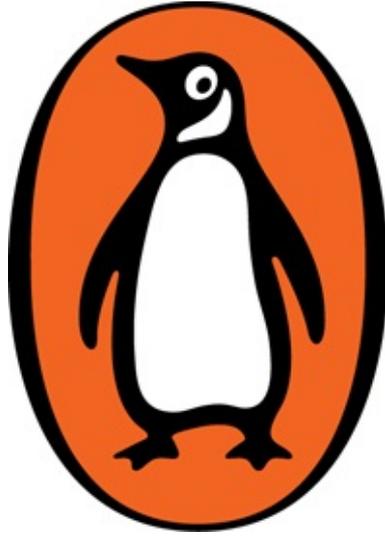


Leo
Tolstoy

Anna
Karenina





Leo Tolstoy

ANNA KARENINA

A Novel in Eight Parts

*Translated by Richard Pevear
and Larissa Volokhonsky
With a Preface by John Bayley*



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND TRANSLATORS

Count Leo Tolstoy was born in 1828 at Yasnaya Polyana, in the Tula province, and educated privately. He studied Oriental languages and law at the University of Kazan, then led a life of pleasure until 1851 when he joined an artillery regiment in the Caucasus. He took part in the Crimean War and after the defence of Sebastopol he wrote *The Sebastopol Sketches* (1855–6), which established his reputation. After a period in St Petersburg and abroad, where he studied educational methods for use in his school for peasant children in Yasnaya Polyana, he married Sofya Andreyevna Behrs in 1862. The next fifteen years was a period of great happiness; they had thirteen children, and Tolstoy managed his vast estates in the Volga Steppes, continued his educational projects, cared for his peasants and wrote *War and Peace* (1869) and *Anna Karenina* (1877). *A Confession* (1879–82) marked a spiritual crisis in his life; he became an extreme moralist and in a series of pamphlets after 1880 expressed his rejection of state and church, indictment of the weaknesses of the flesh and denunciation of private property. His teaching earned him numerous followers at home and abroad, but also much opposition, and in 1901 he was excommunicated by the Russian Holy Synod. He died in 1910, in the course of a dramatic flight from home, at the small railway station of Astapovo.

Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky have translated Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* for Penguin Classics, and produced acclaimed translations of Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky and Gogol. Their translation of *The Brothers Karamazov* won the 1991 PEN Book of the Month Club Translation Prize.

John Bayley (CBE 1999) was Warton Professor of English Literature, Oxford University, from 1974–92. Among his many books are *The Characters of Love: A Study in the Literature of Personality*; *Tolstoy and the Novel*; *Pushkin: A Comparative Commentary*; *Shakespeare and Tragedy*; *Iris: A Memoir of Iris Murdoch*; *Iris and the Friends: A Year of Memories*; and a detailed study of A. E. Housman's poems. *Alice* (1994), *The Queer Captain* (1995) and *George's Lair* (1996) are his trilogy of novels. For Penguin Classics he has introduced Pushkin's *Tales of Belkin and Other Prose Writings* and *Eugene Onegin* and edited Henry James's *The Wings of the Dove*.

ANNA KARENINA

‘William Faulkner, it’s said, was once asked to name the three best novels ever. He replied: “*Anna Karenina, Anna Karenina, Anna Karenina.*” If you don’t recall why, rush to buy a fine new translation by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky’ Boyd Tonkin, *Independent*

‘If there’s such a thing as a definitive translation, this might be it’ Jean Dubail, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*

‘All happy families will receive a copy of this new translation this Christmas; each unhappy family will want one’ Eric Griffiths, *Evening Standard*

‘The newest English-language translation by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky is a significant achievement ... They have applied their hands-off, no-nonsense idea of translation ... the shining result is that Tolstoy’s book reads as if it could have been written yesterday’ Ingrid Lunden, *San Francisco Chronicle*

‘Tolstoy’s greatness lies in not turning the story into sentimental tragedy ... His world is huge and vast, filled with complex family lives and great social events. His characters are well- rounded presences. They have complete passions: a desire for love, but also an inner moral depth’ Malcolm Bradbury, *Mail on Sunday*

‘It’s so fantastic that it can be read over and over again ... I don’t know any other writer who is so adept at peopling their pages’ Maggie O’Farrell, *Daily Mail*, Desert Island Books

