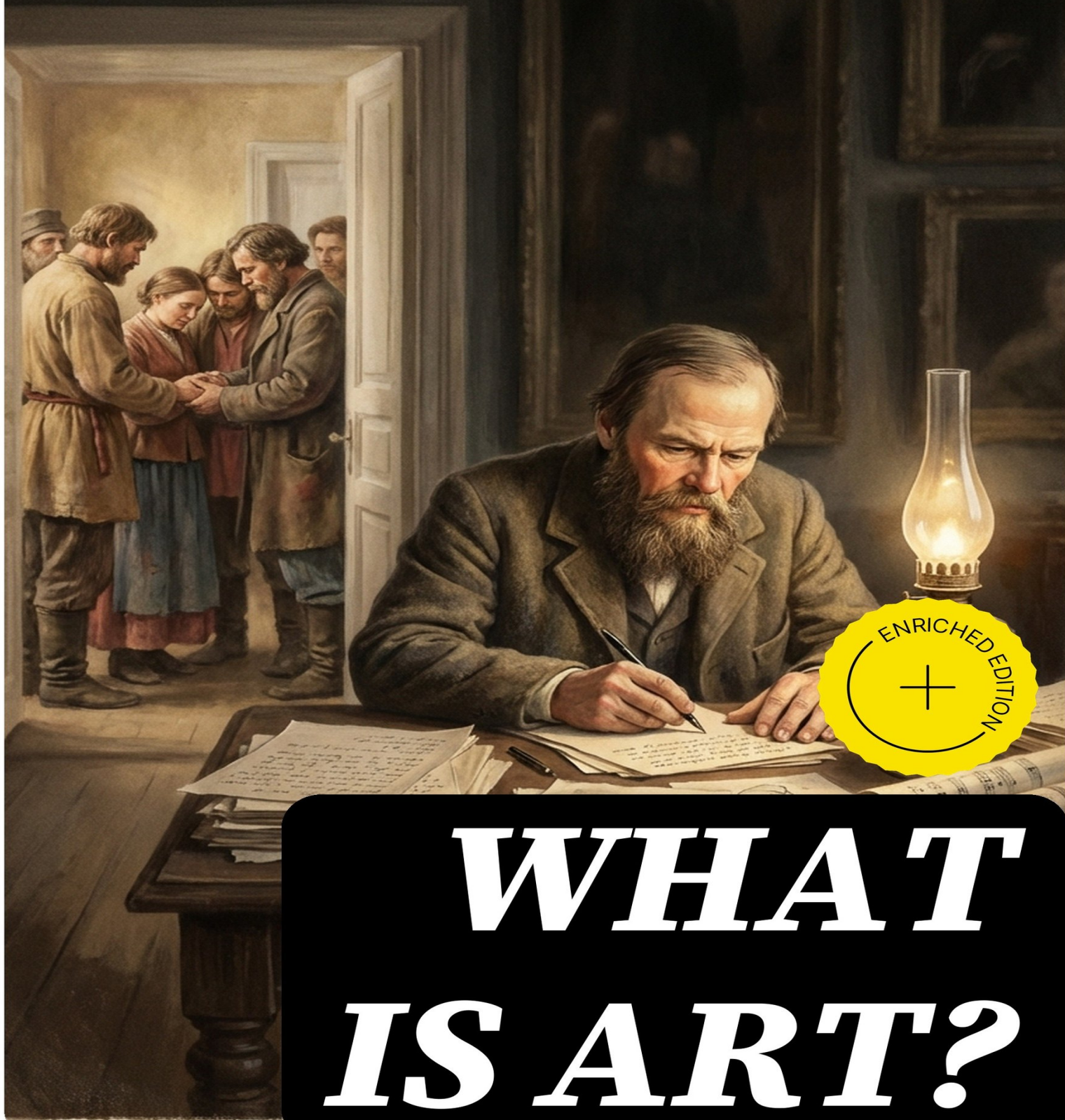


**LEO TOLSTOY**



**WHAT  
IS ART?**

**Leo Tolstoy**

# **What Is Art?**

**Enriched edition. Including "Wherein Is Truth in Art?"**

*Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Georgia Fletcher*

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# Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Historical Context](#)

[Synopsis \(Selection\)](#)

**[What Is Art?](#)**

[Analysis](#)

[Reflection](#)

# Introduction

[Table of Contents](#)

