

**MAJOR WOMEN CHARACTERS IN  
LEO TOLSTOY'S NOVELS: A Study  
Based on War and Peace, Anna  
Karenina and Resurrection**

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*Under the Supervision of*

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## **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that this thesis "**MAJOR WOMEN CHARACTERS IN LEO TOLSTOY'S NOVELS**": **A STUDY BASED ON WAR AND PEACE, ANNA KARENNINA AND RESURRECTION** submitted by **Mrs. Sreekala. M.**, for Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature is a record of bonafide Research carried out by her under my supervision and guidance.

C.U. Campus,  
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## **DECLARATION**

I, **Sreekala. M.**, hereby declare that the study entitled "**MAJOR WOMEN CHARACTERS IN LEO TOLSTOY'S NOVELS**": A STUDY BASED ON *WAR AND PEACE*, *ANNA KARENNINA* AND *RESURRECTION* submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfillment for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature, is an original record of observations and bonafide research carried by me under the supervision and guidance of **Dr. S. Nirmala** and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree or diploma.

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.... .2011

**SREEKALA, M.**

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## INTRODUCTION

Russian realistic fiction can be considered as an offshoot of the political distemper that started in the 1840s, under the reign of Nicholas I (1825–1855). It was the literary critic Vissarion Grigoryevich Belinsky (1811–1848) who heralded the reforms: he called upon writers to realistically approach the country's social problems, such as serfdom and the like, and realize their role as critics of the social order. As quoted by Thomas Gaiton Marullo, the Russian Realist Literature provided an “alternative government” to Tsarist dictates.

The general characteristics of 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian realism include the urge to explore the human condition in a spirit of serious enquiry, although without excluding humor and satire; the tendency to set works of fiction in the Russia of the writer's own day; the cultivation of a straightforward style, but one also involving factual detail; an emphasis on character and atmosphere rather than on plot and action; and an underlying tolerance of human weakness and wickedness. The leading realists began to be published in the late 1840s: the novelists Ivan Turgenev, Ivan Goncharov, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, and Count Leo Tolstoy; the playwright Aleksandr Ostrovsky; the poet Nikolai Nekrasov; and the novelist and political thinker Aleksandr Herzen.

Although it had produced several powerful original literary giants, Russia in the 1840s still lacked a general literary movement. Under



Belinsky's tutelage the seed of the realist movement was sown in the mid-1840s. He was assisted by Nikolai Gogol, who moved from romanticism to his own eccentric brand of realism. The great social and political importance of Gogol's realism lay in its merciless exposure of the social realities of its time and in its faithful mirroring of the harsh discordances of life. At first termed the natural school, the movement developed into the so-called realist school after Belinsky's death.

The defeat of the revolutions of 1848 did not bring the same swerve towards reaction in the ideological development of Russia as the rest of the Europe, although a short period of depression was obviously inevitable. But comparatively soon, in the middle of the 1850s, a new upsurge of democratic ideas began in Russia. The economic, social and political evolution of the country squarely poised the issue of inevitable abolition of serfdom and the general unrest bound up with this had forced the government of the time to grant temporarily a somewhat greater freedom of opinion. The classical leaders and representatives of this new upsurge of democratic thought were the two great heirs to Belinsky's life-work: Nikolay Gavrilovich Chernyshevsky (1828–1889) and Nikolay Aleksandrovich Dobrolyubov (1836–1861).

The central problem around which the thinking of the Russian society revolved at the time of their activities was the issue of the abolition of serfdom. However, there were sharp differences among various progressive camps regarding the method of liberation. To quote George Lukas, "It was on

this issue that the liberalism and democrats first parted company in Russia.” The democrats wanted a radical socio-economic change in the feudal agrarian structure of the Russia, whereas the liberals were hesitant to any conflict with the feudal land-owners, bureaucracy and the autocracy. Throughout the fifties this political division was reflected in literature. Chernyshevky and Dobrolyubov were the ideological leaders of the radical democrats against the liberals.

This new upsurge of revolutionary democracy in Russia thus took place in politically and socially more advanced conditions than those in which Belinsky fought his ideological battle. The higher level of political struggle is apparent in all writings of Chernyshevky and Dobrolyubov. Literary criticism was now directed not just towards the despotism of autocracy and feudal reaction regarded as the chief enemy by Belinsky, but also towards the liberal bourgeoisie and their ideological representations. They no longer based themselves on Hegel’s philosophy but on the radical militant materialism of Ludwig Feuerbach. This stemmed from the conflict from Belinsky and Herzen’s time between the Slavophiles who believed in the superiority of Orthodoxy and Russia and the Westernizers who became increasingly critical of religion and became more and more sympathetic towards socialist ideals that aimed at creating a more humane, resolute and just society. For them, any democratic change meant in the first place the political and social liberation of the lower plebeian section of society which involved a complete radical change in the social power structures and ladders of hierarchy. They

conceived a social cataclysm, a revolution in the Universalist sense, as a radical change in all human relations and all manifestations of life, from massive economic foundations to the highest form of ideology. Moreover, since both these writers could historically and philosophically gain insight into and digest the period following upon the great French revolution, they could look at the obstacles of the liberation of the popular masses with fewer illusions.

We find in their realist writings and concrete analysis of a certain phenomenon, a lively dialectic although derived from Feuerbach's mechanistic materialism. Also they were engaged in a bitter struggle against the "aesthetic" critics of their time, who advocated 'art for art's sake' and attempted to separate the conception of artistic perfection from the realistic reproduction of social phenomenon, and who regarded art and literature as phenomenon independent of social strife. In contrast to such ideas, the realist writers laid great emphasis on the connection between literature and society. They believed that life itself, deeply conceived and faithfully reproduced in literature, is the most effective means of throwing light on the problems of social life and an excellent weapon in the ideological preparation of the democratic revolution they expected and desired. They demanded of the writers that in faithfully depicting the everyday destinies of men they should demonstrate the great problems agitating Russian society, and those decisive, fateful social forces which determine its evolution and not a mere naturalistic reproduction of the surface of life.