Preface

Devoted readers of Tolstoy, and there are a great many of them, would find it hard to say which of his two great novels is their particular favourite. They are very different from each other, although neither could have been written by anyone else. Tolstoy himself always claimed that *War and Peace* was not a novel at all, 'as the West understands the term', but a form unique to himself, and only possible in Russia; whereas *Anna Karenina* he described to a friend as 'this novel, the first I have attempted ...' Later in his long life he claimed that neither had any value, because all that mattered was God and the Truth, and the search to find them. But there is some irony in the fact that Tolstoy's later parables and polemical works are not much read today, whereas his two great novels – if for convenience we can agree to call them that – remain as popular as ever.

Tolstoy began to write *Anna Karenina* between four and five years after the completion and publication of *War and Peace*, and he began it, as he claimed, partly as a result of an accident. A woman threw herself under a train near his country estate of Yasnaya Polyana, and Tolstoy was involved in the subsequent inquiry. Jealousy and an unhappy love affair were involved, and led Tolstoy to reflect very seriously on the role of love and marriage in society. Then one evening he happened to be reading to his children a story by Pushkin, and was filled with admiration at the terseness and simplicity of its opening. 'That is how one should write', he exclaimed, and the famous beginning of *Anna Karenina* may well have been suggested by that moment.

'All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.' A wonderful opening it is; and it has never been better translated than by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky in this edition. At one stroke, and in a single sentence, we are brought into the heart and soul of the story: family life and the lives led by the separate members of families. Everyone in the novel knows all about the others; many are related. It is of importance, for example, that Dolly's feckless and charming husband, Stiva Oblonsky, is also Anna's brother. What is acceptable, or at least excusable, in his behaviour is culpable and ultimately fatal in hers. And in revealing this, as it were, Tolstoy and his novel are far from endorsing what used to be called the 'double standard' of sexual morality. When D. H. Lawrence said that Anna and Vronsky should have defied and banished the world by going away together, he was thinking of himself and his own wife Frieda, with whom he ran away and afterwards married, and he was missing the point. The point that the novel makes is that Anna and Vronsky *think* they can escape from society, but find they cannot. Without the freedom

of the society they are accustomed to, their passion eventually becomes its own prison. Their world is too much a part of them: they need it too much; and the attempt to do without it in the end destroys them both.

However much Tolstoy himself may have tried later in life to escape from that world and to live in a more spiritual dimension, as he felt he saw the peasants doing, he himself knew society, the society described in *Anna Karenina*, through and through. And, with whatever apparent unwillingness, he always remained fascinated by it. Late in his life he would still ask his grown-up daughters who was doing what in Moscow and St Petersburg, and what the women were wearing at the balls. The idea of a novel about the *grande monde* had long haunted him, and he told his wife of the notion of writing about a married lady of that world who would ruin herself. He felt that as soon as he had 'got hold' of such a character the other persons in the story would also 'become real'.

That is certainly what happened. All the characters in *Anna Karenina* are intensely real; and that includes the peasants mowing the field, the servants at the Moscow club where Stiva and Levin have lunch together, even the horses in the great steeplechase, where Vronsky makes a fatal error in going over a jump, and his mount, poor Frou-Frou, breaks her back. Such events are too much alive to be symbolic, and yet the symbolism of disaster is there and very much a part of the novel's rich and complex background.

Some critics and readers have felt that the seeming division of the novel almost into two different worlds – that of Levin (and later Kitty) in the country, and Anna and her friends in town – weakens and distracts us from the main theme. And yet this division is more apparent than real. They all know each other; they all live in the same world with the rest of the Russian upper class; and at the same time the inner mental life and struggle of Levin, which reflects Tolstoy's own state of mind at the time he was writing, parallels the emotional drama which engulfs Anna herself.

Is this drama now out of date? Would Anna today get a divorce, receive custody of her son, marry Vronsky and live happily ever after? Tolstoy did not think so; and the power of the novel, its truth to life and to human character, ultimately persuades the reader not to think so either. Tragedies like that of *Anna Karenina* do not depend on social change and enlightened social arrangements. Tolstoy's grip on the story, and his own remarkable identification with Anna and her situation – he too was beginning to be a self-appointed exile from the Russian society he still loved, in the teeth of his own growing spiritual convictions – ensure that the drama of the novel touches everyone in it, and that includes ourselves as readers.

