refused to grow them, to their current status as the second largest source of calories, the social, economic, and political history of the potato in Russia remains untold, and no contribution is made here.

A presumed reality of persistent starvation and repeated food shortages dominates the authors' understanding of Russian food history, a presumption of some doubt given the recent works of R. E. F. Smith and David Christian, Paul Gregory, and myself. Certainly, food availability in Russia was not so radically different from much of Europe that this theme should be a unique dimension of its history. In places, it is assumed that the Russian peasantry, though fitting within a cereal-based dietary regime, consumed no meat whatsoever, which is certainly not the case. At times, there is too ready a willingness to accept informants' statements on peasant life and Russian agriculture. I do not comprehend how peasants growing sugar beets could be of the view that "sugar is made out of animal [often dog] bones." (Heretz, p. 72).

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The theoretician of chaos Katherine Hayles has written in *Chaos Bound:* "The more random or chaotic a message is, the more information it contains," but pure information is not necessarily comprehensible. Meaning — as opposed to information — results from redundancy, the repetition of message elements to a point where the listener or reader can perceive a pattern. Tolstoi, argues Sankovitch, exploits repetition both to organize the reader's reception of events and to personalize his characters, to each of whom he assigns a characteristic way of rehearsing past experience. Through this very process of review Tolstoi's heroes and heroines grow. Sankovitch also sees in repetition a device that mediates between Tolstoi's acceptance of positivism, a science that deals with fractions, and his faith in the indivisible unity of experience: the distance between the mathematician "fox" and the totalizing "hedgehog," to repeat Isaiah Berlin's Krylov-like summation. "Repetition reminds of wholes by intimating rhythms and patterns," but marks "specificities because it is never perfect repetition." (p. 5)

If Tolstoian character develops through a spiral-like return to memory in a context pregnant with new information, then for the reader, Sankovitch argues, the constant recycling of old material is not a stylistic authorial quirk but the very point of story-telling. What is unique to Tolstoi is not the dramatizing of cognition — a trait shared by virtually all the prose writers of his age — but his emphasis on the relatively limited number of significant experiences that inspire emotional development. Tolstoi also believes the quantity of mental frames available to a given character to be limited. The results are paradoxical. While we tend to consider Tolstoi's narrators to be either patently intrusive or slyly manipulative, able to insinuate themselves into the flow of information with disturbing ease and
regularity, Sankovitch sketches out a narrative aesthetic far closer to that of Henry James, where the reader is tightly bound to the perceptions and cognitive processes of the characters themselves.

Sankovitch's thesis challenges the idea that the many patterns of War and Peace and Anna Karenina are symbolic gestures, inserted by an implied narrator working at a higher level of understanding. Rather, Tolstoi's repetitions appear for the reader in a kind of narratological bold face, becoming our frame for remembering the novels and representing the act of framing through which characters demonstrate their uniqueness. Patterns are the means through which both the novel's world and the novel itself are organized.

What room does Sankovitch leave for irony? Unlike George Eliot's or Proust's characters, Tolstoi's rarely reflect on the fact that they are learning through repetition. The autobiographical, retrospectively ironic undercutting of oneself in which Marcel and Swann engage is quite alien to Tolstoi's style. "Pierre's repeated phrase, *je vous aime. . . . [is] at the same time society's prescription for the occasion, Pierre's attempt first to make order and later to make sense of his experience, and an ironic expression of unacknowledged and imperfectly understood desires and motives." (p. 76) Yet as often as not Tolstoi leaves readers blind to the full relevance of a scene, thereby trapping us in the same partial knowledge as the character.

Sankovitch's argument rings close to Plato — in two ways. Her most original chapter, "Intertextual Repetition in Tolstoy," assumes the existence of an intertextual template underlying all of his prose. Tolstoi's works, Sankovitch asserts, are so many "notes toward a supreme fiction," unified by moments "when characters self-consciously take stock of where they are, who they are, and how they ought to live." (p. 183) But the knowledge is unavoidably incomplete. Carden has already shown the role of a Socratic-like anamnesia in War and Peace, through which characters learn what they already know. Sankovitch proposes, however, that in Tolstoi's eyes the unfinished nature of life's project is the universal of his fiction, and it flourishes on a ground of paradoxes as radical as any that Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, or other antiplatonists constructed. Tolstoian "war" is "a metaphor for a simple understanding of the universe," and "peace" a sign of "the messiness, the randomness, the unpredictability of life." (p. 187)

Sankovitch acknowledges an intellectual debt to Morson's studies of Tolstoi, particularly his Hidden in Plain View. A more polemical relationship with her mentor might have helped Sankovitch cut her book free from the rhetoric of "openendedness." If anything, Stendhal's and Balzac's characters exist in universes far more open to the operations of the ego. What distinguishes Tolstoi, even from fellow Russians like Pushkin and Lermontov, is the degree to which his novelistic strategies trap the libertine subject — an Onegin, Pechorin, or Anna Karenina — in a cobweb of social codes. Here a contrast with Dostoevskii would help. With its hauntingly arranged repetitions — some inaccessible on first reading, some comprehensible to the character alone, some to the reader alone — Crime and Punishment is a thoroughly Tolstoian exploration of cognitive processes. The Devils and The Brothers Karamazov, in contrast, are clearly not "nov-