As has been mentioned before, the incipient struggle between liberalism and democracy was one of the central battlegrounds in the Russian political and intellectual atmosphere. Most of the realist writers of the time inclined towards the liberal philosophy, but in as much as they depicted Russian reality faithfully, they involuntarily aided revolutionary democracy in many ways. For instance, Chernyshevsky showed in his criticism of Turgenev's *Asya*, that Turgenev being a gifted realist writer quite unintentionally but inevitably produced a shattering exposure of the type of liberal intellectual. Similarly it was precisely because Turgenev was a genuine, serious realist that his work could supply weapons against his own political philosophy. The same argument explains why his epochal work, '*Fathers and Sons*' got attacked from all sides: liberals, radicals and conservatives alike. This period of nineteenth century realist movement in Russia is often regarded as the 'Golden Age' in Russian literature: while in other European countries, writers were involved in documenting and analyzing the revolutionary processes. In Russia, it was the realist movement in literature and art itself which initiated the revolutionary wave and carried it forward.

It is in this backdrop that Tolstoy comes to picture. As a social critic he dissects man-woman relationship with philosophical concern. In the present thesis the women protagonists of his three major works mentioned are thoroughly studied for their intense vitality against the bleak background of the Russian aristocratic society that was too cruel to respect the individual

freedom of women. The study highlights the selves of the three heroines, their trauma, personal resistance, tolerance and above all their sincerity to themselves rather than societal requirements. A character study of all the heroines is made in detail placing them against the different background through which they pass as also the social and familial vicissitudes that transform their life and attitude. Family as an institution becomes a major point of discussion in the work. The natural feeling of love of the heroines is pitted against the cultural institution of marriage. Tolstoy's detached evaluation of family and marriage becomes a focal point as the study develops.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- A rereading of Tolstoy's novels stressing the male female dichotomy in his fiction.
- A comparative analysis of his major women characters.
- The examination of the age old theme of social and individual fight in literature.
- A thematic study of Russian aristocracy and how it affects the life of Russian folk.
- An examination of Tolstoy's craftsmanship as a fiction writer with his special gift of the narration.
- A look into Tolstoy, the philosopher and his concern with human liberty.
- A study of his fiction as historical documents with epic dimensions.

- Attempt to read Tolstoy separated from patriarchal mode of reading.
- An examination of his characters from the modern psychological background.

### **RELEVANCE OF THE TOPIC**

The present era being highly individualized due to the abundance of man's access to global media, communication facility like mobile phones, the liberation tendency in human life has made man and women think in separating themselves from the traditional and dogmatic institutionalized values and customs. In the Kerala scenario we have a movement from joint family system to nucleus family system which slowly started questioning the very role of family in individual life. On such a contemporary background it is quite advisable to make a study in the role of family in the life of individuals prone to human passions like love and jealousy.

Why Tolstoy has been taken is worth reasonable. In the development of realistic fiction we find Tolstoy has assumed commendable position for his balancing of the social and psychological aspect of his characters and for making a neat poise between the impressionistic and realistic mode in the narrative of fiction. As the study develops each individual side of the heroines- Anna, Natasha and Maslova is presented examining them in the social and familial circumstances. The universal value of Tolstoy's philosophy vindicates the reason why his novels were put into study.

### **STRUCTURE OF THE WORK AND METHODOLOGY**

The work comprises an introduction followed by three chapters and a conclusion. The methodology adopted is both analytical and descriptive. In order to develop this thesis, I combine evidence gained from close readings of specific passages in the texts themselves with the evidence of a variety of fictional and non-fictional material produced by Tolstoy throughout his lifetime. I also draw on the work of a rich tradition of Tolstoy scholarship, past and present, as well as on some of the insights and analytical techniques of more recent literary theory. For instance, I am interested in Tolstoy's manipulation of the narrative voice and in his use of the technique of repetition. These are subjects which have recently become the object of intensive study in literary scholarship, and increasingly in Tolstoy scholarship, as well. Although I draw on some of the techniques and insights of contemporary literary scholarship, the theoretical assumptions underlying my analysis are different from those underlying the so-called women studies and other post-modernist approaches to literature that have recently become dominant in Slavic Studies and in other fields of literary scholarship.

**Chapter 1** is the key chapter of the work. The three main texts in the study are analyzed with special focus on the thematic unity. The aspects in these novels that relate the philosophical concerns of Tolstoy are presented here under separate titles. The relevance of the work as a genre of novel is discussed here in detail. Here *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina* and *Resurrection* are analyzed in contexts of historical novel, family novel, and spiritual autobiography respectively. Though this chapter focuses on the

novel quality of each work, their separate features have been presented with critical backing. In the section set apart for *War and Peace*, a detailed explanation of historical novel has been given with the novel *War and Peace* as a touchstone. The epical dimensions of the novel have been highlighted in this chapter. Tolstoy's concern with novels as a platform for search for meaning is depicted here. Regarding *Anna Karenina* we stress the genre of family novel. The chapter makes a neat comparison between the familial life of Anna Karenina and Kitty and is made with special focus on their attitude to social norms. Comparisons and contradictions in the novels are a major highlight of the chapter. The chapter talks about aspects like characterization and narrative techniques in the novels. In *Resurrection* we find Tolstoy becoming so meticulous about the inner trauma of the heroin. In such a platform Tolstoy attacks the social institutions for their follies. Institutions like marriage are put into serious scrutiny by Tolstoy.