## Curatorial Vision

This collection gathers Leo Tolstoy's central statements on aesthetics alongside his test cases and the most resonant contemporary and near-contemporary responses. *What is Art?*, *Wherein Is Truth In Art?*, and *On the Significance of Science and Art* articulate an ethic of art grounded in sincerity, moral clarity, and shared feeling. *Shakespeare and the Drama* and *Works of Guy de Maupassant* show those principles applied to major creators. A. Stockham's *Tokology*, Amiel's *Diary*, S. T. Seménov's *Peasant Stories*, and *Stop and Think!* broaden the field to social reform, introspection, peasant life, and exhortation. Criticisms on Tolstoy and the essays by Baring, Howells, Phelps, Panin, and Chesterton complete the dialogue.

The through-line is the question named by the title: what is art for? Across treatise, critique, portrait, and rejoinder, the works pursue art's relation to truth, communal life, and ethical action. The aim is to trace an arc from definition to application, then to reflection upon consequences. Unlike single-work presentations, this arrangement sets Tolstoy's premises beside his judgments of other authors and the assessments of him, building a polyphonic inquiry. *Introduction* and *Books* provide gateways into the corpus, while *Leo Tolstoy: A Short Biography* supplies concise

orientation to the life from which these arguments emerge and toward which they continually return.

What is Art? formulates an austere test of artistic value; Wherein Is Truth In Art? restates the problem in terms of veracity and communicability; On the Significance of Science and Art explores how knowledge and creation intersect. Each pursues clarity about feeling, usefulness, and universality. Shakespeare and the Drama interrogates celebrated theatre by those criteria, while Works of Guy de Maupassant measures modern narrative against them. Together they present a method: define, examine, and test. The surrounding pieces broaden the referential field, allowing questions of beauty and duty to be considered alongside health, diaries, rural storytelling, and calls for mindfulness.

Leo Tolstoy: A Short Biography anchors the inquiry in decisive experiences, while Criticisms on Tolstoy gathers representative reactions to his forceful positions. Maurice Baring's Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky stages a comparative horizon; William Dean Howells's My Literary Passions: "Tolstoy" records a personal encounter with an influence; William Lyon Phelps's Essays on Russian Novelists: "Tolstoi" situates him among peers; Ivan Panin's "Tolstoy the Artist" and "Tolstoy the Preacher" weigh imaginative power against prophetic fervor; G. K. Chesterton's "Tolstoy and the Cult of Simplicity" examines an ascetic strain. The aim is to present a living conversation rather than a solitary pronouncement.

## **Thematic & Aesthetic Interplay**

Tolstoy's aesthetic claims find immediate counterpoint in his case studies. Shakespeare and the Drama pushes the

standards proposed in *What is Art?* to a dramatic tradition, while *Works of Guy de Maupassant* tests modern prose. *Wherein Is Truth In Art?* refines the criterion of authenticity that also animates *Stop and Think!* and informs his attention to S. T. Seménov's *Peasant Stories*. A. Stockham's *Tokology* and Amiel's *Diary* introduce neighboring domains—practical ethics and reflective interiority—against which artistic aims are measured. *Books and Introduction* provide framing impulses that foreground reading as a moral practice and orient the conversation toward responsibility.

Across the volume, motifs recur: sincerity versus virtuosity, communal feeling versus isolated brilliance, and the moral weight of everyday life. *What is Art?* names the standards; *Wherein Is Truth In Art?* probes their veracity; *On the Significance of Science and Art* links perception to social need. Tolstoy's valuation of peasant narratives resonates with S. T. Seménov's *Peasant Stories*, while his ascetic bent is examined in G. K. Chesterton's "Tolstoy and the Cult of Simplicity." Ivan Panin's paired essays, "Tolstoy the Artist" and "Tolstoy the Preacher," crystallize a duality that courses throughout, balancing aesthetic power with ethical proclamation.

Contrasts in tone sharpen the dialogue. In *Shakespeare and the Drama* the register is polemical, whereas in *Works of Guy de Maupassant* discernment and measure coexist. *My Literary Passions: "Tolstoy"* by William Dean Howells offers affectionate testimony, while William Lyon Phelps's *Essays on Russian Novelists: "Tolstoi"* provides a panoramic placement. Maurice Baring's *Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky* frames rivalry and kinship as interpretive lenses. *Criticisms on Tolstoy* condenses the range of assent and dissent. These shifts in genre—from manifesto to memoir, from comparative study to collected critique—enact the very

testing ground demanded by Tolstoy's insistence on moral clarity and communicative power.