And yet there is so much vitality there too, and richness, and gaiety. Anna has as much a power of happiness and life in her as of passion and affliction. How different she is, for instance, from Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*! There is so much humour in the great novel too, as there is in the personality of Anna herself. One of its most moving moments comes near the end of the novel, when Anna is driving to the railway station and to her death under the train. She sees outside a shop on the street a hairdresser's

name which strikes her as comical, and she thinks she will tell Vronsky – it will amuse him too. But then she remembers she won't be seeing Vronsky any more. It is a poignant moment. Quite unexpectedly Tolstoy makes us feel that if anything could have saved Anna it would have been her own sense of the comedy and absurdity of life, and the simple wish to share a joke with her lover. Tolstoy understood the comedy as well as he understood the sadness of things, and his great novels are full of both.

John Bayley

Introduction

We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric,
but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry.

– W. B. Yeats

I

‘I am writing a novel,’ Tolstoy informed his friend the critic Nikolai Strakhov on 11 May 1873, referring to the book that was to become *Anna Karenina*. ‘I’ve been at it for more than a month now and the main lines are traced out. This novel is truly a novel, the first in my life ...’

Tolstoy was then forty-five. He had been writing and publishing for over twenty years. Along with some remarkable shorter pieces – ‘The Snowstorm’, ‘Two Hussars’, ‘Three Deaths’, ‘The Wood Felling’, ‘Sebastopol Stories’, ‘Family Happiness’ – he had produced longer works which he himself referred to as novels. For instance, it was as ‘the first part of a novel’ that Tolstoy sent the manuscript of *Childhood*, the opening section of the trilogy *Childhood, Boyhood and Youth*, to Nikolai Nekrasov, editor of *The Contemporary*, in 1852. Ten years later, apologizing to the editor Mikhail Katkov for his delay in producing the book he had promised him in return for a loan of a thousand roubles, he wrote: ‘I’ve only just settled down to the novel I sold you the rights to, I couldn’t get to it earlier.’ This was *The Cossacks*, begun in 1857, worked on intermittently, and finished ‘with sweat and blood’ in 1862. In 1864, again writing to Katkov, Tolstoy mentioned that he was ‘in the process of finishing the first part of [his] novel on the period of the wars of Alexander and Napoleon’, known then as *The Year 1805* but soon to be renamed *War and Peace*. Why, then, did he call *Anna Karenina* his first novel?

It is true that the early trilogy and *The Cossacks* are semi-fictionalized autobiography and in retrospect Tolstoy may have decided they could not properly be considered novels. But what of *War and Peace*? Isn’t it the quintessential novel, the greatest of the species? Not according to its author. In a statement published after the appearance of the first three volumes, he declared enigmatically: ‘What is *War and Peace*? It is not a novel, still less is it a poem, and even less a historical chronicle. *War and Peace* is what the author wished and was able to express in the form in which it is expressed.’ For Tolstoy, a ‘true novel’ was evidently something more specific than a fictitious prose narrative of considerable length.

In fact, none of the great Russian prose writers of the nineteenth century, with the possible exception of Turgenev, was on easy terms with the novel as a genre. Gogol

called *Dead Souls*, his only novel-length work, a poem. To define this unusual ‘poem’ he invented the notion of a hybrid genre, midway between epic and novel, to which he gave the name ‘minor epic’. He found the novel too static a form, confined to a conventional reality, involving a set of characters who all had to be introduced at the start and all had to have some relation to the hero’s fate, and whose possible interactions were too limited for his inventive gifts. It was the form for portraying ordinary domestic life, and Gogol had no interest in ordinary domestic life. Dostoevsky, who also referred to his work as ‘poetry’, transformed the novel into another sort of hybrid – the ‘novel-tragedy’ of some critics, the ‘polyphonic novel’ of others. Nikolai Leskov, an artist almost equal in stature to Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, though less known outside Russia, made masterful use of the forms of the chronicle, the legend, the tale, the saint’s life, even the local anecdote and the newspaper article, but lost all his gifts when he turned to the novel. As for Chekhov, though he tried several times to write one, the novel was simply alien to his genius.