**Chapter 2** talks about the heroines in the novels under study. This is more descriptive than analytical. This chapter describes the heroines that prepare the basic platform for the whole thesis. The social and familial circumstances that brought about their suffering and the traumatic conditions in their life and their responses to the same have been presented in this chapter in detail. The very subtitle of the first section of the novel, that is, "Natasha, not on the bed of roses" speak about the nature of life she has undergone in a Russian society. Throughout the portrayal of the heroine we find the physical as well as the psychological turbulence that made her react to the contemporary social



system. Regarding Anna, the subtitle “more sinned against than sinning” is so striking that the undeserving victimization brought to her inside and outside her family has been powerfully presented. Anna the mother, the wife, the lover was playing her role in family and society in a realistic framework sacrificing her individual urge. She has been oscillating between the individual interest and social constrains. Anna provides a striking foil to Levin who probably represents the author’s philosophy of life. Anna struggles with the life. Death question appears only when her selfish choices begin to turn on her. We see that Levin is skeptical of the value of life and faith from the very beginning and, it is implied, throughout his entire life until the end of the story. Anna chooses (and regrets) death, but it is Levin whom Tolstoy gives the honor of closing the novel with the best choice of life. He understands that his moment of revelation is not miraculous and that he will still err, but after all, that is part of life.

In the case of Maslova too we find a similar tale tuned in pain. Through the portrayal of Maslova Tolstoy's aim is to preach, to show the world of prisons, of injustice both social and political which assumes the shape of a pamphlet towards the end. The love story between Maslova and Nekhlyudov and the other women he courts is not brought to fruition. There is tenderness in Maslova still, but it is ignored. The sense of duty, of doing the right thing overweighs anything else. Understandably, at this stage of Tolstoy, he considered sexual intimacy as a source of spiritual discord and this flaw in his reasoning hinders the development of this story. Natasha, Anna, Maslova

were described under separate subtitle and each section gives their character sketch with insights into their individual difference. The chapter gives detailed description of their sufferings and the circumstances for the same.

**Chapter 3** is exclusively on the different roles of the heroines in the three novels. Their individual and social roles are discussed here. In the chapter family as a link between the two has been analyzed. Here we see that the various female characters are conditioned for their role as ideal wives and mothers so as to fulfill their respective gender roles as handed over by patriarchy. The unhappiness and discontentment they experience are analyzed in this chapter. A wider background of how women are represented in literature is given. How they are controlled in social system is presented in this chapter. The three heroines' revolt and tolerance are discussed.

**The concluding chapter** is an analytical one that gives a trace of history of narrative fiction from social realism to impressionistic narrative and the role of Tolstoy in the fiction world is highlighted. How modernism effected drastic changes in the narrative world is given at the very outset here and the whole these has been concluded with focal points on impressionism and realism.

### **Review of Literature:**

The three novels taken to study in the present work are *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina* and *Resurrection*. *War and Peace* is often called the greatest novel ever written. It is certainly one of the longest, and its great

length is one source of its enduring fame and reputation. The panoramic novel tells a story of sweeping scope that takes place during the Napoleonic Wars in early nineteenth century Europe. The events depicted in the novel begin in 1805 and end in 1812, the year of Napoleon Bonaparte's fateful invasion of Russia. It is a story of wartime and peacetime, love and marriage, birth and death. It is a story of families, of societies and nations, of soldiers and civilians, of peasants and nobility, of country estates and city salons. In short, *War and Peace* is a novel that attempts to seemingly encompass and interconnect every aspect of life.

*Anna Karenina* is another work that is studied in the thesis. It is considered by popular verdict to be the greatest novel ever written. The novel is classic tale of love and adultery set against the backdrop of high society in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. A rich and complex masterpiece, the novel charts the disastrous course of a love affair between Anna, a beautiful married woman, and Count Vronsky, a wealthy army officer. Tolstoy seamlessly weaves together the lives of dozens of characters, and in doing so captures a breathtaking tapestry of late-nineteenth-century Russian society. In the novel, adultery shakes the Oblonsky household, when Dolly discovers husband Stiva's affair with a former governess. Stiva's sister, Anna Karenina, arrives to help keep the Russian family together. Heroine Anna takes her own lover, Count Vronsky, which introduces a downward spiral in her marriage to Karenin and, ultimately, in her union with Vronsky. Anna's life ends in

suicide. In contrast, Leo Tolstoy's autobiographical hero, Levin, finds salvation in faith.

*Resurrection* is the third work taken in the present study for its similarity of theme. The novel stands out to be one of the best classical pieces of Literature. The story revolves round the act of a molestation of a young woman by a person from a high society. The molester later went on to become a judge, a respectable member of the society. The young woman, by circumstances, became a prostitute, and was rounded up in petty theft case. One day, she was presented before the judge for trial. She did not recognize the judge, but the judge instantly recognized her, and a deep remorse filled his heart. The novel probes deeply into human psychology, and tries to establish a relation between the society and human character. As the novels progress thematically we find Tolstoy bringing about a psychological probe into heroines, the social conditions that design their destiny and the response of these heroines to such a social destiny. All the three works deal with contemporary themes as the “women question” , the role of the family, marriage as the basic social contract, the relationship between nobility and peasantry, between patriarchal ways and industrial nineteenth century. They answered the problems of its time by projecting a vision of a liberated humanity committed to moral improvement of the world. The high seriousness, devotion to ideas, concern for spiritual values as well as unequalled power of psychological characterization – all contributed to the vitality and appeal of Tolstoyan fiction.

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# CHAPTER 1

## **PERSONAL TRAUMA TRANSMUTED INTO UNIVERSAL EPIC**

### INTRODUCTION

The present chapter is a critical analysis of Tolstoy's three major novels – *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, and *Resurrection*. Attempt is made to trace out the thematic unity of the three works. The novel “*War & peace*” defies limitation to any particular category of fiction – to classify it as a historical, sociological, psychological, political or family novel is difficult, as it is a combination of all these elements. Tolstoy's message in the work is clear – though Napoleons, empires, movements and ideas may come and go, human love, trust and everyday domestic life are the abiding values. The same message of Tolstoyan morality continued in ‘*Anna Karenina*’ enforces the notion that violation of marriage, the basic social contract, brings tragedy, while observance brings in an ultimate meaningful life. In his last novel “*Resurrection*”, Tolstoy reiterates the need to observe simple moral law.

The present chapter analyses the three key texts in the study with special focus on the thematic unity. The chapter being the main one in the work the relevance of the works as genre of novel is discussed here. So *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina* and *Resurrection* are analyzed in contexts of historical novel, family novel, and spiritual autobiography respectively. Aspects like characterization and narrative techniques are discussed in each

section. As the chapter develops comparisons and contrasts are discussed and philosophical contents in each work is stressed. Apart from these the role of marriage as an institution is problematised here.

