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SCAPEGOATING, DOUBLE-PLOTTING, AND THE JUSTICE OF *ANNA KARENINA*

Introduction

The question which this article seeks to answer is one of the most vexed and persistent in the history of *Anna Karenina*'s reception: to what extent and how justifiably is Anna suggested to be deserving of her fate? I approach this question through three issues: the possibility that Anna is used as a scapegoat; Anna's status as tragic or otherwise; and the effect upon her of Levin's existence in the novel. The last of these, which is the subject of the second half of the article, connects to the other main question of *Anna Karenina* criticism: how are the novel's two central stories related? The three issues of scapegoating, tragedy, and double-plotting will be related to each other as they are raised; for example, to introduce Levin is also to introduce the concept of comedy as a possible contrast to Anna's tragedy. The argument is therefore cumulative.

Some critics have considered Anna to deserve her fate; others have found her not to deserve it; some critics in each category some have found the novel to concur with them. Early European critics such as Matthew Arnold and Melchior de Vogüé endorsed what they judged to be the novel's condemnation of Anna, whereas Russian critics including Lev Shestov, Nikolai Strakhov, and Dmitrii Sviatopolk-Mirskii interpreted the novel in the same way, but criticized it. Critics including Amy Mandelker found the novel not to condemn Anna. Many critics, however, have found the novel to be internally conflicted with regard to her. Viktor Shklovskii, Mark Aldanov, Henri Troyat, Judith Armstrong, George Steiner, Mary Evans, and Harold Bloom all proposed variants of the idea that Tolstoi's condemnation of Anna was contradicted by his love and admiration for her. D. H. Lawrence and Peter Jones found his condemnation of Anna to be subverted by the novel's artistry. Thomas Mann found the novel's attitudes towards the society which condemns Anna to be self-contradictory. Isaiah Berlin, A. N. Wilson, and Sidney Schultze found a contradiction in the novel between what Mikhail Bakhtin would term the monologic and the heteroglossic: between condemnation of Anna, and agnosticism as to her guilt. Vladimir Alexandrov found the whole novel to be polyphonic, with every issue capable of several different interpretations. A majority of the novel's critics have found in it at least some impulse to condemn Anna, and of these, many have found other aspects of the novel which contradict it. The reading of *Anna Karenina* as internally contradictory has much to support it.

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Scapegoats

Both the condemnation of Anna, and its subversion, may be clarified with reference to the concept of the scapegoat. The phenomenon of persecuting individuals as representatives of a category of supposed malefactors was analysed by René Girard in his 1985 book *Le Bouc émissaire*.[1] This book purported to disclose the concealed mechanisms by which scapegoats had been persecuted in history, myth, and fiction. In the context of narrative, it made a useful distinction between scapegoating in a text, and scapegoating by a text (Girard, p. 30). In the former case, the scapegoat is shown to be the victim of a persecution of which the text itself disapproves. In the latter case, the text makes a character the victim of its own persecution.

Anna Karenina may be described as a scapegoat of both kinds. Men and women in the St Petersburg *svet* (high society) practise adultery and fornication with impunity. Anna is singled out for persecution because she commits adultery in a manner which befits her erstwhile membership of 'the conscience of Petersburg society'—with deep consciousness of guilt, and (eventual) transparency towards Karenin and society.[2] In this respect she is a scapegoat of her society (which punishes her on behalf of all adulterers), and in her text (which criticizes this society for its hypocrisy). On the other hand, many of the characters whose transgressions resemble or exceed Anna's own are treated relatively benignly not only by *svet*, but by the narrative itself. Oblonskii is satirized in a manner which amuses and endears; as Alexandrov noted, he 'is oddly and largely guiltless (even as he dissipates the family's wealth)'.[3] Shestov wrote that

> All the characters in *Anna Karenina* are divided into two categories. Some keep to the rules, and along with Levin find paradise [*idut' k blagu*]; the others serve their own desires, break the rules, and, in proportion to the audacity and decisiveness of their actions, suffer a more or less cruel punishment.[4]

Yet this is not quite true: most of the characters in the latter category are permitted to satisfy these desires without suffering any kind of punishment. There is also a problem pertaining to Anna's agency. She is presented as an exemplar as well as a victim of the faults of her society. Her religious and ethical education is shallow, and even by the end of the novel she is

[1] René Girard, *The Scapegoat*, trans. by Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

[2] *Anna Karenina: Roman v vos'mi chastiakh*, in L. N. Tolstoi, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 14 vols (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1952), VIII–IX (VIII, 136). All translations, unless otherwise stated, are my own.

[3] Vladimir E. Alexandrov, *Limits to Interpretation: The Meanings of 'Anna Karenina'* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), p. 211.

[4] Lev Shestov, *Dobro v uchenii gr. Tolstogo i F. Nitshe* (St Peterburg: Izdanie M. V. Pirozhkova, 1907), p. 4.