Subtle correspondences animate the set. Amiel's Diary mirrors the inwardness that *What is Art?* seeks to transmit through feeling, while A. Stockham's *Tokology* exemplifies the practical good that *On the Significance of Science and Art* places within cultural labor. *Stop and Think!* transposes the demand for sincerity into a civic admonition, just as *Books* reasserts the formative power of reading choices. *Leo Tolstoy: A Short Biography* supplies a narrative backbone whose episodes are tacitly invoked by his evaluations of Shakespeare, Maupassant, and Seménov. The result is a network of echoes in which principles, lives, and judgments continually illuminate one another.

## **Enduring Impact & Critical Reception**

The question "What is art?" remains unsettled, and Tolstoy's answer continues to provoke because it binds beauty to fellowship and duty. The selections show how a theory becomes an ethic with consequences for taste, education, and public life. Debates over inclusivity, accessibility, and the cultural authority of classics are already anticipated in *Shakespeare and the Drama* and in the attention to S. T. Seménov's *Peasant Stories*. The practical thread represented by A. Stockham's *Tokology* and the reflective thread of Amiel's *Diary* reveal how artistic judgment touches health, conscience, and daily conduct, making the inquiry immediate rather than abstract.

*What is Art?* stands as a landmark in modern aesthetics, and *Shakespeare and the Drama* remains a flashpoint in discussions of theatrical value. Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky by

Maurice Baring crystallizes a comparative frame that continues to shape encounters with Russian fiction. My Literary Passions: "Tolstoy" by William Dean Howells and William Lyon Phelps's Essays on Russian Novelists: "Tolstoi" register an enduring presence in Anglophone literary culture. Ivan Panin's two portraits and G. K. Chesterton's essay articulate persistent questions about artistry and preaching, plainness and grandeur. Together, these writings map a public argument that has never entirely subsided.

The materials gathered here illuminate ongoing afterlives across culture. Arguments first sharpened around Shakespeare and the Drama recur whenever performance traditions are reassessed. The emphasis on accessible expression in *What is Art?* surfaces in movements that prize plain speech, shared feeling, and social service. Attention to S. T. Seménov's *Peasant Stories* echoes in renewed regard for vernacular voices. A. Stockham's *Tokology and Stop and Think!* point toward the porous border between didactic writing and moral art, a border continually crossed in public discourse. These currents sustain a conversation that touches classrooms, stages, reading circles, and civic life.

The collection remains vital because it models thinking in the round. Tolstoy's theses, their concrete applications, neighboring case materials, and the spectrum of responses together prompt scrutiny without coercion. Criticisms on Tolstoy ensures counterarguments are present; *Introduction and Books* keep the focus on inquiry rather than reverence; *Leo Tolstoy: A Short Biography* supplies the human scale. In such company, *What is Art?* ceases to be a closed doctrine and becomes a framework for ongoing evaluation. The result is an invitation to judgment informed by empathy, rigor, and a sense of art's obligations within shared life.

# Historical Context

[Table of Contents](#)

## Socio-Political Landscape

The anthology assembles works forged under the shadow of imperial autocracy, rural poverty, and tightening censorship. “Leo Tolstoy: A Short Biography” and the “Introduction” anchor readers in a Russia negotiating the aftershocks of serf emancipation, a hierarchical bureaucracy, and a powerful established church. In this setting, debates on art and science were inseparable from questions of authority, conscience, and social duty. “What is Art?” and “On the Significance of Science and Art” appear not only as aesthetic treatises but as interventions in public life, challenging the legitimacy of elite culture, philanthropic posturing, and official narratives about progress that left peasants and workers on the margins.

The rural settlement after emancipation defined the moral horizon of many texts here. Communal landholding, redemption payments, and the strain of modernization bore directly on S. T. Seménov’s “Peasant Stories,” which register the pressures on village households and the ethical imagination they sustain. Tolstoy’s agrarian sympathies animate “Stop and Think!,” a tract-like appeal to conscience amid social dislocation. Local self-government expanded, literacy rose, and railways stitched regions together, yet basic inequities persisted. The anthology’s Russian voices return to the countryside as a political arena, measuring the

state's promises against the realities of debt, hunger, and the fragile solidarities of laboring families.