#### A. **WAR AND PEACE – A HISTORICAL NOVEL**

W.H. Hudson in his *An Introduction to the Study of Literature* defines Literature as “an expression of life through the medium of languages”( p.12) This definition can be easily vindicated by Tolstoy’s novels in general and his panoramic novel *War and Peace* in particular. The novel is a singular blending of history, realism, fiction in an epic frame work with a mastery of artistic excellence. Almost all the novels by Tolstoy satisfy the major features of any definition of novel as a genre. The definition given by *Encyclopedia Britannica* is a striking instance. A novel is in literature a “sustained story which is not historically true but might very easily be so. Novel has been made a vehicle for satire, for instructions, for political or religious exhortations, for technical information; but these are side issues. Its plain direct purpose is to amuse by a succession of scenes painted from nature and, by a thread of emotional narrative. (p. 572). This literary marvel in the world of fiction provides almost all the ingredients of historical novel in Russian background.

Ian Watt in his *The Rise of the Novel* says, “A novel is a realistic form of writing rather than imaginative. It presents the segment of life and society, in more or less approximate terms, which has been seen and experienced by actual men and women of a particular period.”(67). Tolstoy’s *War and*

*Peace* as a clear example. In this book Tolstoy aimed at giving the picture of a whole epoch, and that one of the most stirring in the history of modern Europe; the real subject is the conflict between the French and the Russians from 1805 to 1812, the historical events of the novel concluding with the tragedy of the French retreat from Moscow. The enormous scope of the book, the power of its psychology, the vast number of characters crowding its pages, its tremendous vitality all won for Tolstoy recognition deservedly world-wide.

The novel depicted the story of five families against the background of Napoleon's invasion of Russia. This major work appeared between the years 1865 and 1869. Its vast canvas includes 580 characters, many historical, and others fictional. The story moves from family life to the headquarters of Napoléon, from the court of Alexander to the battlefields of Austerlitz and Borodino.

This novel presents a terrific and soul-stirring crisis in the history of a great nation, and one of the epoch-making events of the world. The work is truly a novel, and not history in the form of fiction, because all these events are not in the dry, detached light of the historian but through their effect on the minds and souls of the private individuals participating in them. The novel focuses on Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812. As Napoleon's army invades Russia, Tolstoy follows characters from diverse backgrounds - peasants and nobility, civilians and soldiers. The novel details their struggles with the problems of their time period, their history, and their culture. And as the novel progresses, these characters transcend their specific roles,



becoming some of the most moving and uniquely human characters in Russian literature.

The novel contains 580 characters, many historical, and others fictional. The story moves from family life to the headquarters of Napoleon, from the court of Alexander I of Russia to the battlefields of Austerlitz and Borodino. Tolstoy's original idea for the novel was to investigate the causes of the Decembrist revolt, to which he refers only in the last chapters. It is assumed that Andrei Bolkonski's son will become one of the Decembrists. The novel explores Tolstoy's theory of history, and in particular the insignificance of individuals such as Napoleon and Alexander. Tolstoy did not consider *War and Peace* to be a novel (nor did he consider many of the Great Russian fictions written at that time to be novels). This view becomes less surprising if one considers that Tolstoy was a novelist of the realist school who considered the novel to be a framework for the examination of social and political issues in nineteenth-century life. The line from the novel vindicates the same.

The novel paints a vivid tableau of Russian society at the beginning of the nineteenth-century. Written and published before *Anna Karenina*, from 1865 to 1869 (when Tolstoy was in his late 30s), *War and Peace* tells of four aristocratic families - the *Bezukhovs*, *Bolkonskies*, *Rostovs* and *Kuragins* - whose personal lives become caught up in the tumultuous events of the time. Richard Freeborn observes in his contribution to *The Cambridge History of Russian Literature*, 'The greatness of *War and Peace* lies in the very multiplicity of its many locales, characters and viewpoints', (p. 303)

Historical novels always merge fact and fiction, as the contradictory terms “historical” and “novel” reminds us. But the deeper and more interesting answer as to why Tolstoy chose a historical context for this particular story—unlike his later *Anna Karenina*, which is completely fictional—involves his complex theory of history. In the novel under reference itself, Tolstoy writes

*“In historical events great men are but labels serving to give a name to the event, and like labels they have the least possible connection with the event itself. Every action of theirs, that seems to them an act of their own free will, is in an historical sense not free at all, but in bondage to the whole course of previous history, and predestined from all eternity”.*

*(War and Peace, Book 9, Ch. 1)*

As the narrative develops, we can easily find out how conscious Tolstoy was in blending fact and fiction. His words in *What is Art* are worth quote. “History is the life of nations and of humanity. To seize and put into words, to describe directly the life of humanity or even of a single nation, appears impossible.”(p. 67)

As Tolstoy shows us in *War and Peace*, historians do not give us the whole truth about what happened on the battlefield, or anywhere else for that matter. They give us only their particular version on what happened, distorted by their own prejudices, interpretations, and fantasies. The historian is, then, much more akin to a creative writer than he would likely

admit. By writing an account of Napoleon's war with Russia from the Russian perspective, which had not yet been attempted at the time of the novel's publication (or so Tolstoy tells us), Tolstoy is suggesting that a fictional work may do the job of recording history just as well.