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insufficiently percipient to criticize society for its responsibility for her faults. In comparison to Levin, she may be considered as having 'bad moral luck' (in Bernard Williams's sense of the term).[5] Moreover, her characterization is inconsistent. Her ethical and emotional decline after experiencing happiness with Vronskii is not predictable from her character as initially presented. Peter Jones finds Anna's failure and Levin's relative success to be 'equally false conclusions in the light of everything else we have been shown in the novel; they are conclusions apparently imposed by the author upon the implicit argument, and against its principal burden.'[6] It is as though the progression which Anna's character had made through successive drafts of the novel from a plump, crude, seductive coquette, to the woman whom Vronskii encounters at the station in Moscow, is partially reversed over the course of the novel—Tolstoi's earlier impulse to punish female adultery having come again to the fore. Vladimir Solov′ev, reviewing that part of the novel which had been published by 1875, had already found her characterization to bifurcate: 'one [Anna] comes directly out of the novel while the other from the author's own attitude to her. Therefore when he writes about her directly it seems that he is not speaking about the woman he is describing.'[7] Anna's presentation can even be inconsistent within the space of a few pages. When she appeals to Dolli to forgive her brother, 'Sympathy and love unfeigned were visible on Anna's face' (VIII, 76). Yet when Dolli has left the room: '"Stiva," she said to him, winking merrily, making the sign of the cross on him, and indicating the door with her eyes, "Go, and God help you"' (VIII, 80). Bernard Williams argues that 'however inevitable Tolstoy ultimately makes [Anna's downfall] seem, it could, relative to her earlier thoughts, have been otherwise'; however, rather than attributing this to the author's will, he attributes it to 'a matter of intrinsic luck, and a failure in the heart of her project'.[8] In fact, Anna's downfall is partly the result of her scapegoating by her text.

There exists an overlap between Anna's scapegoating in and by the text, since the narrative not only criticizes those who censure Anna for, and only for, the openness of her adultery, but also implicitly supports them in condemning open adultery more than discreet adultery. Newton comments that 'it is difficult to think of any other novel that convincingly suggests that a bad marriage is preferable to an extra-marital affair in which there is genuine love

[5] Bernard Williams, 'Moral Luck', in *Moral Luck*, ed. by Daniel Statman (New York: State University of New York, 1993), pp. 35–56. Williams defines 'moral luck' as the kind of luck which allows one to behave in a more rather than less moral way. Civilians in Nazi Germany had the 'moral bad luck' to be born in a time and place which were likely to involve them in guilt (p. 16).

[6] Peter Jones, *Philosophy and the Novel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 110.

[7] Brother of the Symbolist philosopher Vladimir Solov′ev, quoted in *Tolstoy: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by A. V. Knowles (London, Henley, and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 249.

[8] Williams, p. 41.

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on both sides; *Anna Karenina* is such a novel'.[9] It also suggests that had Anna remained with Karenin while conducting her affair, she would have wronged Karenin and Sergei less, and not have destroyed Vronskii and herself. (The only detail which suggests the contrary is Sergei's depiction as largely unscathed by his mother's disappearance.) The implication that Anna's hubris lies in her attempt to 'spit in Mother Grundy's eye' is supported by Tolstoi's comment to Kramskoi in the summer of 1875 that 'One thing's certain. Anna's going to die—vengeance will be wreaked on her. She wanted to rethink life in her own way.'[10] His answer to Kramskoi's question: 'How should one think?' is: 'One must try to live by the faith which one has sucked in with one's mother's milk and without arrogance of the mind.'[11] Betsi Tverskaia's circle has absorbed neither mother's milk nor faith, but none the less collaborates with the narrative in punishing Anna's double transgression.

The tension between Anna's scapegoating in, and by, her text can be explored in relation to the divergent interpretations of the novel's epigraph. 'Mne otmshchenie, i az vozdam' is the standard Slavonic translation of one of God's prophecies quoted by Paul to the Romans. The passage from the King James Authorized translation of the Bible (italicized below) is:

> Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, *Vengeance is mine; I will repay*, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him [. . .] Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.[12]

The second sentence makes it clear that Paul cites in the spirit of the passage from Leviticus in which God tells Moses:

> Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord.[13]

However, Paul is not quoting this passage, but is slightly misquoting from Moses' song in Deuteronomy (the degree of misquotation is similar in Hebrew, Russian, and English):

> To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. For the Lord shall judge his people.[14]

[9] K. M. Newton, 'Interpreting Tolstoy's Intention in *Anna Karenina*', in *In Defence of Literary Interpretation: Theory and Practice* (London: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 153–72 (p. 170).

[10] D. H. Lawrence writes that 'all the tragedy comes from Vronsky's and Anna's fear of society. The monster was social, not phallic at all. They couldn't live in the pride of their sincere passion, and spit in Mother Grundy's eye' (*'Study of Thomas Hardy' and Other Essays*, ed. by Bruce Steele (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 180).

[11] Quoted in A. N. Wilson, *Tolstoy* (London: Penguin, 1988), p. 278.

[12] Romans 12. 19–21.

[13] Leviticus 19. 18.

[14] Deuteronomy 32. 35–36.

