THE THEORY AND INTERPRETATION OF NARRATIVE SERIES
FRAMING

ANNA KARENINA

Tolstoy, the Woman Question, and the Victorian Novel

Amy Mandelker

Ohio State University Press / Columbus
For my son, Nicholas
The prison-house is the world of vision.
Plato, The Republic

The better a person understands the degree to which they are externally determined (their substantiality), the closer they come to understanding and exercising their real freedom.
Mikhail Bakhtin

“What woman, what slave could be to such an extent a slave as I am in my position?”
Anna Karenina
List of Illustrations xi
Preface xiii
Note on Translation and Transliteration xv
Introduction: Snakes at Yasnaya Polyana 1

Part I: Passe-Partout: Tolstoy’s Image

1 The Myth of Misogyny: De-Moralizing Tolstoy 15
2 The Judgment of Anna Karenina: Feminist Criticism and the Image of the Heroine 34
3 Beyond the Motivations of Realism: Tolstoy, the Victorian Novel, and Iconic Aesthetics 58

Part II: Frame: Image and the Boundaries of Vision in Anna Karenina

4 The Execution of Anna Karenina: Heroines Framed and Hung 83
5 A Painted Lady: The Poetics of Ekphrasis 101

Part III: Illuminations: Reading Detail and Design in Anna Karenina

6 Knife, Book, and Candle: The Resisting Russian Reader 125
7 The Woman with a Shadow: Fables of Demon and Psyche 141
8 Picking a Mushroom and Escaping the Marriage Plot 163
Conclusion: After Anna Karenina  179
Notes  183
Bibliography  211
Index  225
ILLUSTRATIONS

The portico at Yasnaya Polyana 2
Portrait of Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoy, 1901 14
Poster for East Lynne 62
"Anna Visiting Her Son," 1883 63
Statue of Laocoön in the Vatican Museum 106
"Tolstoy Resting in the Forest," 1891 124
Mushroom (syroezhka) 164
"Jam-making," 1932 165
The main sources of inspiration for this book were three seminal studies: Richard Gustafson’s *Leo Tolstoy: Resident and Stranger*, Gary Saul Morson’s *Hidden in Plain View: Narrative and Creative Potentials in “War and Peace,”* and Mary Ann Caws’s *Reading Frames in Modern Fiction*. I had the good fortune to discuss my work with all three and to benefit from their comments, suggestions, and encouragement. Gary Saul Morson read most of the manuscript as it was written and offered extensive constructive criticism. In addition, I had the opportunity to teach a course on the avant-garde with Mary Ann Caws, an experience that transformed my perceptions of painting, frames, the visual, and the interrelationships of art and literature.

I would also like to acknowledge the numerous friends and colleagues who read and commented on portions of this book in manuscript, and whose insights, ideas, and often libraries were always generously made available to me: Elizabeth Allen, Pamela R. Bleisch, Ellen Chances, Caryl Emerson, Lillian Feder, David Goldfarb, Gina Kovarsky, Jerry Leo, Robert Maguire, Deborah Martinsen, Cathy Nepomnyashchy, Seth Schein, and Anatole Vishevs. Cathy Popkin read and commented on the entire manuscript; her invaluable suggestions and encouragement are deeply appreciated. I am particularly grateful for the close attention my manuscript received from Stephanie Sandler, who read my book for the Ohio State University Press, and from the editors of the Theory and Interpretation of Narrative series, Peter Rabinowitz and Jim Phelan. Naturally, any errors or infelicities of the text are entirely my own responsibility.

My most profound gratitude goes to my teachers and counselors: Shelley Angelides, Emily Dalgarno, Deborah Mandelbaum, Roy Men-
delson, Katherine O’Connor, Rosalia Rosenbaum, Victor Terras, and Thomas G. Winner. I must also thank the members of my discussion group on Russian theology and scientific thought, Ellen Chances, Richard Gustafson, and Alex Mihailović. I appreciate the expertise of my research assistants Tanya Serdiuk, Elina Yuffa, and Maria Makowiecka. The graduate students in my seminars “Tolstoy and the European Novel” at Columbia and the CUNY Graduate Center provided a challenging forum for discussion and constantly forced me to rearticulate and clarify my ideas. My colleagues at the CUNY Graduate Center offered the best kind of stimulating and supportive environment for research and writing; I would like to thank in particular Vincent Crapanzano, Fred Nichols, and Burton Pike. A generous grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities provided me with a fellowship year in order to complete this book.

I am grateful to my father, who makes writing books look easy, but who has never allowed me to forget how much hard work is necessary; and to my mother, who was willing to discuss Victorian novels and feminism with me for hours on end. Friends, students, and colleagues too numerous to mention by name have put up with a great deal of obsessive talk about Tolstoy over the years.

Slightly different versions of chapters 5 and 7 were published as articles: “A Painted Lady: The Poetics of Ekphrasis in Anna Karenina” (Comparative Literature, 43 [Winter 1991]: 1–19) and “The Woman with a Shadow: Fables of Demon and Psyche in Anna Karenina” (Novel, 24 [Fall 1990]: 48–68). A portion of chapter 2 was published as a review article, “Feminist Criticism and Anna Karenina,” in Tolstoy Studies Journal 3 ([1990]: 82–103).
Note on Translation and Transliteration

To accommodate those who do not read Russian, I cite whenever possible from existing translations. It has often been necessary to correct or emend available translations and I have done so, relying on the authoritative texts in the ninety-volume Jubilee Edition of Tolstoy’s complete works, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, Jubileinoe izdanie (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1928–58). Direct citations to this edition, indicated as PSS, or to any other source in Russian, indicate that the translation is my own.

All citations to *Anna Karenina* are to the translation by Constance Garnett, revised by Leonard J. Kent and Nina Berberova (New York: Modern Library, 1965). References to this translation are indicated by page number alone. References to the Jubilee Edition are to volume and page number.

I have used the Library of Congress system of transliteration from the Russian Cyrillic alphabet, with the exception of common proper or geographical names, which may be given in their more usual, anglicized form (e.g., Kitty instead of Kiti; Moscow instead of Moskva). Exceptions occur when a work is cited that has used a different transliteration system.