Literature may tell the truth as effectively as supposedly objective history books that are in fact not objective at all. Tolstoy says in the novel "In historic events, the so-called great men are labels giving names to events, and like labels they have but the smallest connection with the event itself. Every act of theirs, which appears to them an act of their own will, is in an historical sense involuntary and is related to the whole course of history and predestined from eternity". (*War and Peace*, Book. 9, Ch.1)

In *War and Peace*, Tolstoy maintains a delicate balance between stirring scenes of major historical events and intimate portraits of daily life. In 365 chapters (approximately 1500 pages), the author moves back and forth between social life and military life, ballrooms and battles, marriages and massacres, and many venues in between. No character is too small and no subject too large for Tolstoy's broad literary canvas. Poggioli in his *Tolstoy as a Man and Artist* remarks about the great writer as "a reflector as vast as a natural lake; a monster harnessed to his great subject, all of human life!" (p. 120)

#### **a. Contrasts and Contradictions**

The very title of the novel *War and Peace* anticipates a contrastive nature in the novel. Among these contrasts we find a dichotomy between

realism and romance, spiritual and material, past and present, aristocratic and democratic, social and individual and above all war and peace. Individual life pitted against social aspects has been powerfully presented in this work.

The ambience of contrast can be cited from the novel in the extract

*“One step beyond that boundary line which resembles the line dividing the living from the dead lies uncertainty, suffering, and death. And what is there? Who is there?--there beyond that field, that tree, that roof lit up by the sun? No one knows, but one wants to know. You fear and yet long to cross that line, and know that sooner or later it must be crossed and you will have to find out what is there, just as you will inevitably have to learn what lies the other side of death. But you are strong, healthy, cheerful, and excited, and are surrounded by other such excitedly animated and healthy men.” So thinks, or at any rate feels, anyone who comes in sight of the enemy, and that feeling gives a particular glamour and glad keenness of impression to everything that takes place at such moments .*

*(War and Peace, Book 2, Ch. 8)*

The binaries between the spiritual and the material are available in many parts of the novel. Tolstoy, who himself gave away possessions in search of spiritual regeneration later in life, shows in *War and Peace* the positive side of the *Rostovs'* material misfortunes. Count Rostov's gracious payment of Nicholas's debts shows a powerful connection between father and son, a connection that Nicholas affirms by vowing to repay his debt in five years. His early financial losses appear to leave him wiser and later in life he becomes a savvy landowner. Moreover, the Rostov spirit for life, unhindered

by compromised finances, ends up breeding charismatic children who marry into two of the largest fortunes in Russia, that of the Bolkonskis and that of the Bezukhovs. Tolstoy tries to prove that financial carelessness has the capacity to ultimately produce a spiritual richness worth far more than the mere material wealth. Tolstoy's own words in *War and Peace* sum up the same "*Man lives consciously for himself, but is an unconscious instrument in the attainment of the historic, universal, aims of humanity*". (*War and Peace*, Book. 9, Ch. 1).

A careful examination of the amazingly rich thematic multiplicity of the novel reveals a deliberate and meaningful series of juxtapositions and alternating contrasts, first between *War and Peace*, and then, within this framework, series of alternating contrasts of scenes, situations, events, and characters under each of these two divisions. In war we have the contrasts between Alexander I and Napoleon; good and bad generals; those who think they can direct the course of events and those who make no pretence at doing so; cowardly braggarts among the officers and selfless, unconsciously brave fellows like Tushin.

In the later half of the novel, there are the contrasts between the bureaucracy, cultural snobbery, and cynicism of city life and the simple pleasures of country existence; the cold aristocratism of the Bolkonskys and the gay, simple, indulgent Rostovs; or between these two families, with their true patriotism and tradition of unselfish service, and the Kuragins and Drubetskoys, who place their own advancement, financial or professional, above everything. So attached is Tolstoy to this device of antithesis, which he

regards as a touchstone of the reality of things, that he creates a series of contrasting characters, and in a few individual characters, such as Pierre and Natasha, he stresses their contrasting moods and thoughts as important traits in their natures. This elaborate pattern of juxtapositions and alternating contrasts serves to create an illusion of ceaseless movement involving an endless variety of action, people, moods, and thought. The novel incorporates historical characters, vivid battle scenes, several love stories, shrewd glimpses of everyday life, an examination of Western ideas and the Russian soul, and a disquisition on the nature of history itself, among other things. It is at once a book of ideas and an epic portrait of ordinary life amid extraordinary circumstances.

*War and Peace* abounds in romantic images and mate-choices made without a full grasp of their consequences, some of them with disastrous results. Pierre marries the beautiful Helene in a daze of sexual passion and native trust, and his life almost immediately becomes a constant torment as Helene cheats on him with his friend. Natasha is smitten with the rakish Anatole and prepares to elope with him without seeing that his irresponsible ways would bring her to misery. Her crush on Anatole costs her a chance with Andrew, who cannot forgive her lapse. In both cases, an unreasoned romantic impulse ends up being destructive. Yet Tolstoy does not condemn irrational love. The two great love stories that conclude the novel, between Natasha and Pierre and between Mary and Nicholas, both take their lovers and us as readers, by surprise. It suddenly occurs to all of them that they are in love, despite having very different expectations in mind. Tolstoy clearly

demonstrates that unexplained love can be a horrible mistake, but it can also be wonderful. At its best, unpredictable love is a symbol of the mysterious forces of human life and instinct that cannot be denied.

**b. Tolstoy's Techniques and Narrative style**

Tolstoy's techniques in characterization is superb and provides much to his extraordinary realism, for one of the most difficult things for a novelist is to reveal the total personality of a character, as a person in real life reveals himself. Tolstoy does not use the familiar lengthy description of a character, nor does he take refuge in the awkward flashback. The revelation of personality in real life comes about over a period of time by slow accretions, by the accumulation of much detailed information and understanding through innumerable small actions and intimacies. This is the logical, the natural way, and a close approximation of it is pursued in Tolstoy's novels. We become acquainted with his men and women as we would become acquainted with real people whom we meet for the first time and about whom our knowledge and understanding increase as our intimacy increases over time and space.

We are introduced to Prince Andrew, Pierre, Natasha, or Nicholas in a customary setting, as we might be in the case of a future friend in real life. Our first impression of the external appearance is only that which we would see ourselves, conveyed by the author's few brief descriptive sentences. We learn next to nothing of the character's past or personality at this point. But from the reactions and remarks of others this indirect method is a favorite of Tolstoy and eventually through the conversation, self-examination, behaviour, and actions of the character, spread out over many pages and years, our knowledge of him grows until finally we obtain a complete image. There are no startling or abrupt revelations. Each thought or emotion develops out of another. And in the case of characters with a pronounced moral and spiritual



bent, like Prince Andrew and Pierre, their dissatisfaction with life is resolved, if ever, not by the author's philosophizing, but by a combination of prolonged self-examination, reflection, and extensive experiences on the part of the characters.