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An emphasis on the Levitican and Pauline senses points to the novel's censure of scapegoating in the text, and the injustice of Anna's suffering. Kropotkin found that 'it was the opinion of the Betsies—surely not Superhuman Justice—which brought Karenina to suicide', and Shklovskii concurred that 'not God, but people, those people who hated Tolstoi himself, pushed Anna under the wheels of the train'.[15] These interpretations are supported by Tolstoi's admiration for four books by other authors, at around the time of writing *Anna Karenina*. In March 1872 he wrote to Pisemskii in praise of his novel *B vodorovote* (*In the Whirlpool*, 1871), which refrains from judgement of an adulteress who commits suicide.[16] In 1891 he stated that between the ages of thirty-five and fifty (1863–78) Mrs Wood, Trollope, and George Eliot had had a great influence on him (*TL*, II, 486). Taking these authors in the order in which Tolstoi listed them: in *East Lynne* (1861) Carlyle quotes Romans 12. 20 in order to explain why he will not take action against a man who has wronged him.[17] In *Phineas Redux* (1874) Kennedy unsuccessfully defends himself from a charge of vengefulness by quoting the same passage to Phineas.[18] In 1885 Tolstoi specifically expressed his admiration for *Felix Holt* (1866), in which Mrs Transome's adultery is treated sympathetically and tragically. Eikhenbaum thought that Tolstoi chose his epigraph after finding it quoted by Schopenhauer in *The World as Will and Representation* (first read by Tolstoi in 1869), where Schopenhauer uses it in support of his condemnation of *jus talionis*: 'no person has the authority of power to set himself up as a purely moral judge and avenger', for which reason 'the Bible says *Vengeance is mine*'.[19] Dostoevskii thought, in relation to *Anna Karenina*, that 'It is clear and evident' that 'the laws of the spirit are still so unfamiliar, so unknown to science, so undefined and so mysterious, that there is not and cannot yet be any healers, or even any definitive judges, but there is one who says: "Vengeance is mine, I will repay".'[20] Tolstoi went further in a letter of May 1873 to Strakhov:

Man cannot understand and express the objective essence of life—that is the first thing. The essence of life—what makes us live—is the need for what we wrongly call good. Good is only the opposite of evil, as light is of darkness, and just as there is no absolute

[15] Prince Peter Kropotkin, *Idealy i deistvitel'nosti v russkoi literature* (London: Duckworth, 1916), p. 135, and Viktor Shklovskii, *Lev Tolstoi* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Ts K VLKSM, 1967), p. 349.

[16] *Tolstoy's Letters* [henceforth *TL*], trans. and ed. by R. F. Christian, 2 vols (London: Athlone Press, 1978), I, 241–42.

[17] Ellen Wood, *East Lynne*, ed. by Andrew Maunder (Ontario: Broadview, 2000), p. 563.

[18] Anthony Trollope, *Phineas Redux*, 2 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), I, 250.

[19] Boris Eikhenbaum, *Lev Tolstoi: semidesiatye gody* (Leningrad: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1974), pp. 170–71. The citation from Schopenhauer is taken from Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. by E. F. J. Payne, 2 vols (New York: Dover, *c.* 1969), II, 348.

[20] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *A Writer's Diary*, trans. by Kenneth Lantz, 2 vols (London: Quartet, 1995), II, 1071.

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light and dark, so there is no absolute good and evil. Good and evil are only materials out of which beauty is formed, i.e. what we love without reason, without profit, without need. (*TL*, I, 261)

In the same letter he wrote that he had finished a draft of *Anna Karenina*.

However, the Deuteronomic quotation is ambiguous, and a number of critics have argued that Tolstoi takes on himself the role of God. In 1900 Shestov wrote that 'Vengeance is waiting for her, and Tolstoi will give it to her.'[21] Eikhenbaum, notwithstanding his observation concerning Schopenhauer, argued that 'the issue is not that Tolstoi makes the deciding of the question of guilt and criminality subject to the will of God, but that this God (already, doubtlessly, subject to the will of Tolstoi as the author of the novel) apparently decides that it is necessary to "repay" Anna for her crime'.[22] Eikhenbaum also argued that Tolstoi increased Anna's guilt after reading Dumas's treatise *L'Homme-Femme* (1872), which countenances the murder of faithless wives.[23] Tolstoi praised that novel for its 'lofty understanding of marriage' three weeks before starting *Anna Karenina*; the epigraph itself was written for an early draft.[24] Finally, before completing *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoi had started work on *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1889), in which Pozdnyshev blames his wife for devoting herself to her sexual attractiveness; Anna's chief concern by the end of her life is to maintain her attractiveness to Vronskii. Tolstoi's own interventions in the critical disputes concerning the meaning of the epigraph favour the interpretation of the epigraph as vengeful. Thirty years after completing *Anna Karenina* he wrote that 'I chose the epigraph simply in order to explain the idea that the bad things people do have as their consequence all the bitter things, which come not from people, but from God, and that is what Anna Karenina herself experienced.'[25] On balance, the epigraph's Pauline context of love, and its Levitican source, are somewhat weaker than the vengeful spirit of the quotation's direct Deuteronomic source. Anna is 'repaid' more thoroughly than is the society which arrogates to itself God's responsibility. Thomas Mann was right to find 'a certain contradiction inherent in the author's originally moral theme, in the charge he raises against society; for one wonders what weapon of punishment God might use if society behaved other than it does'.[26]

[21] Shestov, p. 3.

[22] Eikhenbaum, p. 161.

[23] Elisabeth Stenbock-Fermor, *The Architecture of 'Anna Karenina': A History of its Writing, Structure, and Message* (Lisse: de Ridder, 1975), p. 93.

