

# Critical Insights: Leo Tolstoy

“This volume in the *Critical Insights* series gathers essays from a range of scholars on Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy and his seminal works. **The volume offers contextual foundations for understanding the nineteenth-century writer’s novels and stories alongside modern perspectives on themes, technique, and other elements of Tolstoy’s writing.**

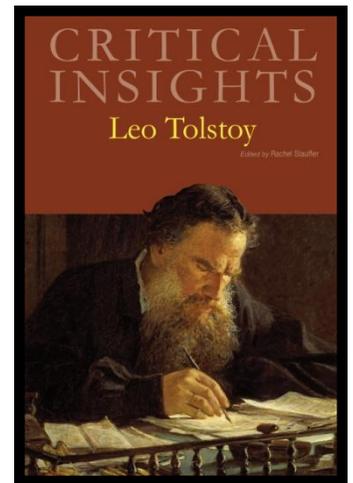
Two opening chapters offer a brief biography of the writer and a general discussion of his place in literature (in particular, Russian literature). The four essays in the following Critical Contexts section expand on this background in both providing historical context and surveying common scholarship. “Topics and Trends in Tolstoy Studies” by Joseph Schlegel admirably performs the latter, while The J. Alexander Ogden piece “The Great Brain’s Brawn: Tolstoy at the Gym” focuses on a particular detail of the writer’s life—his enjoyment of physical activity—and attaches it to Tolstoy’s broader artistic outlook.

The ten chapters that follow within the Critical Readings section bring much of Tolstoy’s major works, including *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, to light in strikingly different ways. “Similar to a Feverish Delirium:” The Fantastic Worlds of Battle as Tolstoy’s Criticism of War in *War and Peace*” by Natalya Sukhonos examines the battlefield as one of the writer’s most vivid settings. Others (“From Christ to Krishna: Tolstoy and Eastern Philosophies” and “The Path of Life: A Guidebook to Tolstoy’s Philosophical Source Material and the Mysticism of His Latter Years”) explore the influence of eastern philosophies on Tolstoy’s work. The section culminates with a more technical analysis of Tolstoy’s writing—“Tolstoy’s Narrative Technique: Listing People, Objects and Events”—noting the connection of list making with Tolstoy’s views on contemporary society.

Supplemental material within the Resources portion of this Critical Insights volume includes a list of Tolstoy’s major works, a bibliography, information about the contributors, and an index. **The volume, which can also be viewed online, works as both a good introduction to contemporary Tolstoy criticism and a modern supplement to long existing analyses.”**

-ARBA, 2018

## Reviews



ISBN: 978-1-68217-611-5  
Pub. Date: October 2017  
List Price: \$105

**SALEM PRESS**

2 University Plaza, Suite 310, Hackensack, NJ 07601  
(800) 221-1592 FAX (201) 968-0511  
www.salempress.com csr@salempress.com