As Percy Lubbock affirms in *The Craft of Fiction*, “these men and women never inhabit a world of their own; they seem to inhabit our world. That is, their world never strikes us as an abstract one. They stand forth fully defined with all their limitations of time, place, and circumstance. Tolstoy does not hover over the destinies of his men and women; they appear to exercise free choice in working out their fate, so that what they do seems to be psychologically necessary, even though their consciousness of freedom, in the Tolstoyan sense, is illusory”. (New York: Peter Smith, 1947 p. 50). His psychological insights, like his style, create in the reader a sense of intimacy with the characters, for in his analysis of thoughts, feelings, and actions Tolstoy's points of reference are nearly always the reality of life and not abstractions.

Rooted in social realism the novel can be generally classified as historical fiction. It contains elements of many types of popular 18th and 19th century literature, especially the romance novel. The novel attains its literary status by transcending genres. Tolstoy was instrumental in bringing a new kind of consciousness to the novel. His narrative structure is noted for its "god-like" ability to hover over and within events, but also to swiftly and seamlessly take a particular character's point of view. His use of visual detail is often cinematic in its scope, using the literary equivalents of panning, wide

shots and close-ups, to give dramatic interest to battles and ballrooms alike. There are mental flashbacks, as when Napoleon reconstructs some of his previous victories. There are other temporal devices, such as a future Napoleon writing about the events that are unfolding. These devices, while not exclusive to Tolstoy, are part of the new novel that is arising in the mid-19th century and of which Tolstoy proves himself a master. A typical passage quoted here from the text vindicates the same.

*Anna Pavlovna's reception was in full swing. The spindles hummed steadily and ceaselessly on all sides. With the exception of the aunt, beside whom sat only one elderly lady, who with her thin careworn face was rather out of place in this brilliant society, the whole company had settled into three groups. One, chiefly masculine, had formed round the abbe. Another, of young people, was grouped round the beautiful Princess Helene, Prince Vasili's daughter, and the little.*

*Princess Bolkonskaya, very pretty and rosy, though rather too plump for her age. The third group was gathered round Mortemart and Anna Pavlovna. The vicomte was a nice-looking young man with soft features and polished manners, who evidently considered himself a celebrity but out of politeness modestly placed himself at the disposal of the circle in which he found himself. Anna Pavlovna was obviously serving him up as a treat to her guests. As a clever maitre d'hotel serves up as a specially choice delicacy a piece of meat that no one who had seen it in the kitchen would have cared to eat, so Anna Pavlovna served up to her guests, first the vicomte and then the abbe, as peculiarly choice morsels. The group about Mortemart immediately began discussing the murder of*

*the Duc d'Enghien. The vicomte said that the Duc d'Enghien had perished by his own magnanimity, and that there were particular reasons for Buonaparte's hatred of him. "Ah, yes! Do tell us all about it, Vicomte," said Anna Pavlovna, with a pleasant feeling that there was something a la Louis XV in the sound of that sentence: "Contez nous cela, Vicomte." The vicomte bowed and smiled courteously in token of his willingness to comply. Anna Pavlovna arranged a group round him, inviting everyone to listen to his tale. "The vicomte knew the duc personally," whispered Anna Pavlovna to of the guests. "The vicomte is a wonderful raconteur," said she to another. "How evidently he belongs to the best society," said she to a third; and the vicomte was served up to the company in the choicest and most advantageous style, like a well-garnished joint of roast beef on a hot dish. The vicomte wished to begin his story and gave a subtle smile. "Come over here, Helene, dear," said Anna Pavlovna to the beautiful young princess who was sitting some way off, the center of another group. The princess smiled. She rose with the same unchanging smile with which she had first entered the room - the smile of a perfectly beautiful woman. With a slight rustle of her white dress trimmed with moss and ivy, with a gleam of white shoulders, glossy hair, and sparkling diamonds, she passed between the men who made way for her, not looking at any of them but smiling on all, as if graciously allowing each the privilege of admiring her beautiful figure and shapely shoulders, back, and bosom- which in the fashion of those days were very much exposed- and she seemed to bring the glamour of a ballroom with her as she moved toward Anna Pavlovna. Helene was so lovely that not only did she not show any trace of coquetry, but on the contrary she even appeared shy of her unquestionable and all too victorious beauty. She seemed to wish, but to be*

unable, to diminish its effect. "How lovely!" said everyone who saw her; and the vicomte lifted his shoulders and dropped his eyes as if startled by something extraordinary when she took her seat opposite and beamed upon him also with her unchanging smile. "Madame, I doubt my ability before such an audience," said he, smilingly inclining his head. The princess rested her bare round arm on a little table and considered a reply unnecessary. She smilingly waited. All the time the story was being told she sat upright, glancing now at her beautiful round arm, altered in shape by its pressure on the table, now at her still more beautiful bosom, on which she readjusted a diamond necklace. From time to time she smoothed the folds of her dress, and whenever the story produced an effect she glanced at Anna Pavlovna, at once adopted just the expression she saw on the maid of honor's face, and again relapsed into her radiant smile. The little princess had also left the tea table and followed Helene. "Wait a moment, I'll get my work.... Now then, what are you thinking of?" she went on, turning to Prince Hippolyte. "Fetch me my workbag." There was a general movement as the princess, smiling and talking merrily to everyone at once, sat down and gaily arranged herself in her seat. "Now I am all right," she said, and asking the vicomte to begin, she took up her work. Prince Hippolyte, having brought the workbag, joined the circle and moving a chair close to hers seated himself beside her. *Le charmant Hippolyte* was surprising by his extraordinary resemblance to his beautiful sister, but yet more by the fact that in spite of this resemblance he was exceedingly ugly. His features were like his sister's, but while in her case everything was lit up by a joyous, self-satisfied, youthful, and constant smile of animation, and by the wonderful classic beauty of her figure, his face on the contrary was dulled by imbecility and a constant expression of sullen