[24] Quoted in C. J. G. Turner, *A Karenina Companion* (Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1993), p. 111; Sidney Schultze, *The Structure of 'Anna Karenina'* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1982), p. 12.

[25] Quoted in Donna Tussing Orwin, *Tolstoy's Art and Thought 1847–1880* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 81.

[26] *Anna Karenina*, trans. by Constance Garnett, 2 vols (New York: Random House, 1939), I, xix–xx.

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The representation of Anna's scapegoating in the text is partly undermined by her scapegoating by the text.

Muted Tragedy

A similar tension may be discerned in the novel's treatment of tragedy. In early 1871, shortly before starting *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoi taught himself ancient Greek.[27] Although there is no firm evidence that he read Greek tragedies, his decision to learn Greek was made during a period in which he intensively read dramas, and it is likely that he did read the ancient plays. Their characteristic patterns may be found in several aspects of Anna's story. She falls from high estate (the aristocracy of the world's most powerful land empire) to her death, by yielding to her passion after 'almost a whole year' of resistance (VIII, 159). After capitulating to Vronskii, her *anagnōrisis* is immediate and fully conscious. Her *peripeteia* occurs in stages, and is sometimes itself reversed—as during her initial happiness with Vronskii in Italy, and on his estate—but it ends in her destruction. She bears her situation with frankness and dignity, as is perceived by Golenishchev and Levin. Her catastrophe fulfils omens: the killing of a worker by the train which brings Anna to Vronskii, and the comment of 'Anna's friend' that 'women with a shadow normally end badly' (VIII, 145). As in many Greek tragedies, the dead protagonist is kept off the narrative stage, first to be seen by an anonymous witness (at Obiralovka station), and only later to be described through Vronskii.

Yet Anna's society offers her no chorus, because it is unable to conceive of tragedy. Betsi Tverskaia speaks with equanimity in explaining to Anna that the same thing (for example, Liza Merkalova's chronic adultery) 'can be looked at tragically and turned into a misery, or looked at simply and even cheerfully. Maybe you're inclined to look at things too tragically' (VIII, 317). Even those inhabitants of St Petersburg society who condemn its triviality (Lidiia Ivanovna and her circle) are Christian and inimical to tragic thinking. The banality of the society is implicated in Anna's sufferings. Betsi Tverskaia and her circle, in their inability to imagine tragic adultery, shun those who do imagine it. When Anna asks 'Am I worse than others, or better? I think, worse', Betsi's response, 'Enfant terrible, enfant terrible!', both exemplifies the light-hearted tone which Betsi considers more appropriate to the discussion of adultery and implicitly endorses Anna's self-criticism as being worse than other adulteresses' complaisance (VIII, 317).[28] One of the causes and effects of Anna's scapegoating by her society is its refusal to recognize her as tragic.

Yet certain features of the narrative, too, undermine Anna's possible tragic

[27] Henri Troyat, *Tolstoy*, trans. by Nancy Amphoux (London: Penguin, 1970), pp. 453–54.

[28] Tolstoi uses the Russian equivalent to the French phrase: 'Uzhasnyi rebenok, uzhasnyi rebenok'.

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status. They include those which imply that her suffering is justified, and those which lower her dignity. Wholly justified suffering is not tragic: the deterioration of Anna's character, her abandonment of her son, and lack of interest in her daughter, function in part to make her suffering seem appropriate. Tragic protagonists also have a degree of stature, but Anna's dignity is eventually lost: her attendance of the St Petersburg theatre is desperate rather than defiant, and during her last journey she is presented as psychologically disturbed. All of these features can be seen to limit the degree to which Anna is a scapegoat of her text, by presenting her as deserving of a degree of non-tragic suffering. Yet their effect is ambivalent, since in relation to the overall inconsistency in the presentation of Anna's character, they can be seen as involved in her scapegoating by the text. The features of Anna's presentation which accord her a provisional tragic status also measure the degree of her failure to attain this status, whether this failure is fair or otherwise. Yet since the failure is not absolute, their presence serves also to raise Anna's status in the text from what it would otherwise be. Anna is always nobler than two of the adulteresses with whom Tolstoi and his contemporary readers would have been most inclined to compare her: Hélène Kuragina and Emma Bovary. The hints of Greek tragedy function less at Anna's expense than at that of the *svet* which denies Anna's tragic status because it cannot conceive of tragedy.

Levin's Contribution

Levin despises *svet* at least as much as does the narrative, and he can conceive of tragedy. However, before exploring the effect of his presence in the novel on Anna's treatment, it is worth summarizing the relations of the novel's two main stories, and the ways in which they have been characterized by critics. After Vronskii's pursuit of Anna frees Kiti to marry Levin, the couples have no significant causal effect on each other. Vronskii and Anna's adultery, and their perceived mistreatment of Kiti, give both couples reason not to see one another. Thereafter Levin and Vronskii meet thrice, Anna and Levin meet for a few hours, and Anna and Kiti meet for only a few minutes. The couples make no effort to learn more of each other's stories, nor are they shown to be conscious of their stories' parallels. Dolli and Oblonskii follow the two couples' stories with near-equal interest, but they also fail to compare them. The reader, by contrast, is impelled to compare them precisely in order to connect them at the level of meaning, and to give substance to the term 'inner link' in Tolstoi's assertion that: 'The structural link is not the plot or the relationships (friendships) between the characters, but an inner link [. . .] the very thing that made the work important for me' (*TL*, I, 311). Such a link

