. Modern Adlerian psychology points this out very well with its concept of “cognitive lifestyle”: the characteristic way of behaving and thinking that is formed early on in childhood, and which acts as a guiding rule of rules for what is important to an individual in life. Conscience thus becomes a guiding internal force. This personal rule of rules is mostly unconscious for the average individual and is therefore another unknown force unless revealed through insight or psychotherapy (Adler 1964).

Under “Pain and Sickness” in *Unto Thee I Grant*, it is written that the value of suffering as a compensation leads the way to awakening the Divine Soul within and a peace most profound:

To suffer, is a necessity entailed upon thy nature, wouldst thou that miracles should protect thee from its lessons? Or shalt thou repine, because it happeneth

unto thee, when lo! it happeneth unto all? Suffering is the golden cross upon which the rose of the Soul unfoldeth. (91)

Adversity and suffering may be the result of the law of compensation for past actions, such as not being true to oneself or being insincere. However, it may also be the seed that leads to opening the door to new ideas and possibilities of how life works best when the values of the soul are heeded. In 1812, this may well have been the case when the religious Tsar Alexander I was inspired with a new strategy on how to resist Napoleon's formidable Grande Armée. The tsar had become seriously interested in Christian mysticism through a friendship with the pietist visionary Baroness von Krüdener, who apparently saw herself as a prophet sent to the tsar by the Divine (Bennett 2020). The tsar is quoted as saying "that the burning of Moscow had 'illuminated his soul'" (Olivier 2024).

One can imagine the mystically inclined Tsar Alexander praying and meditating on how to save his country and people from Napoleon's invasion, when the idea crosses his mind to evacuate the city and set his own capital alight. The royal command goes out to the nobility, military commanders, and the governor of Moscow: "Leave now and set Moscow ablaze. This will save Mother Russia from Napoleon and the French."

This radically new call to action from the tsar resonates and mobilizes the thoughts and hopes of hundreds of individuals who carry out the tsar's order to sacrifice much of their own capital city, so Napoleon has no one to fight when his Grande Armée arrives in Moscow. In effect, they "let go and let the Divine," thus inviting the Divine Law of compensation to react to the authentic thoughts, prayers, and action of thousands of Russians who are willing to pay the price to see Napoleon's fall under the Divine Law of compensation, thereby saving Russia from defeat. This is in line with Tolstoy's thinking that such a law of predestination operated in 1812, and his later conviction as a pacifist, that malevolence should not be resisted with more human violence so that the Divine Law of cause and effect can freely operate.

Tolstoy gives all his characters a similar faith in the significance of their own individual lives and events, and an awareness of providential predestination. This is evident in the actions of Natasha, who at one point in the novel was acting spontaneously from her authentic inner self, when she decided to give away her family's possessions on the streets of Moscow to help injured and dying soldiers, among whom is her former betrothed, Prince Andrei Bolkónsky. Profound results follow (Tolstoy 2017, xix).

### **Unconscious Forces and the Holographic Theory of The Universe**

Citing battle orders and plans that are not heard, understood, or just not followed in the chaos of real battles, those military commanders who imagine themselves to be making history are portrayed by Tolstoy as not being conscious of everything going on. Tolstoy boldly asserts that there are greater unconscious forces that work together that drive the end results on the battlefield: "Only unconscious action bears fruit" (Tolstoy 2017, xix). This is in line with Rosicrucian and mystical thinking that we must release our thoughts and let go of them if they are to bear fruit (Lewis 2015).

It is pertinent to note here that such unconscious forces, as described by Tolstoy, are not limited exclusively to the human psyche. In illustration of this concept, modern physics estimates that dark matter makes up about 25 percent of the mass-energy in the universe. Having no interaction with light or visible electromagnetic radiation, this dark matter is thus invisible to the human eye. And there is dark energy too that is reckoned to make up about 70 percent of everything in the universe, the remaining 5 percent or so coming from ordinary matter (Greene 2005, 432). There are evidently forces that operate in the physical universe that are still unknown to modern science and which operate outside human consciousness.

As the renowned quantum physicist Niels Bohr (1885-1962) wrote: “Everything we call real is made of things that cannot be regarded as real” (Bohr 1987). The implication is that at the microscopic quantum level everything is only potentially real but can materialize when life’s creative laws call them into action.

The holographic theory of the universe is one in which our everyday 3-D space-time world is seen as emerging as a projection in time from processes occurring on a lower order two-dimensional surface where there is no time (Greene 2005; Greene 1999).

This holographic theory helps to explain quantum entanglement, that “spooky action at a distance,” as Albert Einstein (1879-1955) called it, when two originally connected particles are found to be still linked together even when they are separated and far apart (Isaacson 2018). This has its human corollary in the mystical technique of looking within oneself away from the projection as we endeavor to understand ourselves in life. The inference here is that we are indeed here in this 3-D world of time and space, and that our greater essence is coded on some 2-D boundary surface where there is no time, but which has projected us into our present 3-D world of becoming. It is possible to interpret the poetry of William Blake (1757-1827) through his themes of connectedness and harmony in a way that is also in line with modern physics and holography: “To see a world in a grain of sand and heaven in a wild flower, hold infinity in the palm of your hand and eternity in an hour.”