War and compulsory service formed a stark backdrop to arguments about art's purpose. Veterans' memories, frontier campaigns, and militarized schooling fostered habits of obedience that Tolstoy consistently interrogated. "On the Significance of Science and Art" questions the moral authority of a state that funds grand institutions yet tolerates preventable suffering. "What is Art?" presses further, doubting the public good of spectacles tailored for imperial audiences. In "Shakespeare and the Drama," the critique extends to the canonization of courtly theater, exposing how admiration for prestigious drama can buttress hierarchies. Aesthetic judgment thus appears as political judgment, inseparable from the discipline and display of power.

Church-state entanglement intensified controversies surrounding these works. Exhortations to poverty, nonviolence, and truth-telling collided with clerical prerogatives and with a censorship apparatus wary of lay preaching. "Criticisms on Tolstoy" documents the struggle to place his voice: saintly reformer to some, corrosive dissenter to others. Ivan Panin's paired studies, "Tolstoy the Artist" and "Tolstoy the Preacher," register the fault line between the novelist's craft and prophetic rebuke, capturing the social suspicion aroused when literature crosses into lived doctrine. Public debates about obedience, heresy, and moral authenticity frame not only Tolstoy's arguments but also their reception in classrooms, salons, and periodicals.

The anthology's horizon is not solely Russian. "Works of Guy de Maupassant" enters from a republican France reshaped by defeat, secular schooling, and a consolidating middle class. Its exacting realism sharpened the Russian

conversation about luxury, impulse, and urban restlessness. Across the Atlantic, William Dean Howells's "My Literary Passions: 'Tolstoy'" and William Lyon Phelps's "Essays on Russian Novelists: 'Tolstoi'" show U.S. critics engaging art as a democratizing force amid mass-circulation journalism and new universities. Maurice Baring's "Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky" records a British vantage, where comparisons of spiritual psychology and social critique mirrored anxieties about empire, industrial fatigue, and the authority of tradition.

Domestic policy and intimate life converge in "A. Stockham's Tokology," set against legal and cultural battles over reproductive knowledge, marital reform, and the medicalization of the home. Anti-obscenity statutes and professional gatekeeping restricted circulation of plainspoken counsel, while women's labor underwrote agrarian and urban economies. The work's plea for informed motherhood intersects with Tolstoyan moral rigor and the peasant household's precarious arithmetic of bread, bodies, and time. By placing "Tokology" beside treatises on art and science, the anthology underscores that debates over purity, health, and consent are matters of governance, not private sentiment alone.

"Amiel's Diary" reflects a Swiss milieu of civic liberalism and cultured introspection, yet its preoccupation with conscience and vocation chimes with Russian crises of belief. The diary's self-scrutiny models a citizen's effort to reconcile public obligation and private longing, an effort echoed across the collection. The section titled "Books" gestures to reading practices shaped by expanding libraries and cheap print, instruments of both emancipation and control. Baring's "Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky," explicitly comparative by title, signals the empire's divided legacy of

spiritual rebellion and social critique, a legacy the “Introduction” sets in relief as readers move among biography, manifesto, and village sketch.

## **Intellectual & Aesthetic Currents**

Tolstoy’s aesthetic arguments grew from an ethic of radical truthfulness. “What is Art?” defines art as the transmission of sincere feeling that unites people across class and custom. “Wherein Is Truth In Art?” refines the claim against charges of puritanism, insisting that clarity of moral purpose need not extinguish beauty. “On the Significance of Science and Art” confronts triumphalist narratives of knowledge, treating science as a tool whose worth depends on service to the least protected. Together these essays engage and resist the positivist spirit of the age, substituting the criterion of conscience for that of institutional prestige or technical virtuosity.

A rivalry of styles structures the anthology’s literary field. “Works of Guy de Maupassant” showcases a brisk realism of surfaces and shocks, while Seménov’s “Peasant Stories” cultivate a plainer rustic candor. Tolstoy’s “Shakespeare and the Drama” challenges inherited reverence for canonical theater, raising questions about imitation and idolatry. In the Anglophone essays, Howells and Phelps defend a democratic realism that privileges moral perception over ornament. G. K. Chesterton’s “Tolstoy and the Cult of Simplicity” counterattacks with paradox, arguing that severity can become its own extravagance, and that an art of renunciation risks mistaking minimalism for virtue.