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might justify his comment that, in contrast to the 'orgy' of *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina* was a 'well-finished novel' (*TL*, I, 258).[29]

Critics of *Anna Karenina* have divided into those who have stressed the connection of its stories (particularly in the last four decades)[30] and those who have stressed their disconnection—of whom some (also more recent) have found significance in this condition.[31] Those who have stressed disconnection have often remarked on the failure of Levin's story to be relevant to, or wholly to contextualize (provide the terms in which to understand) Anna's story—it has rarely been the other way round. For example, the Russian critic Avseenko wrote in *Russkii Mir* in 1875 that the Levin scenes 'lack the dramatic element and slow down the development of the story'.[32] The French translation to which Nathan Haskell Dole (the first translator of *Anna Karenina* into English) referred retained only part of Levin and Kiti's story, as have several of the film adaptations of *Anna Karenina*; Clarence Brown's, Julien Duvivier's, and Alexander Zarkhi's versions of 1935, 1947, and 1967 respectively all end with Anna's suicide.[33] Of these the first gives more time to Oblonskii and Dolli than to Levin and Kiti, returning the novel towards the state of its first draft, before Levin had been introduced.[34] In the novel, however, of the 239 chapters slightly over half (126) concern Levin and his associates to the exclusion of Anna and hers. Alexandrov notes flatly that the author 'did not make it clear what the relations between the two halves are'.[35]

It does seem clear, however, that Levin's own views have little to do with Anna's scapegoating by her society. He condemns her neither as much as does the novel as a whole, nor as much as he condemns the society which

[29] The description of *War and Peace* as an 'orgy' appears in the draft for an introduction to *War and Peace*, quoted in Natasha Sankovitch, *Creating and Recovering Experience: Repetition in Tolstoy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 32.

[30] See e.g. Mary Evans, *Mary Evans Reflecting on 'Anna Karenina'* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 25; Jones, p. 72; Barbara Lonnqvist, '*Anna Karenina*', in *The Cambridge Companion to Tolstoy*, ed. by Donna Tussing Orwin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 80–95 (p. 94); Gary Saul Morson, '*Anna Karenina' in Our Time: Seeing More Wisely* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 168–96; Newton, pp. 153–72; Natasha Sankovitch, *Creating and Recovering Experience: Repetition in Tolstoy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 109; Schultze; Stenbock-Fermor.

[31] See e.g. Alexandrov, p. 297; John Bayley, *Tolstoy and the Novel* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1966), p. 203; Edward Wasiolek, *Tolstoy's Major Fiction* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 162; A. N. Wilson, *Tolstoy* (London: Penguin, 1988), pp. 280–85.

[32] Quoted in Knowles, p. 265.

[33] Maya Birdwood-Hedger, 'Tension between Domestication and Foreignization in English-Language Translations of *Anna Karenina*' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2006), p. 72; *Anna Karenina*, dir. by Clarence Brown (MGM, 1935); *Anna Karenina*, dir. by Julian Duvivier (Twentieth Century-Fox, 1947); *Anna Karenina*, dir. by Alexandr Zarkhi (Mosfil'm, 1967).

[34] Schultze, p. 13. Tolstoi started writing the first detailed draft on 18 March 1873; Levin first appears as Gagin's (Oblonskii's) eccentric friend Neradov in the third draft in the summer of 1874.

[35] Alexandrov, p. 95.

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shuns her. Although he does not invite Anna to visit Pokrovskoe, or visit her at Vozdvizhenskoe, he counteracts society's isolation of her to the extent of providing the horse which Dolli uses to visit her. His most strident condemnation of promiscuous women is undermined by the scene in which it occurs, as he himself becomes aware. He asserts to Oblonskii in the Angliia restaurant that 'In such [illicit] love there can't be any kind of tragedy [. . .] And in Platonic love there can't be tragedy, because in that kind of love all is clear and pure, because...'. His idealism is undermined by his sudden recollection of 'his own sins, and the inner struggle he had lived through', Oblonskii's sceptically twinkling eyes, and Levin's absurd situation eating a gargantuan gourmet meal which he does not enjoy and will pay for (viii, 49). His denial of the tragedy of adultery is undermined by its repetition in Betsi Tverskaia's subsequent assertion to Anna. In two later conversations about adultery during hunting expeditions with Oblonskii, Levin is non-committal.