When Tolstoy called *Anna Karenina* his first novel, he was conceiving the form in the same restricted sense that Gogol found so uncongenial. He was deliberately embracing the conventional limits of the genre. This was to be a novel *in excelsis*, portraying a small group of main characters (in the final version there are seven, all related by birth or marriage), set in the present and dealing with the personal side of upper-class family and social life. Indeed, *Anna Karenina* introduces us to the most ordinary Russian aristocrats of the 1870s, concerned with the most ordinary issues of the day, behaving in the most ordinary ways, experiencing the most ordinary joys and sorrows. The one character who might seem out of the ordinary – Konstantin Levin – is also most ordinary, as Dostoevsky pointed out in his *Diary of a Writer* (February 1877, II, 2): ‘But of Levins there are a great many in Russia, almost as many as Oblonskys.’ The author’s task was to manoeuvre us, for some seven or eight hundred pages, through and among these ordinary people and their doings. It was not that Tolstoy was so charmed by ordinary life. In 1883, six years after finishing *Anna Karenina*, he would begin the second chapter of a famous novella with the words: ‘Ivan Ilyich’s life was most ordinary, and therefore most terrible.’ As with the novella, so with the novel: the polemic of *Anna Karenina* rests on the ordinariness of its characters.

Anna Karenina is polemical, first of all, in its genre. To publish such a book in the 1870s was an act of defiance, and Tolstoy meant it as one. By then the family novel was hopelessly out of fashion. The satirist Saltykov-Shchedrin noted at the time that the family, ‘that warm and cosy element ... which once gave the novel its content, has vanished from sight ... The novel of contemporary man finds its resolution in the street, on the public way, anywhere but in the home.’ The radical intelligentsia had been attacking the ‘institution’ of the family for more than a decade. Newspapers, pamphlets, ideological novel-tracts like N. G. Chernyshevsky’s *What Is to Be Done?*, advocated sexual freedom, communal living and the communal raising of children. Questions of women’s education, women’s enfranchisement, the role of women in

public life, were hotly debated in the press. On all these matters Tolstoy held rather conservative views. For him, marriage and childrearing were a woman's essential tasks, and family happiness was the highest human ideal. As Nabokov observed in his lecture notes on *Anna Karenina*, 'Tolstoy considers that two married people with children are tied together by divine law forever.' An intentional anachronism, his novel was meant as a challenge, both artistic and ideological, to the ideas of the Russian nihilists.

There was always a provocative side to Tolstoy's genius, and it was most often what spurred him to write. *Anna Karenina* is a tissue of polemics on all the questions then being discussed in aristocratic salons and the newspapers, with Konstantin Levin acting as spokesman for his creator. There are arguments with the aristocracy as well as with the nihilists on the 'woman question'; with the conservative Slavophiles as well as with the radical populists on the question of 'going to the people' and the exact geographical location of the Russian soul; with both landowners and peasants on questions of farm management; with advocates of old and new forms of political representation – local councils, provincial elections among the nobility – and of such judicial institutions as open courts and rural justices of the peace; with new ideas about the education of children and of peasants; with the new movements in art and music; with such recent fashions among the aristocracy as spiritualism, table-turning, pietism and non-Church mysticism, but also with the 'official' Church, its teachings and practices; with corrupt and ineffective bureaucrats, lawyers, capitalists foreign and domestic; with proponents of the 'Eastern question' and supporters of the volunteers who went to aid the Serbs and Montenegrins in their war with the Turks (Tolstoy's handling of this last issue was so hot that his publisher refused to print the final part of the novel, and Tolstoy had to bring it out in a separate edition at his own expense).

There is, in other words, no neutral ground in Tolstoy's novel. His writing is 'characterized by a sharp internal dialogism', as Mikhail Bakhtin has noted, meaning that Tolstoy is conscious at every moment not only of what he is presenting but of his own attitude towards it, and of other possible attitudes both among his characters and in his readers' minds. He is constantly engaged in an internal dispute with the world he is describing and with the reader for whom he is describing it. 'These two lines of dialogization (having in most cases polemical overtones) are tightly interwoven in his style,' as Bakhtin says, 'even in the most "lyrical" expressions and the most "epic" descriptions.'* The implicit conflict of attitudes gives Tolstoy's writing its immediate grip on our attention. It does not allow us to remain detached. But, paradoxically, it also does not allow Tolstoy the artist to be dominated by Tolstoy the provocateur. His own conflicting judgements leave room for his characters to surprise him, lending them a sense of unresolved, uncalculated possibility. Pushkin, speaking of the heroine of his *Evgeny Onegin*, once said to Princess Meshchersky, 'Imagine what happened to my Tatiana? She up and rejected Onegin ... I never expected it of her!' Tolstoy loved to quote this anecdote, which he had heard from the princess herself.