Technological transformation powered the circulation and themes of these texts. Cheap editions, improved presses,

rail networks, and telegraphy broadened audiences and synchronized debates across continents. “Tokology” brings an applied-science idiom into the household, translating anatomy and hygiene for lay readers while contesting professional monopolies on knowledge. “On the Significance of Science and Art” tests whether such diffusion uplifts or merely dazzles. “Amiel’s Diary,” with its analytic inwardness, resonates with emerging inquiries into memory and attention, expanding the sense of what counts as truthful description. Aesthetic form here absorbs new rhythms of information, speed, and expertise without surrendering ethical scrutiny.

Experiment with genre is itself an argument in this collection. “Leo Tolstoy: A Short Biography” compresses a public life into a narrative of conscience, staging the stakes for the treatises that follow. Ivan Panin’s diptych—“Tolstoy the Artist” and “Tolstoy the Preacher”—formalizes a perennial critical split-screen, while “Criticisms on Tolstoy” assembles dissent as method, a collage of appraisal rather than a single verdict. “Stop and Think!” exemplifies the aphoristic exhortation, aiming at moral reflex rather than elaborate proof. The brief section “Books” hints at a cataloging impulse: to sort, weigh, and recommend as an ethics of reading in an age of abundance.

Religious and ethical currents course through the volume. Tolstoy’s reinterpretation of Christian teaching valorizes poverty, labor, and nonresistance, pressing art toward communion rather than display. Chesterton’s “Tolstoy and the Cult of Simplicity” recasts that rigor as a temptation to severity, defending creaturely delight against excessive austerity. Maurice Baring’s “Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky,” comparative by design, frames narrative art as a battleground of sin and renewal, emphasizing the

psychological stakes of moral choice. “Wherein Is Truth In Art?” links these debates, warning that sentimentality and cynicism can both counterfeit feeling, and urging an aesthetic of honest contagion as the common measure.

## **Legacy & Reassessment Across Time**

Revolution and counterrevolution redrafted the ledger of merit. After 1905 and 1917, Tolstoy’s indictments of wealth and coercion seemed prophetic, yet his religious radicalism and nonviolence complicated revolutionary canons. Realist craft drew official praise, while sermons on conscience invited suspicion. “Criticisms on Tolstoy” gained new life as readers sorted the political from the spiritual in his legacy. Seménov’s village focus—once moral localism—was recast in terms of class, labor, and land. The anthology mirrors that ambivalence, preserving doctrinal friction alongside narrative art, and showing how institutional agendas can alternately domesticate and inflame a writer’s demand for truth.

Across the twentieth century, anti-war movements, conscientious objection, and campaigns for humane education repeatedly mined these pages. “What is Art?” informed curricular disputes about whether art serves amusement, uplift, or solidarity, while “On the Significance of Science and Art” became a touchstone in arguments over research priorities and public funding. The provocation of “Shakespeare and the Drama” periodically resurfaced wherever theater culture seemed captive to prestige rather than feeling. As audiences diversified, the question of whom art addresses—and who is excluded—shifted from a

philosophical to a policy problem, drawing these essays into arenas of cultural planning and civic education.

Gender and health debates prompted fresh readings of “A. Stockham’s Tokology.” Once censured for frankness, it later appeared as a precursor to public-health literacy and patient rights, even as portions aged with medical progress. Its insistence on consent, nutrition, and maternal dignity harmonized with renewed attention to domestic labor’s economic value. Set beside Tolstoy’s exhortations, the work exposes tensions between moral purity and bodily autonomy. This historical oscillation—from scandal to classic—demonstrates how scientific style and ethical tone can travel different timelines, with a text’s social utility waxing even as its technical advice requires annotation.

Critical authority also changed hands. Howells and Phelps, early arbiters of realist taste, saw their reputations wane and revive with shifts in university canons and journalism. Yet their essays continue to frame Anglo-American encounters with Tolstoy as a contest between sentiment and sincerity. “Amiel’s Diary,” once read as private consolation, gained relevance as memoir and life-writing rose to prominence, its disciplined introspection offering a counterweight to confession-as-spectacle. “Works of Guy de Maupassant” accrued darker resonance as readers, marked by wars and urban estrangement, found in its economy of detail a method for registering shock without grandiloquence.