On the other hand, his and Anna's stories contrast ostentatiously, and invite an ethical interpretation which justifies their divergent fates, and makes both appear the more extreme by contrast. The patterning which reveals their differences extends even to triviality: Anna returns to St Petersburg to find her dress unmade because her instructions have been ignored; Levin returns to Pokrovskoe to find his buckwheat burnt because his instructions have been ignored. Oblonskii, Anna, Vronskii, Kiti, and Levin begin their stories in Moscow, where Anna and Levin meet Vronskii, and both see Kiti. From this middle ground Anna and Vronskii, and Levin, travel in directions that are geographically and ethically opposite to St Petersburg and Pokrovskoe. Anna and Vronskii elope while Kiti and Levin marry, but Anna gives birth before this time, whereas Kiti does so afterwards. Anna and Vronskii 'honeymoon' in Italy, whereas Kiti and Levin choose the Russian countryside. Later, both couples live on the land, where they are visited by friends and relatives. Anna and Levin study agricultural treatises, and draw opposite conclusions from them. Anna is shunned by, and Levin is shunning, *svet*. The couples return to Moscow, where Levin and Anna meet, Levin becomes a father, and Anna commits suicide (at Obiralovka). Thereafter Vronskii aspires towards effectual suicide in war, whereas Levin avoids suicide until he believes that he understands why he should live. In so far as Levin's story successfully makes Anna appear relatively guilty, his presence reduces her scapegoating by the text—the more convincingly, since he is not involved in her scapegoating in the text. On the other hand, in so far as Anna's downfall is perceived to be underjustified on its own terms, but a foil to Levin's relative success, Levin can be considered to be an involuntary agent of Anna's scapegoating by her text; Empson remarks that 'This power of suggestions is the strength of the

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double plot; once you take the two parts to correspond, any character [. . .] seems to cause what he corresponds to.'[36] Shestov found that:

> If Anna could have [. . .] died not crushed [*razdavlennoi*] and annihilated but righteous and proud then Tolstoi would have lost that fulcrum which allowed him to retain his spiritual equilibrium. The alternative presented itself to him—Anna or himself, her destruction or his salvation. And he sacrificed Anna, who had gone to Vronskii whilst her husband was alive.[37]

As Anna became increasingly sympathetic in successive drafts, Levin's role expanded, as though in counterbalance.

Several factors favour the interpretation that the divergence in their fates is insufficiently justified by the ethical difference between them. Two under-acknowledged factors mean that direct comparison of their behaviour is unfair. First, they are at very different stages in their marriages. Several of Tolstoi's protagonists before and after *Anna Karenina* pursue other women after they have married, as Tolstoi himself did. It would appear that Levin is fortunate to have outgrown the promiscuous lust which his diaries record; Anna, on the other hand, has only ever known Karenin. Since she is nine years into her marriage, the fairest comparison is not of Anna with Levin or Kiti as they are, but as the reader projects they might be nine years on. Secondly, they live in different domains. I use the term domain to refer to a non-temporal subdivision of a fictional world, which may be social, geographic, aesthetic, plot-related, or any combination of these. A double-plotted novel does not necessarily have two domains (as Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* does not), but *Anna Karenina* does. Anna's domain corresponds to St Petersburg and its high society; Levin's, to the Russian countryside and its inhabitants. Europe and Moscow may be considered to constitute a mixed domain—they are socio-geographic realms in which both Anna's and Levin's stories partially take place, but which are not characterized by either. Anna is effectively restricted to her own domain, and has no access to the kind of countryside in which Levin's idea of goodness resides; Peterhof, which is a rural Court, and Vozdvizhenskoe, a mechanized estate, are denatured countryside. Her own domain also differs from Levin's in terms of the nature of the action which takes place in them. Whereas Anna's story aspires towards the condition of a European *roman*, Levin's has more of the aspect of autobiography. Tolstoi only very infrequently wrote in his diary while writing the novel, as though writing Levin's story served in part to replace its function.[38] Wilson describes reading Anna's and Levin's stories respectively as:

[36] William Empson, 'Double Plots: Heroic and Pastoral in the Main Plot and Sub-Plot', in *Some Versions of Pastoral* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1950), pp. 27–88 (p. 34).
[37] Shestov, p. 4.
[38] *Tolstoy's Diaries*, ed. and trans. by R. F. Christian, 2 vols (London: Athlone Press, 1985), I, vii.

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rather like wandering into what appears to be a new house. On our left the dining room, finished and complete, with its furniture, pictures, characters and conversation. On our right, however, we fling open the door of the ballroom and find ourselves in an open field, with the architect and builders still looking at the plans.[39]

Wilson exaggerates. None the less, the characterization of 'counterfeit art' in *What is Art?* (made with reference to Western European literature, particularly French, from Boccaccio to Prévost) applies more obviously to Anna's than to Levin's story: 'Adultery is not only the favourite, but the only theme of all novels [. . .] as a consequence of the lack of belief and the exceptional features of the lifestyle of the wealthy classes, the art of those classes became impoverished in its subject-matter.'[40] Levin's relatively formless, undirected story can give only limited resonance to Anna's putative tragedy. Anna's restriction to her own domain is one factor in her scapegoating by her text.