*self-confidence, while his body was thin and weak. His eyes, nose, and mouth all seemed puckered into a vacant, wearied grimace, and his arms and legs always fell into unnatural positions. "It's not going to be a ghost story?" said he, sitting down beside the princess and hastily adjusting his lorgnette, as if without this instrument he could not begin to speak. "Why no, my dear fellow," said the astonished narrator, shrugging his shoulders. "Because I hate ghost stories," said Prince Hippolyte in a tone which showed that he only understood the meaning of his words after he had uttered them. He spoke with such self-confidence that his hearers could not be sure whether what he said was very witty or very stupid. He was dressed in a dark-green dress coat, knee breeches of the color of cuisse de nymphe effrayee, as he called it, shoes, and silk stockings. The vicomte told his tale very neatly. It was an anecdote, then current, to the effect that the Duc d'Enghien had gone secretly to Paris to visit Mademoiselle George; that at her house he came upon Bonaparte, who also enjoyed the famous actress' favors, and that in his presence Napoleon happened to fall into one of the fainting fits to which he was subject, and was thus at the duc's mercy. The latter spared him, and this magnanimity Bonaparte subsequently repaid by death.*

(*War and Peace*, Book 1, Ch 3.)

Images too play vital role in the poetic narrative of the novel. The following extract from the novel epitomizes Tolstoy's imaginative caliber.

*"In quiet and untroubled times it seems to every administrator that it is only by his efforts that the whole population under his rule is kept going, and in this consciousness of being indispensable every administrator finds the chief reward of his*

*labor and efforts. While the sea of history remains calm the ruler-administrator in his frail bark, holding on with a boat hook to the ship of the people and himself moving, naturally imagines that his efforts move the ship he is holding on to. But as soon as a storm arises and the sea begins to heave and the ship to move, such a delusion is no longer possible. The ship moves independently with its own enormous motion, the boat hook no longer reaches the moving vessel, and suddenly the administrator, instead of appearing a ruler and a source of power, becomes an insignificant, useless, feeble man.”*

*(War and Peace, Book. 11, Ch. 12)*

Such an approach goes beyond conventional realism and suggests not only Tolstoy's complete identification with his characters, but a genuine love for them. Even in negative characters, he nearly always discovers some good, which was his abiding principle in real life. The reprehensible Dolohov is tenderly devoted to his mother, and the obnoxious Anatole Kuragin is apparently a brave officer in combat. The artist, Tolstoy believed, is called upon to portray his men and women, not to judge them. It almost seems as though he lived among the characters he created very much as he wanted to live among his friends and neighbors.

Thus characters actually grow and develop in '*War and Peace*'. The vivacious child Natasha who runs breathlessly into the living room with her doll at the beginning of the novel, and at the large formal dinner boldly demands to know what the dessert will be, is the same Natasha who fifteen years later, at the end of the book, appears as Pierre's wife, noticeably plumpish and sloppy, anxiously scanning the diapers of her newest born.

That is, they are really one and the same person at two different ages and not merely two different ages attributed to a single person, a familiar fault with novelists who project development of a character over a long stretch of years. And Tolstoy shows us all the intermediary stages of this growth as he does with other major characters of the novel.

The method he uses to create this effect is one of brilliant externalization. At Anna Pavlovna Scherer's soiree at the beginning of the novel the vicomte is about to tell one of his stories and the hostess calls Helene over. The princess smiled. She rose with the same unchanging smile with which she had first entered the room, the smile of a perfectly beautiful woman. With a slight rustle of her white dress trimmed with moss and ivy, with a gleam of white shoulders, glossy hair, and sparkling diamonds, she passed between the men who made way for her, not looking at any of them but smiling on all, as if graciously allowing each the privilege of admiring her beautiful figure and shapely shoulders, back, and bosom - which in the fashion of those days were very much exposed and she seemed to bring the glamour of a ballroom with her as she moved toward Anna Pavlovna. Helene was so lovely that not only did she not show any trace of coquetry, but on the contrary she even appeared shy of her unquestionable and all too victorious beauty. She seemed to wish, but to be unable, to diminish its effect.

Tolstoy's use of language in this novel commands special mention. Although Tolstoy wrote most of the books, including all the narration in Russian, significant portions of dialogue (including its opening paragraph) are written in French and characters often switch between the languages. This

reflected 19<sup>th</sup> century reality since Russian aristocracy in the early nineteenth century were conversant in French, which was often considered more refined than Russian - many were much less competent in Russian. An example in the novel is Julie Kuragin, Princess Marya's friend, who has to take Russian lessons in order to master her native language. It has been suggested that it is a deliberate strategy of Tolstoy to use French to portray artifice and insincerity, as the language of the theater and deceit while Russian emerges as a language of sincerity, honesty and seriousness. When Pierre proposes to Helene he speaks to her in French - *Je vous aime* - and as the marriage emerges as a sham he blames those words.

The translators of the novel like Constance Garnett and Louise and Aylmer Maude knew Tolstoy personally. Translations have to deal with Tolstoy's often peculiar syntax and his fondness of repetitions. About 2% of *War and Peace* is in French; Tolstoy removed the French in a revised 1873 edition, only to restore it later again. Most translators follow Garnett retaining some French; Briggs uses no French, while Pevear-Volokhonsky retains the French fully.

### c. **“To love life is to love God”**

Like a typical realistic novel, *War and peace* too encompasses the philosophical inclination of its author. Tolstoy's dense thoughts preoccupying the meaning of life and its end are permeated in the novel. With its thematic density the novel anticipates the modernist notion of the meaningless quest of man in literary works.