The digital turn reframed access, pedagogy, and the public square in which these arguments live. Open archives and global classrooms have placed “What is Art?” at the center of debates about creativity, community, and algorithmic taste. “On the Significance of Science and Art” speaks to contemporary disputes over expertise,

misinformation, and the ethics of innovation. The compact exhortations of “Stop and Think!” travel easily across new media, while Baring’s “Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky,” Panin’s paired studies, and Chesterton’s critique anchor comparative courses that cross languages and traditions. The anthology’s polyphony—biography, diary, story, manifesto—remains a model for teaching art as a civic practice.

# **Synopsis (Selection)**

[Table of Contents](#)

## **Introduction and Books**

These framing pieces orient the reader to Tolstoy's central question—what art is for—and sketch the scope of the materials assembled here. They prime the conversation that follows between Tolstoy's theories, his applied criticism, and a range of responses from admirers and opponents, highlighting tensions between moral purpose and aesthetic autonomy.

## **Leo Tolstoy: A Short Biography**

A concise life sketch traces Tolstoy's path from aristocratic origins and literary fame to a searching ethical crisis that reshaped his worldview. It provides context for his late aesthetics by linking key turning points in his experience to his demands for sincerity, universality, and moral service in art.

## **What is Art?**

Tolstoy advances a definition of art as the intentional transmission of felt experience from artist to audience, valuing works that are sincere, clear, and broadly accessible. He challenges prevailing notions of beauty and elite taste, arguing that art should strengthen human

fellowship and moral life. The tone is polemical and reformist, aimed at overturning established hierarchies.

## **Wherein Is Truth In Art?**

This follow-up sharpens the criteria by which Tolstoy distinguishes genuine art from imitation, emphasizing the authenticity of feeling and its power to be shared across classes and cultures. He tests prevailing fashions against these standards, insisting that truth in art is ethical as well as aesthetic.

## **On the Significance of Science and Art**

Tolstoy weighs the social value of science and art, contending that both matter only insofar as they serve human well-being, especially among the least advantaged. He challenges specialization and luxury that detach knowledge and creativity from life's moral tasks, urging redirection toward practical and ethical ends.

## **Shakespeare and the Drama**

Tolstoy scrutinizes Shakespeare's reputation and questions the dramatic works' coherence, moral clarity, and communicative power by his own standards of art. The essay's iconoclastic tone provokes debate about canon formation, stagecraft, and whether artistic greatness can be severed from moral intelligibility.

# **Works of Guy de Maupassant**

In assessing Maupassant, Tolstoy admires the economy and observational acuity while probing where such virtues do—or do not—serve a humane purpose. The piece doubles as a case study in his aesthetics, testing a celebrated realist against the demands of sincerity, clarity, and moral resonance.

## **A. Stockham's Tokology**

Tolstoy welcomes this practical treatise on women's health and family life as an example of knowledge aimed at genuine human improvement. His notice underscores the value he places on clarity, usefulness, and ethical intent in cultural production.

## **Amiel's Diary**

Reflecting on an introspective journal, Tolstoy assesses the strengths and limits of self-analysis as a path toward moral clarity. He weighs contemplation against action, attentive to the diary's candor and its bearing on a life oriented to conscience.

## **S. T. Seménov's Peasant Stories**

Tolstoy commends these tales for their unadorned authenticity and closeness to everyday experience. He sees in them the kind of direct, morally intelligible art that can speak across social boundaries.

## **Stop and Think!**

A brief exhortation urging readers to pause before habit and impulse, and to measure daily choices by conscience and consequence. Its accessible tone aligns with Tolstoy's broader aim to connect ethical reflection with ordinary life.

## **Criticisms on Tolstoy**

A range of contemporary and later views take up Tolstoy's aesthetics and ethics, weighing his coherence, influence, and blind spots. Together they situate his arguments within larger debates about art's purpose, the role of religion in culture, and the limits of moral didacticism.

## **“Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky” by Maurice Baring**

Baring sets Tolstoy alongside Dostoevsky, contrasting their moral visions, narrative methods, and portraits of the soul. The comparison highlights complementary strengths and differing emphases—ethical realism and social plainness on one side, psychological intensity and metaphysical drama on the other.

## **My Literary Passions: “Tolstoy” by William Dean Howells**

Howells offers a personal-critical appreciation of Tolstoy's impact on his taste and practice, emphasizing plain style, truthfulness, and social sympathy. The tone is admiring and pragmatic, illustrating how Tolstoy's example shaped Anglo-American realism.