However, despite the differences in their domains, Anna and Levin have striking similarities as individuals. Their intellects are comparable: 'all the subjects that interested Vronskii she learnt about in books and specialist journals [. . .] He was amazed at her knowledge, her memory' (IX, 224). Her reading is more productive than that of Levin, who reads nothing that helps him with his farming. When they meet they agree on public philanthropy. They are both capable of extreme mental states: Anna during her last journey, and Levin on the night of his engagement, experience opposite extremes of misanthropy and philanthropy; Anna immediately before her suicide, and Levin immediately before his conversation with Fyodor, fail to understand why anyone should live. As Hardy points out: 'Anna and Vronskii and Levin are all tempted to suicide—the difference between them and Oblonskii is most easily, if crudely, summed up in this fact.'[41] Shestov's question: 'Why has fate so unfairly favoured Levin and so cruelly hurt Anna?' takes some of its force from their similarities as individuals.[42]

Yet in various ways the novel undermines the apparent contrast of their stories. 'All happy families resemble one another, each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way' asserts a difference far stronger than the novel justifies: the Levins, Shcherbatskiis, Lvovs, Sviiazhskiis, and Parmenovs have little more in common than do the Karenins with Nikolai and Masha (*AK*, VIII, 5). Not for the last time in the novel, the narrator misleads. Anna and Vronskii are in certain respects more successful than Levin and Kiti. Vronskii's 'management of his estate, which occupied and absorbed him more and more, was

[39] Wilson, p. 280.
[40] Lev Tolstoi, *Chto takoe iskusstvo?*, ed. by Militsa Greene (Letchworth: Bradda Books, 1963), p. 97.
[41] Barbara Hardy, 'Form and Freedom: Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*', in *The Appropriate Form: An Essay on the Novel*, 2nd edn (London: Athlone Press, 1971), p. 196.
[42] Shestov, p. 8.

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most successful'; unlike Levin, he makes a return on modern machinery, and 'knew how to keep up prices' (IX, 224). Dolli 'even envied [Annie's] healthy appearance [. . .] Not one of her own children had crawled like that' (IX, 198). Whereas she struggles to discipline her own children, Sergei causes Anna no problems. Even the difference of Anna's and Levin's endings is not absolute. Although Levin's romantic comedy with Kiti retains an ideal, only semi-sexualized, aspect until the end of the novel, it is also troubled. Levin's acceptance of Christian dogma is psychologically and intellectually insecure. Levin himself, at one stage of his epiphany, is aware of the danger that he will again tear himself 'on some mental nail of his own making'.[43] As Shestov notes, 'Having killed her, [Tolstoi] leads Levin to a belief in God and ends his novel'; there is a sense that the novel must end where it does, before Levin loses his arduously attained faith.[44] Soviet critics who wished to downplay the ending of a novel which, unlike Dostoevskii's novels, was included in the Soviet canon found it relatively easy to dismiss it as unsuccessful. Although its precariousness is not acknowledged by the narrative rhetoric, it none the less softens the contrast between Levin's fate and Anna's, and mitigates the extent to which she is scapegoated by her text.

Despite their similarities, the thoughts which chiefly occupy Levin are of limited relevance to Anna. Happily married, Levin is concerned with why to live, whereas Anna, unhappily married, is concerned with how to live. The divinely comic, cosmic vision of Levin's epiphany has no place in it for Anna's tragedy (and according to Levin, individuals exclude themselves from this comedy by failing to apprehend its reality). Wasiolek argues that 'Levin's searching and finding are insubstantial' if they do not 'confront [. . .] Anna's physical passion'; they do not. Wasiolek also points out that Tolstoi 'dares risk only the briefest of encounters between' Anna's and Levin's 'two worlds'.[45] Zarkhi's 1967 film adaptation expands this scene to a discussion between Anna and Levin on the subject of suicide, as they walk round a garden—but their feelings on this subject have little in common. Levin's failure to provide the terms in which Anna can understand herself, or be understood by others, may be considered to exacerbate Anna's scapegoating, since it weakens the implied ethical contrast which justifies the divergence of Levin's and Anna's fates. On the other hand, Levin's failure to wholly contextualize Anna, and the disjunction between his and Anna's domains, may be considered to undermine the ethical contrast so thoroughly that it has little validity at all.

[43] Dostoevskii's phrase about Levin, quoted in Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 176. I use the term *epiphany* to refer to Levin's attainment of a euphoric understanding of life and God at the end of the novel. Although the terms *bogoiavlenie* and *epifaniia* occur nowhere in the novel, Levin twice describes something as having been *otkryto* (opened) to him (VIII, 385, 403).

[44] Shestov, p. 3.

[45] Wasiolek, p. 162.

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Each character lives in a domain which has its own concerns and standards of judgement. On such a reading, Anna's downfall cannot be understood in relation to Levin at all. Such a reading is supported by the presence of Oblonskii. His impunity was adduced above as evidence for Anna's scapegoating by the text. However, it might alternatively be considered to indicate the presence of a discourse in the text which does not condemn Anna. Oblonskii is the novel's intermediary character: he is Anna's brother, Vronskii's friend, Levin's friend, Kiti's brother-in-law, and a kneader of social dough who lives in the mixed domain of Moscow. His impunity offers an alternative perspective from which to view Anna more sympathetically, and thereby to reduce Anna's scapegoating by the text. Compared to Levin, however, he is a minor character—and Levin himself is too closely related to Anna in similarity and contrast for him and his domain to be seen as constituting a wholly separate ethical sphere, which would determine the novel as ethically pluralist. None the less, Levin's ethical relevance to Anna is unstable.