Tolstoy was mistaken when he told Strakhov that the main lines of *Anna Karenina* were already traced out. In an earlier letter, dated 25 March 1873 but never sent, he spoke even more optimistically about finishing the book quickly. The letter is interesting for its description of what started him writing. For more than a year he had been gathering materials – ‘invoking the spirits of the time’, as he put it – for a book set in the early eighteenth century, the age of Peter the Great. That spring his wife had taken a collection of Pushkin’s prose down from the shelf, thinking that their son Sergei might be old enough to read it. Tolstoy says:

The other day, after my work, I picked up this volume of Pushkin and as always (for the seventh time, I think) read it from cover to cover, unable to tear myself away, as if I were reading it for the first time. More than that, it was as if it dispelled all my doubts. Never have I admired Pushkin so much, nor anyone else for that matter. ‘The Shot’, ‘Egyptian Nights’, *The Captain’s Daughter!!!* There was also the fragment, ‘The guests arrived at the summer house’. Despite myself, not knowing where or what it would lead to, I imagined characters and events, which I developed, then naturally modified, and suddenly it all came together so well, so solidly, that it turned into a novel, the first draft of which was soon finished – a very lively, very engaging, complete novel, which I’m quite pleased with and which will be ready in fifteen days, if God grants me life. It has nothing to do with what I’ve been plugging away at for this whole year.

As it happened, the novel took him not fifteen days but four more years of work, during which much that had come together so suddenly through the agency of ‘the divine Pushkin’ was altered or rejected and much more was added that had not occurred to him in that first moment of inspiration.

The earliest mention of the subject of *Anna Karenina* comes to us not from Tolstoy but from his wife, Sophia Andreevna, who noted in her journal on 23 February 1870 that her husband said he had ‘envisioned the type of a married woman of high society who ruins herself. He said his task was to portray this woman not as guilty but as only deserving of pity, and that once this type of woman appeared to him, all the characters and male types he had pictured earlier found their place and grouped themselves around her. “Now it’s all clear,” he told me.’ Tolstoy did not remain faithful to this first glimpse of the guiltless adultress when he began writing the novel three years later, but she re-emerged in the course of his work and finally overcame the severe moral judgement he tried to bring against her.

The fate of Tolstoy’s heroine was suggested to him by a real incident that occurred in January 1872, a few miles from his estate. A young woman, Anna Stepanovna Pirogov, the mistress of a neighbouring landowner and friend of the Tolstoy family, threw herself under a goods train after her lover abandoned her. Tolstoy went to view the mangled body in the station house. It made an indelible impression on him.

Thus, well before inspiration struck him in the spring of 1873, Tolstoy had in mind the general ‘type’ of his Anna and her terrible end. When he did begin writing, however, despite his admiration for Pushkin’s artless immediacy (‘The guests arrived at the summer house’), he began with his ideas. And the main idea, the one he struggled with most bitterly and never could resolve, was that Anna’s suicide was the

punishment for her adultery. It was from this struggle with himself that he made the poetry of his heroine.

In the first versions, Anna (variously called Tatiana, Anastasia, and Nana) is a rather fat and vulgar married woman, who shocks the guests at a party by her shameless conduct with a handsome young officer. She laughs and talks loudly, moves gracelessly, gestures improperly, is all but ugly – ‘a low forehead, small eyes, thick lips and a nose of a disgraceful shape ...’ Her husband (surnamed Stavrovich – from the Greek *stavros*, ‘cross’ – then Pushkin, and finally Karenin) is intelligent, gentle, humble, a true Christian, who will eventually surrender his wife to his rival, Gagin, the future Vronsky. In these sketches Tolstoy emphasized the rival’s handsomeness, youth and charm; at one point he even made him something of a poet. The focus of these primitive versions was entirely on the triangle of wife, husband and lover, the structure of the classic novel of adultery. Tolstoy planned until very late in his work to have the husband grant a divorce and the wife marry her lover. In the end, the renegades were to be rejected by society and find a welcome only among the nihilists. The whole other side of the novel, the story of Levin and Kitty, was absent from the early variants; there were no Shcherbatskys, the Oblonsky family barely appeared, and Levin, called Ordynstsev and then Lenin, was a minor character.