### **The Unknown Predetermined Forces in Carl Jung’s Model of the Psyche and *War and Peace***

Tolstoy’s examination of human psychology and the effects of swirling events that confront his characters can be understood as predetermined by complex elements which are either unknown or unconscious.

Such unconscious forces and their effects play a prominent role in the model of Carl Jung (1875-1961) of the human psyche. The subconscious mind makes up most of the human psyche and communicates largely through symbols and imagery. This process stands out in Jungian psychology where symbols have been described as metaphors for the eternal in the forms of the transient, the two being thrown together and fused into a unity of meaning, a symbol, or metaphor (Eriksson 2025).

Jolande Jacobi (1974), in her book *Complex, Archetype, Symbol in the Psychology of C.G. Jung*, described this complexity of unconscious forces in contrast to the assumed notion that human beings are born without prior conditioning:

It is a mistake to suppose that the psyche of the newborn child is a *tabula rasa* (clean slate) in the sense that there is absolutely nothing in it. Insofar as the child is born with a differentiated brain that is predetermined by heredity and therefore individualized, it meets sensory stimuli coming from outside not with ANY aptitudes, but with specific ones. . . . These aptitudes can be shown to be inherited instincts and preformed patterns, the latter being the *a priori* and formal conditions of apperception that are based on instinct. All those factors, therefore, that were essential to our near and remote ancestors will also be essential to us, for they are embedded in the inherited organic system. The psyche of the newborn child is like a photographic plate that was exposed in earlier generations. When it is developed, separate fragments of the picture appear here and there, until the whole picture is before us. (44)

Plato (ca. 427 – 347 BCE) speaks to this idea of an intimate, yet collective predestination in the *Phaedo*:

And if it is true that we acquired our knowledge before our birth, and lost it at the moment of birth, but afterwards, by the exercise of our senses upon sensible objects, recover the knowledge which we had once before, I suppose that what we call learning will be the recovery of our own knowledge. (Trans. Tredennick 1961)

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), in his book *The Phenomenon of Man [People]* (1961, 261), addresses the goal of such learning: “The work of human works . . . is to establish in and by means of each of us, an absolutely original center in which the universe reflects itself in a unique and inimitable way.”

Tolstoy accomplishes this psychological task in himself after his spiritual and moral crisis, reporting on his new Self in his work “The Kingdom of God Is Within You” (1893) and in other published articles (Morson 2025).

### **Jung’s Process of Individuation and the Self**

In the psychology of C. G. Jung, psychological growth in all its aspects is a process of redemption, often initiated by a moral or spiritual crisis later in life which Tolstoy experienced around the age of fifty in 1878. In “My Confession” (1884), Tolstoy wrote: “I felt that something had broken within me on which my life had always rested, and that I had nothing left to hold on to, and that morally my life had stopped” (Tolstoy 1884; Edinger 1973, 51). In Jungian psychology, such an experience is referred to as an attack of the “alienated ego,” the start of a necessary emptying or darkness before the search for a new day of meaning can begin. The goal in response is to uncover and develop through conscious hard work, effort, and individual realization, a greater self that has been hidden through unconscious identification with the ego

(Edinger 1973, 103). This is the “process of individuation,” an ongoing opus through which the individual becomes psychologically whole, an indivisible unity, called the Self.

As Edward Edinger wrote: “The transpersonal life energy in the process of self-unfolding uses the human consciousness, a product of itself, as an instrument for its own self-realization” (1973, 104). This process occurs through linking together as much as possible the various components or sub-systems of the individual psyche that are autonomous, yet interdependent, the conscious and the unconscious, opposites, but interconnected in self-perpetuating cycles of movement as symbolically illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1. The Yin and Yang symbol in Jungian psychology often represents the conscious and unconscious aspects of human consciousness, and although static, the image evokes a sense of perpetual movement and interdependence. The seed of the opposite is contained in the other.

These interdependent aspects of the Self are:

- the ego complex, that center of consciousness that has a high degree of continuity and identity.
- the persona or mask (the well-adapted side of consciousness).
- the shadow (the poorly adapted side of consciousness).
- the *anima* and *animus*, which are respectively the personifications of the feminine nature of a man’s subconscious and the masculine nature of a woman’s subconscious.
- the personal unconscious with its feeling-toned complexes that was once conscious, but which has been suppressed, forgotten, or ignored.
- the non-personal or collective unconscious with its Archetypes inherited with the brain structure. (Hall and Lindsey 1970; Edinger 1973; Jung 1957; Jacobi 1974)

All of these elements are best illustrated in Figure 2, which also offers Jung’s notion of a universal or collective consciousness and unconscious that individuals share with others over time.