This instability is revealed in their ambivalent and distanced personal relations. The novel opens with their failure to meet. Despite the fact that Levin has been friends with Oblonskii for much longer than he was friends with the young Prince Shcherbatskii—with whose three sisters he fell in love in turn—he has never met Oblonskii's younger sister before the novel begins. When it does begin, Anna and Levin neither meet nor are mentioned to one another. The plot as written gives the impression that they both leave Moscow soon after the ball, but in fact Anna arrives in Moscow on the morning that Levin leaves it, and they use stations at opposite sides of the city. Schultze considers that Tolstoi, who rewrote this section many times, intended this hidden near-coincidence.[46] On the one occasion on which they meet, Levin scrutinizes her (in her portrait, then her reality) in reported thought and free indirect speech, rendering him vulnerably transparent while Anna is opaque. A chapter break permits resonance to his wonder (IX, 278). He is 'completely won over' by her grace, urbanity, intelligence, wit, beauty, and 'truth', feels that he has judged her 'formerly so harshly', and feels 'a tenderness and pity, which surprised him' (IX, 283, 282). The rhetoric of this and the two following scenes is ambivalent: Levin's feelings are qualified by his drunkenness, the compromised Oblonskii acts as Anna's advocate to him, he begins to feel guilty even before rejoining Kiti, and reconciles himself with her by accusing Anna of bewitchment. This accusation is partly supported by the subsequent revelation that 'she had unconsciously [. . .] the whole evening done all in her power to arouse in Levin a feeling of love towards her' (IX, 285–86). The inauthenticity of her behaviour is suggested by the naive tone and apparent contradictions ('not merely naturally, cleverly, but cleverly and carelessly')

[46] Schultze, p. 32.

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of the narration as focalized by Levin (ix, 279). On the other hand, this very focalization gives the reader no clear grounds for judgement. Levin's repentance to Kiti is only partly sincere. His persisting admiration and pity for Anna, which is consistent with finding her tragic, carries as much force as Kiti's denial of the validity of his response. The singularity of the meeting, and Levin's disadvantages of inebriation and admiration, implicitly acknowledge Levin's inability fully to contrast with or to contextualize her. Rachinskii commented to Tolstoi: 'How I enjoyed the acquaintance of Levin. You must agree that this is one of the best episodes of the novel. Here the opportunity presented itself to tie together all the threads of the story and to provide a unified conclusion. But you did not want this' (*TL*, i, 311). By refusing a 'unified conclusion' the narrative permits latitude in the interpretation of Anna. Raymond Williams considers that in *Anna Karenina* (as in *Women in Love*)

> an important relationship ends in tragedy, in a death given significance by the whole action [. . .] by the coexistence of these other relationships, the tragic relationship has been given a context. In this limited but important sense, a society has been formed, around the tragic experience.[47]

The limitations are, however, important. Levin does not offer sufficient terms in which Anna's story should be understood, nor does he constitute a binary contrast to Anna in either his ethical status or his fate. Overall, these facts militate against Anna's scapegoating by and in her text, and on balance the effect on her of his existence in the novel is benign.

Even after Levin's role had expanded between the third and the fifth drafts to fill over half of the text, including the whole of the last of the novel's eight parts, the title continued to name the heroine alone. The subtitle too (for those who have read the novel, or know its plot) emphasized Anna, since a *roman* is also euphemistically a love affair. The title *Anna Karenina* is unusual for Tolstoi, whose titles both before and after this novel tended to be general or abstract nouns rather than protagonists' names, and to reflect the structure of those works which are organized around comparison—for example, *The Two Hussars* (1856), *Three Deaths* (1859), *War and Peace* (1863–69), *The Two Old Men* (1885–86), *Master and Man* (1895), *The Three Hermits* (1886), *The Light Shines in the Darkness* (1880s–1902), and an early draft of *Anna Karenina*, which was entitled *Two Marriages* (the translated titles given here correspond closely to the original titles). The title *Anna Karenina* encourages interpretation of Anna as 'the fact of the novel', and requires no alteration for those film adaptations which largely exclude Levin.[48] However, its full poignancy is felt only in the fact that despite the novel's contents, it points to Anna alone. The title and subtitle hang above the novel rather as Pilate's epithet hangs

[47] Raymond Williams, *Modern Tragedy* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1966), p. 122.
[48] Bayley, p. 202.

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above Christ on his cross, stating the crime of the man he has condemned to death (having a *roman*) in a manner indeterminately accusatory, ironic, and honouring.[49] Within the novel Tolstoi, Pilate-like, both condemns Anna's society for condemning her and imposes the death penalty (which that society did not possess) for the sake of a higher cause than that society conceives of. Yet the novel also contains a figure who partially resembles Tolstoi, and who partially alleviates Anna's scapegoating by his similarities to her, irrelevancies to her, and ambivalent contact with her. Girard describes 'naïve persecutors' who are 'unaware of what they are doing'.[50] *Anna Karenina* is not a novel which is fully aware of its contradictions, and to the extent to which it is not, such persecution as it practises is naive. Pilate appears in the novel in Mikhailov's painting of Christ's trial, which contains 'faces moved around so many times for the sake of the conformity of the whole' (VIII, 43). Despite Tolstoi's numerous drafts of the novel, and his claim for its coherence, he never achieved the conformity of the whole.

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[49] 'THE KING OF THE JEWS', Mark 15. 26, or slight variants in Matthew 27. 37, Luke 23. 38, and John 19. 19. The *imia–familiia* (Christian name–surname) form is unusual in Russian, and is used only twice for Anna in the novel.

[50] Girard, p. 8.

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