In the early versions, Tolstoy clearly sympathized with the saintly husband and despised the adulterous wife. As he worked on the novel, however, he gradually enlarged the figure of Anna morally and diminished the figure of the husband; the sinner grew in beauty and spontaneity, while the saint turned more and more hypocritical. The young officer also lost his youthful bloom and poetic sensibility, to become, in Nabokov’s description, ‘a blunt fellow with a mediocre mind’. But the most radical changes were the introduction of the Shcherbatskys – Kitty and her sister Dolly, married to Anna’s brother, Stiva Oblonsky – and the promotion of Levin to the role of co-protagonist. These additions enriched the thematic possibilities of the novel enormously, allowing for the contrasts of city and country life and all the variations on love and family happiness played out among Stiva and Dolly, Anna and Karenin, Kitty and Vronsky, Anna and Vronsky, Kitty and Levin. The seven main characters create a dynamic imbalance, with one character always on the outside, moving between couples, uniting or dividing them, and shifting the scene of the action as they move – from Petersburg to Moscow, from Russia to Germany, from the capitals to the provinces. At some point each of the seven plays this role of shuttle. The novel they weave together goes far beyond the tale of adultery that Tolstoy began writing in the spring of 1873.

III

‘Levin is you, Lyova, minus the talent,’ Sophia Andreevna said to her husband after reading the first part of *Anna Karenina*. (And she added, ‘Levin is an impossible man!’) Indeed, though Tolstoy often lent features of his own character to his protagonists, Levin is his most complete self-portrait. He has the same social position

as his creator, the same 'wild' nature, the same ideas and opinions, the same passion for hunting, the same almost physical love of the Russian peasant. He shares Tolstoy's favourite method of criticism by feigned incomprehension, applied here to such matters as government bureaucracy, the provincial elections, and the latest fashions in music (the fullest development of this method is found in Tolstoy's *What Is Art?*, published in 1898, particularly in his deadpan treatment of Wagner's operas). Levin's estate reproduces Tolstoy's Yasnaya Polyana, and his marriage to Kitty duplicates Tolstoy's marriage to Sophia Andreevna in the minutest details – his unusual way of proposing, his turning over of his diaries, his compunction about confessing before the ceremony, his visit to the Shcherbatskys on the day of the wedding, even the forgotten shirt. The death of Levin's brother Nikolai is drawn from the death of Tolstoy's own brother Nikolai, also from consumption. In fact, most of the major characters in the novel and many of the minor ones, including the servants, had their counterparts in Tolstoy's life. The only notable exceptions, interestingly enough, are Anna and Vronsky.

Levin also goes through the same religious crisis that Tolstoy went through while he was writing the novel, and reaches the same precarious conversion at the end. The following passages suggest how closely Tolstoy modelled Levin's spiritual struggle on his own. The first is from Part Eight of *Anna Karenina*:

'Without knowing what I am and why I'm here, it is impossible for me to live. And I cannot know that, therefore I cannot live,' Levin would say to himself ...

It was necessary to be delivered from this power. And deliverance was within everyone's reach. It was necessary to stop this dependence on evil. And there was one means – death.

And, happy in his family life, a healthy man, Levin was several times so close to suicide that he hid a rope lest he hang himself with it, and was afraid to go about with a rifle lest he shoot himself.

The second is from his *Confession*, begun in 1879, just a year after the definitive version of *Anna Karenina* was published. In it Tolstoy gives a forthright account of his own agonized search for some meaning in life:

Though happy and in good health, I became persuaded that it was impossible for me to live much longer ... And, though happy, I kept away from the least bit of rope, so as not to hang myself from the beam between the wardrobes in my bedroom, where I found myself alone each day while I dressed, and I stopped going hunting with my rifle, so as not to yield to this too-easy way of delivering myself from existence.

Anna Karenina was written at the most important turning-point in Tolstoy's life. Up to then the artist in him had balanced the moralist; after *Anna* the moralist dominated the artist.