## **Essays on Russian Novelists: "Tolstoi" by William Lyon Phelps**

Phelps surveys Tolstoy's achievement with a teacher's clarity, summarizing the major works and the ethical program behind them. He balances praise for artistic power with reservations about prescriptive tendencies.

## **"Tolstoy the Artist" and "Tolstoy the Preacher" by Ivan Panin**

Panin splits Tolstoy's legacy into aesthetic creator and moral teacher, examining how each role strengthens or constrains the other. The essays probe whether didactic urgency refines artistic truth or distorts it, mapping the inner tension of Tolstoy's late theory.

## **"Tolstoy and the Cult of Simplicity" by G. K. Chesterton**

Chesterton challenges Tolstoy's exaltation of simplicity and suspicion of festivity, defending complexity, tradition, and the ordinary delights of life. With paradox and wit, he argues that a too-rigid moral program can impoverish art

and human joy, offering a counterpoint to Tolstoy's strictures.

# What Is Art?

[Main Table of Contents](#)

## **Introduction**

[Leo Tolstoy: A Short Biography](#)

## **Books**

[What is Art?](#)

[Wherein Is Truth In Art?](#)

[On the Significance of Science and Art](#)

[Shakespeare and the Drama](#)

[Works of Guy de Maupassant](#)

[A. Stockham's Tokology](#)

[Amiel's Diary](#)

[S. T. Seménov's Peasant Stories](#)

[Stop and Think!](#)

## **Criticisms on Tolstoy**

["Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky" by Maurice Baring](#)

[My Literary Passions: "Tolstoy" by William Dean Howells](#)

[Essays on Russian Novelists: "Tolstoi" by William Lyon Phelps](#)

["Tolstoy the Artist" and "Tolstoy the Preacher" by Ivan Panin](#)

["Tolstoy and the Cult of Simplicity" by G. K. Chesterton](#)

# Introduction

[Table of Contents](#)

# Leo Tolstoy: A Short Biography

by Aylmer Maude

[Table of Contents](#)

COUNT LEO TOLSTOY was born 28th August 1828 [in the Julian calendar then used in Russia; 9th September 1828 in today's internationally accepted Gregorian calendar], at a house in the country not many miles from Toúla, and about 130 miles south of Moscow.

He has lived most of his life in the country, preferring it to town, and believing that people would be healthier and happier if they lived more natural lives, in touch with nature, instead of crowding together in cities.

He lost his mother when he was three, and his father when he was nine years old. He remembers a boy visiting his brothers and himself when he was twelve years old, and bringing the news that they had found out at school that there was no God, and that all that was taught about God was a mere invention.

He himself went to school in Moscow, and before he was grown up he had imbibed the opinion, generally current among educated Russians, that 'religion' is old-fashioned and superstitious, and that sensible and cultured people do not require it for themselves.

After finishing school Tolstoy went to the University at Kazán. There he studied Oriental languages, but he did not pass the final examinations.

In one of his books Tolstoy remarks how often the cleverest boy is at the bottom of the class. And this really does occur. A boy of active, independent mind, who has his

Significance of Science and Art further requires that cultural effort address the conditions of ordinary life. These principles together propose a universality rooted not in abstraction but in shared experience and moral intelligibility. The anthology's design subjects this claim to practical trials by mixing treatises with selected examples and appraisals, examining whether the proposed criteria hold across genres, audiences, and critical traditions without recourse to institutional authority.

Works of Guy de Maupassant and S. T. Seménov's Peasant Stories supply narrative evidence. Tolstoy esteems Maupassant's lucid style and concentration on ordinary situations, suggesting forms capable of crossing social boundaries through clarity and economy. Seménov's stories, authored from a peasant vantage, align with Tolstoy's emphasis on unembellished truth and communal feeling. Their juxtaposition argues that universality may emerge both from refined craft and from lived authenticity. The pairing tests whether shared feeling depends on authorship position, technique, or subject matter, and whether Tolstoy's standards can encompass divergent routes to broadly intelligible experience.

Shakespeare and the Drama interrogates universality by targeting a dramatist long treated as emblematic of it. Tolstoy questions whether elevated reputation corresponds to truly communicable feeling for common readers and spectators. This skepticism complements *On the Significance of Science and Art* by redirecting esteem toward works demonstrably serving life. The inclusion of Amiel's Diary extends the test to introspective prose, implying that universality can manifest through disciplined self-scrutiny when articulated with candor. The range from public theater to private journal exposes different paths by

which feeling might claim broad relevance without relying on conventional hierarchies of genre or fame.