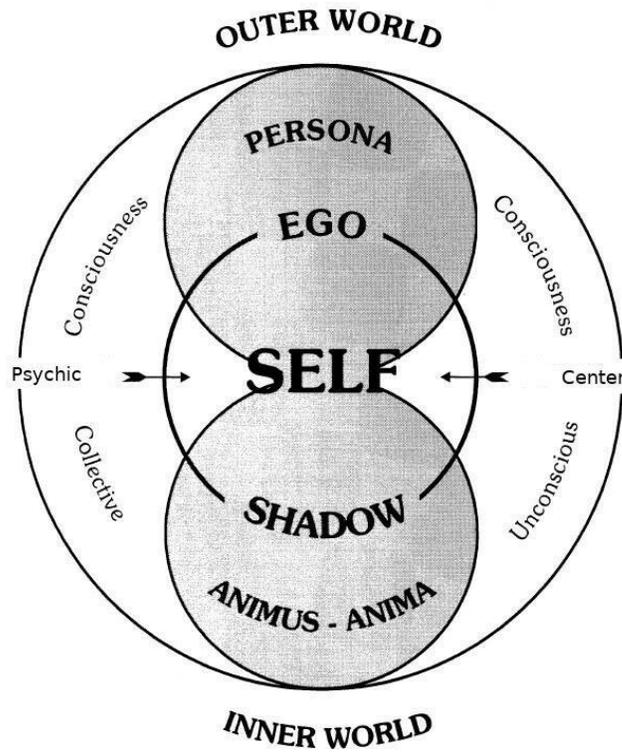


Figure 2. An imagining of Jung's model of the psyche (source unknown).

## The Self

Symbols of wholeness appear in human dreams and fantasies when the individual has integrated some of the preceding components into consciousness as much as is possible at a given time. The Self may be symbolized by a beautiful mythical animal, a young child, a wise old man, a jewel, the philosopher's stone, or a mandala. As such, it represents the unity of expression attained by an individual from the collective unconscious, the end of a spiritual quest for wholeness. This new Self represents a new ordering, a rejoining of parts, and a creation of a new unified center of the whole psyche (conscious and unconscious), just as the ego is the unified center of the conscious personality.

The Self is thus the new overall authority and subordinates the ego to itself. Edinger describes the Self as the inner empirical deity or authority and identifies it with a divine image (Edinger 1973, 3, 62). The Christ Consciousness has been described as a paradigm or model of the Individuating Ego (Edinger 1973, 131). Tolstoy, who was a student of human psychology, saw the Christ in a similar way, not as the son of the Divine, but as a very wise man who had found a true accounting of life (Morson 2025).

In a letter replying to a colleague who asked if he had “borrowed” his archetypal soul images from Laurence Sterne’s novel *Tristram Shandy*, Jung with humor and humility remarked: “In the last five years, it has become more and more uncanny as I have discovered quite suspicious traces of it also in the old alchemists, and now the mischief seems complete since it turns out that I was discovered already in the eighteenth century.” It seems possible that Laurence Sterne drew upon the secret teachings—presumably Rosicrucian—of his time. They contain the Royal Secret of the King and Queen, who were none other than the *animus* and *anima*, or *Deus* and *Dea* (Schaa 1976, 20; C.G. Jung 1973, 248).

Visitors who met Leo Tolstoy in his later years often left with an uneasy impression, as though he could perceive thoughts they had not expressed. If such accounts are accurate, they suggest a heightened sensitivity—an attunement to an inner awareness or to forces beyond ordinary perception. Observers frequently characterized him in elevated terms, portraying him as possessing almost divine insight while simultaneously engaged in an immense personal struggle against the constraints of human existence. To some, he represented the vitality of nature itself; to others, he seemed to embody the moral conscience of the world. For many readers and acquaintances alike, Tolstoy was more than a towering literary figure—he stood as a living expression of humanity’s enduring quest for meaning (Morson 2025).

## **Conclusion**

Tolstoy’s illustration of predestination in *War and Peace* is a masterpiece of everyday human psychology showing the wisdom of the ancient injunction to “Know Thyself” and the mercy behind the law of cause and effect. This law is known to mystics and Rosicrucians as the law of compensation for human behavior, which allows the process of knowing oneself to begin. Tolstoy’s focus on human behavior and motivation reveals his interpretation of the concept of free will and its seeming limits when we are confronted by swirling external forces and the will and actions of others. These may seem to limit our choices as we undergo such pressures. When viewed through the lens of quantum entanglement, “observer-participancy,” and a holographic universe, we are led to a fuller understanding of the operations of the law of karma as a teaching tool that can shape both individual and collective choices.

Finally, Amy Mandelker’s commentary on this important epic novel offers readers helpful historical context as well as insight into Tolstoy’s mystical approach to humanity’s struggle for self-realization.

## **Author’s Note**

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## **Conflict of Interest**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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