How difficult it was for Tolstoy to keep that balance we can see from his work on the portrayal of Anna. The enigma of Anna is at the heart of the novel. In the earlier drafts she was quite fully explained. Tolstoy described her past, how she came to marry, at the age of eighteen, a man who was twelve years her senior, mistaking her wish to shine in society for love, how she discovered her full femininity only at the age of thirty. He stated explicitly that 'the devil had taken possession of her soul', that she had known these 'diabolical impulses' before, and so on. Of this abundance of

commentary only a few traces remain in the final portrait of Anna. As Tolstoy worked, he removed virtually all the details of her past, all explanations, all discussion of her motives, replacing them by hints, suggestions, half-tones, blurred outlines. There is a glimpse of Anna's dark side at the ball in Part One, where she takes Vronsky away from Kitty, but it seems to surprise Anna as much as anyone. There are moments when she does seem 'possessed' by some alien power, but they are only touched on in passing. Tolstoy became more and more reluctant to analyse his heroine, with the result that, in the final version, her inner changes seem to come without preparation and often leave us wondering. The final portrait of Anna has about it a 'vivid insubstantiality', in John Bayley's fine phrase, which we do not find anywhere else in Tolstoy. He lost sight of her, in a sense, as he drew closer to her and finally became one with her. The stream of consciousness in which he narrates Anna's last hours gives us what are surely the most remarkable pages in the novel, and some of the most remarkable ever written.

A friend of Tolstoy's, the editor and educator S. A. Rachinsky, complained to him that *Anna Karenina* had no architecture, that the two 'themes' developed side by side in it, magnificently, but with no connection. His criticism prompted an interesting reply from Tolstoy, in a letter dated 27 January 1878:

Your judgement of *Anna Karenina* seems wrong to me. On the contrary, I am proud of my architecture. But my vaults have been assembled in such a way that the keystone cannot be seen. Most of my effort has gone into that. The cohesion of the structure does not lie in the plot or in the relations (the meetings) of the characters, it is an internal cohesion ... look well and you will find it.

In a letter to Strakhov some two years earlier he had already raised the question of this hidden cohesion:

In everything or almost everything I have written, I have been moved by the need to bring together ideas that are closely knit, in order to express myself, but each idea, expressed separately in words, loses its meaning, is enormously impoverished when removed from the network around it. This network itself is not made up of ideas (or so I think), but of something else, and it is absolutely impossible to express the substance of this network directly in words: it can be done only indirectly, by using words to describe characters, acts, situations.

This is perhaps Tolstoy's most perfect definition of his artistic practice.

Among the many thematic links between the two 'sides' of the novel, the most obvious is the contrast of the happy marriage of Levin and Kitty with the tragic relations of Anna and Vronsky. More hidden is the connection between Anna and Levin, who meet only once. Under the moral problem of adultery, which was Tolstoy's starting point, lies the 'problem' that obsessed Tolstoy most of all – death. Death and Anna enter the novel together; death is present at her first meeting with Vronsky; death is also present in their first embrace and in their mysteriously shared dream; death haunts their entire brief life together. But for Levin, too, death comes to darken the happiest moments of his life. It gives a stark title to the only chapter with a title in the whole novel – chapter XX of Part Five, describing the last agony of Levin's brother Nikolai. Anna surrenders to death; Levin struggles with it and wins, momentarily. But even in his victory, surrounded by his family, his estate, his peasants, he is as alone as

Anna in her last moments. Metaphysical solitude is the hidden connection between them, and is what connects them both to their author.