The Criticisms on Tolstoy section evaluates the universality claim through multiple lenses. William Dean Howells, writing in *My Literary Passions*: "Tolstoy," adopts an American realist perspective that finds Tolstoy's ordinary-life emphasis widely resonant. William Lyon Phelps positions that resonance within the broader field of Russian novelists. G. K. Chesterton's "Tolstoy and the Cult of Simplicity" challenges the assumption that simplicity guarantees universal reach, stressing possible exclusions created by an anti-ornamental ethos. Maurice Baring's "Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky" contrasts ethical realism with psychological and metaphysical depths, probing whether universality must also accommodate experiences that resist straightforward moral articulation.

## Question 4

**How do these works negotiate simplicity, style, and ethical seriousness in judging art?**

Tolstoy's treatises argue that art's value lies in sincere, clear transmission of feeling, a position that privileges simplicity over virtuosity when the latter obscures meaning. *On the Significance of Science and Art* aligns style with serviceable clarity, while *What is Art?* and *Wherein Is Truth In Art?* caution against refinement that isolates audiences. This curatorial center of gravity favors diction and form that neither flatter specialists nor dilute moral content. Simplicity here is not mere plainness but structural accessibility, orienting art toward shared understanding and ethical consequence rather than toward technical self-reference.

Works of Guy de Maupassant illustrates how restraint becomes a stylistic ideal compatible with complexity of observation. Tolstoy commends narrative economy and precision, finding ethical seriousness in the honesty of depiction rather than in overt preachment. In Shakespeare and the Drama, by contrast, rhetorical flourish and theatrical device are scrutinized when they seem to bypass sincere moral engagement. S. T. Seménov's Peasant Stories present another route to simplicity, where style emerges from proximity to everyday speech and labor. Across these examples, the anthology explores whether simplicity is a tool of clarity, a social marker, or a critical standard with variable applications.

A. Stockham's Tokology and Amiel's Diary broaden the inquiry beyond fiction. Tokology's practical orientation coheres with Tolstoy's demand that cultural production aid life directly, a test case for plain style allied to tangible good. Amiel's introspective entries model stylistic discipline oriented toward truthful self-accounting, suggesting that ethical seriousness may be internal and diagnostic as well as social. Together, these works show simplicity functioning across domains: instrumental when instructing, reflective when recording conscience, and narrative when representing shared worlds. The anthology thereby treats simplicity as a family of practices rather than a single prescription.

Responses by contemporaries refine and contest this triad. Ivan Panin's paired essays keep distinct the artist's aesthetic freedom and the preacher's moral insistence, guarding against collapsing style into sermon. William Dean Howells reads Tolstoy's simplicity as enabling realism's ethical charge, while William Lyon Phelps situates such judgments within comparative literary assessment. G. K.

Chesterton's "Tolstoy and the Cult of Simplicity" argues that simplicity risks becoming orthodox, potentially narrowing the field of legitimate styles. Maurice Baring's "Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky" complicates the simplicity-ethics link by showing another major novelist engaging profound issues through denser, more turbulent stylistic means.

## **Question 5**

### **What portrait of artistic authority emerges from Tolstoy and his interlocutors?**

Tolstoy grounds authority in moral clarity and shared feeling. What is Art? defines legitimate art through communicability and sincerity, and Wherein Is Truth In Art? clarifies the tests of veracity. On the Significance of Science and Art adds the criterion of service to human welfare. This triad claims authority not from tradition or institutional sanction but from an artwork's capacity to unite diverse people in recognizable experience and to orient that experience toward the good. The anthology places these statements at its core, establishing a normative framework against which all included examples and critiques implicitly measure themselves.

Shakespeare and the Drama asserts a counter-authority by challenging canonical prestige where it conflicts with Tolstoy's standards, while Works of Guy de Maupassant exemplifies authority earned through precision and honesty. S. T. Seménov's Peasant Stories shift authority toward voices close to everyday labor, suggesting that authenticity of origin can reinforce authenticity of feeling. Amiel's Diary shows authority grounded in disciplined self-knowledge rather than public acclaim. Together, these texts reorganize