

programming of individualistic “calculating actors, whether firms, interest groups, or individual citizens” (23–25) and the resulting subjectivity.

The fact that neoliberal economists accepted the “positive purposes of government,” as Collier writes, likely resulted more from the demands of individual subjects forged by disciplinary power and subpopulations forged by biopolitics—or, in Foucault’s later terminology, the self-care, care for others, and resistance of these forged subjects—than from independent thinking of neoliberal economists, as Collier seems to argue. The Soviet Union witnessed an explosion of “critical reflections on government practice” not captured by the narrow neoliberal ideas of these economists.

I encourage readers to examine Collier’s book and my review and to make their own assessment.

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To the Editor:

Upon reading Inessa Medzhibovskaya’s review of my book *Understanding Tolstoy* (vol. 71, no. 4), I was newly struck by the capacity of some Slavic specialists to render the field of Tolstoi studies unnecessarily opaque and irrelevant. Medzhibovskaya seems to think that the only readers of books on Tolstoi—or at least, the only readers worth writing for—are those 150 or so English-speaking Tolstoi specialists whose job it is to write books for, well, 150 or so English-speaking Tolstoi specialists. But what of the much larger audience of readers, among whom are faculty in other fields, undergraduate and graduate students, not to mention many other serious readers, who might benefit from a broad, accessible, and thought-provoking book like *Understanding Tolstoy*? Silent on that subject, Medzhibovskaya instead accuses me of creating a work whose contents “would be all too familiar to specialists and scholars who keep their thinking and reading about Tolstoi serious and current.”

Of course, Medzhibovskaya knows that she must deal with the fact that, among those who have found something “serious and current” in *Understanding Tolstoy* are prominent American and Russian scholars whose mentorship and contributions to my thinking I acknowledge in the book. That inconvenient truth she artfully handles by arguing that my “limpid” and “fetching, even sly” writing style is a tool employed to seek the approval of those very scholars, whom she identifies as the surviving representatives of the Old Criticism.

I suspect that her strong negative reaction to my book might have something to do with her own (largely unacknowledged) theoretical assumptions. Medzhibovskaya might have conceded that *Understanding Tolstoy* does, in fact, have a clearly articulated interpretive framework, whose main shortcoming, alas, is that it is not hers. As I say on p. 3 of the introduction: “I wanted to write a book that reconstructs, rather than deconstructs Tolstoy—a book that mirrors the very internal unity of Tolstoy’s trajectory as a man and artist.”

I am well aware that in the contemporary intellectual climate, such an approach to literary criticism is bound to strike some scholars as rather passé, even naïve. All right, then, let us have *that* debate, openly and honestly, rather than using one another’s books as convenient objects for our own scholarly axe-grinding, which not only grates on the ears; it makes the important work we are all engaged in seem irrelevant to all but a tiny cadre of fellow specialists.

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