Richard Pevear

Translators' Note

Tolstoy's narrative voice poses a particular challenge to the translator. To apply general notions of natural, idiomatic English and good prose style to Tolstoy's writing is to risk blunting the sharpness of its internal dialogization. The narrator's personal attitudes often intrude on the objectivity of his discourse. Sometimes the intrusion is as slight as a single word, a sudden shift of tone, as, for instance, when he adds to the list of those enjoying themselves at the skating rink the 'old people who skated for hygienic [*gigienicheskiy*] purposes'. It is the word 'hygienic' that Tolstoy scorns, as much as the practice – one of the 'new' terms made current by the popularization of medical science in the later nineteenth century. At other times the intrusion is not so slight. An example is the description of the merchant Ryabinin's carriage standing in front of Levin's house: 'A little gig was already standing by the porch, tightly bound in iron and leather, with a sleek horse tightly harnessed in broad tugs. In the little gig, tightly filled with blood and tightly girdled, sat Ryabinin's clerk, who was also his driver.' Tolstoy clearly despises the merchant, and therefore his carriage and driver, as much as Levin does. There is also the narrator's undercutting of Kitty's admiration for the very spiritual Mme Stahl: "“And here's Mme Stahl,” said Kitty, pointing to a bath-chair in which something lay, dressed in something grey and blue, propped on pillows under an umbrella.' Or the description of Karenin's meeting with his new lady-friend: 'Catching sight of the yellow shoulders rising from the corset of Countess Lydia Ivanovna ... Alexei Alexandrovich smiled, revealing his unfading white teeth, and went up to her.' That 'unfading' (as in 'unfading glory'), worthy of Gogol or Dostoevsky, comes unexpectedly from Count Tolstoy. There are other times when his artistic purpose is less clear: for instance, in the scene at the railway station early in the novel, when the watchman is killed: '... several men with frightened faces suddenly ran past. The stationmaster, in a peaked cap of an extraordinary colour, also ran past. Evidently something extraordinary had happened.' Vladimir Nabokov says of this passage: 'There is of course no actual connection between the two [uses of 'extraordinary'], but the repetition is characteristic of Tolstoy's style with its rejection of false elegancies and its readiness to admit any robust awkwardness if that is the shortest way to sense.' In previous English translations such passages have generally been toned down if not eliminated. We have preferred to keep them as evidence of the freedom Tolstoy allowed himself in Russian.

List of Principal Characters

Guide to pronunciation stresses, with diminutives and variants. Russian names are made up of first name, patronymic (from the father's first name), and family name. Formal address requires the use of the first name and patronymic. Among family and intimate friends, a diminutive of the first name is normally used, such as Tanya for Tatiana or Kostya for Konstantin, never coupled with the patronymic. Some of Tolstoy's aristocrats have adopted the fashion of using English or Russified English diminutives – Dolly, Kitty, Betsy, Stiva. With the exception of Karenina, we use only the masculine form of family names.

Oblónsky, Prince Stepán Arkádyich (Stiva)

Princess Dárya Alexándrovna (Dolly, Dásha, Dáshenka,
Dóllenka), *his wife, oldest of the three Shcherbatsky sisters*

Shcherbátsky, Prince Alexander Dmítrievich or Alexandre (*French*)

Princess ('the old princess', no first name or patronymic given), *his wife*
Princess Ekaterína Alexándrovna (Katerína, Kitty,
Kátia, Káténka), *their third daughter, later wife of Konstantin Levin*

Karénina, Anna Arkádyevna, *née* Princess Oblonsky, *Stepan Arkadyich's sister*

Karénin, Alexéi Alexándrovich, *her husband*

Sergéi Alexéich (Seryózha, Kútik), *their son*

Vrónsky, Count Alexéi Kirílovich (Alyósha)

Countess (no first name and patronymic given), *his mother*

Alexander Kirílovich, *his brother*

Várya (diminutive of Varvára), *née* Princess Chirkóv, *wife of Alexander Vronsky*

Lévin, Konstantín Dmítrich (Kóstya)

Nikolái Dmítrich (Nikólenka), *his brother*

Kóznyshev, Sergéi Ivánovich, *half-brother of Konstantin and Nikolai Levin*

Lvov, Princess Natálya Alexándrovna (Natalie), *née* Shcherbatsky, *sister of Dolly and Kitty*

Arsény (no patronym given), *her husband*

Tverskóy, Princess Elizavéta Fyódorovna (Betsy), *Vronsky's first cousin*

Márya Nikoláevna (Masha, no family name given), *companion of Nikolai Levin*

Agáfya Mikháilovna (no family name given), *Levin's former nurse, now his housekeeper*

Countess Lydia Ivánovna (no family name given), *friend of Karenin*

Sviyázhsky, Nikolái Ivánovich, *friend of Levin, marshal of nobility in Súrov district*

Katavásov, Fyódor Vassílyevich, *friend of Levin*

Varvára Andréevna (Várenka, no family name given), *friend of Kitty*

Veslóvsky, Vásenka (or Váska, diminutives of Vassíly, no patronymic given), *friend of Oblonsky*

Yáshvin, Captain or Prince (no name or patronymic given), *friend of Vronsky*