Several characters in *War and Peace* experience sudden revelations about the absurdity of existence. Andrew, for instance, has a near-death experience at Austerlitz that shows him a glimpse of the truth behind the falsity of earthly life. While Andrew needs a brush with death to bring about this spiritual vision, Pierre spends most of the novel wondering why his life is so empty and artificial. The immediate cause of Pierre's philosophizing is his marriage to the wrong woman, but his pondering goes beyond Helene alone, to include the vast mystery of why humans are put on Earth. Pierre's involvement with the mystical practice of Freemasonry constitutes his attempt to give meaning to his life. Tolstoy, however, shows the inadequacies of this approach, as Pierre grows bored with the Masons and dissatisfied with their passivity. Pierre's involvement with politics, shown in his short-lived, crazy obsession with assassinating Napoleon, is equally shallow. What finally gives meaning to Pierre's life is the experience of real love with Natasha.

The aim of an artist, he once said, is not to resolve a question irrefutably, but to compel one to love life in all its manifestations. In the novel Tolstoy reflects "*To love life is to love God. Harder and more blessed than all else is to love this life in one's sufferings, in undeserved sufferings.*" (*War and Peace*, Book 4, Ch. 15)

With his belief in the timelessness of human experience, he did not hesitate to project his own into the historical past of the novel. When he read several early chapters in manuscript to a circle of in-laws, the Bers family and their mutual friends, some in the audience looked furtively at each other as they recognized, among those present, models of a few of the characters.

When Natasha Rostova was introduced, a friend winked at the blushing Tanya Bers, Tolstoy's young sister-in-law, known in the family as "*the Imp*." And Tanya was delighted to hear the description of her doll Mimi and the true story of how she asked a young lover to kiss the doll and then made him kiss her instead. The exquisitely wrought scene of Natasha's first ball must also have recalled to Tanya her own first ball at which Tolstoy had been her escort. Although his wife jealously insisted that she had served as the model for the unforgettable heroine, and perhaps she did in certain traits, one has only to read the published diary of Tanya Bers to observe the striking correspondences between her image and youthful experiences and those of Natasha Rostova. But the perceptive reader will wonder at how completely the model is transposed, for the realism, vitality, and pure beauty and poetry Tolstoy imparts to his heroine belong only to the transmuting power of art.

Tolstoy's heroes have a single aim: they search for a way to live life without its transience and want of purpose. Andrei despairs of finding such a purpose when, in Book 9, he says

*"Life is a series of senseless phenomena following one another without any connection". Pierre, on the other hand, discovers that most human beings live life like soldiers under fire, diverting themselves with cards, women, horses, parties, to avoid thinking about the ultimate problem in life, which is death.*

*(War and Peace, Book 8, Ch.1)*

*Tolstoy writes "He had the unlucky capacity many men, especially Russians, have of seeing and believing in the*

*possibility of goodness and truth, but of seeing the evil and falsehood of life too clearly to be able to take any serious part in life. Every sphere of activity was, in his eyes, linked with evil and deception”*

*(War and Peace p. 234)*

Death, therefore, provides the individual with a definition of life, just as suffering provides an understanding of what man's basic needs are, Tolstoy believed that Understanding the existential opposites of life and death are essential to the growth of a human being. Stated in many ways throughout the novel, these opposite values provide the illumination that defines the main characters. Thus Pierre learns freedom through imprisonment, and Andrei achieves love through hate and knowledge of life as he lies dying.

Tolstoy exposes these polar values during the moments of crisis his characters face, and each crisis carries with it a measure of personal growth for the protagonist. The crisis provides the "necessity", that is, the outer structure within which the individual must grow and extend himself in order to adjust to the new situation. The crisis is the moment at which the individual must retrench his values through self-reflection, or "consciousness," in order to overcome the forces that threaten him. The rest of Tolstoy's themes, including his interest in history, derive from these ultimate unities of life and death.

One major criterion of the realistic novel is truthfulness to individual experience, and a writer, when truth is dull, gray, or commonplace, should not

garnish it with the illusion of bright exaggeration. For example, the character Platon Karataev, who personifies the slow, patient indomitable will of the people that must triumph because its cause is just and its life entirely one of service. Yet Tolstoy rarely deals in illusion. He deals with life itself, and no matter how ordinary it may be, he makes it interesting without the aid of exaggeration. There are no overtly psychopathic cases in ' *War and Peace*', no lost weekends, no snake pits, and no undue emphasis upon melodramatic, impressionistic effects to titillate the reader's sensibilities. The figures of Nicholas Rostov and Princess Mary have no particular brilliance, no special abilities, and they do not stand out among the ordinary level of people of their social class. Yet they are evidently admirable souls, they gain our sympathy, and we identify ourselves with them. Tolstoy achieves this effect by bringing out in such characters what he calls the common sense of mediocrity which, at crucial moments in their lives, is manifested as a spiritual power that enables these ordinary people to act nobly. Tolstoy's philosophy can be best summed up in the lines from the novel "*Man is created for happiness ... happiness is within him, in the satisfaction of simple human needs, and ... all unhappiness arises not from privation but from superfluity.*" (*War and Peace*, Book 14, Ch. 12).

**d. Human behavior a mystery.**

Of the important messages in *War and Peace*, one is that every human being is sacred and has great influence over his or her personal destiny. While none of us can control the large, impersonal forces of history, war and death, each of us can make positive choices in our everyday lives. Choices

that help create happiness for ourselves and for the important people in our lives. The very opening chapter itself is a striking example for the philosophical content of the book.

*Each man lives for himself, using his freedom to attain his personal aims, and feels with his whole being that he can now do or abstain from doing this or that action; but as soon as he has done it, that action performed at a certain moment in time becomes irrevocable and belongs to history, in which it has not a free but a predestined significance. There are two sides to the life of every man, his individual life, which is the more free the more abstract its interests, and his elemental hive life in which he inevitably obeys laws laid down for him. Man lives consciously for himself, but is an unconscious instrument in the attainment of the historic, universal, aims of humanity. A deed done is irrevocable, and its result coinciding in time with the actions of millions of other men assumes an historic significance. The higher a man stands on the social ladder, the more people he is connected with and the more power he has over others, the more evident is the predestination and inevitability of his every action.*

(*War and Peace*, Book 1, Ch. 1. p. 34.)

In an uncanny way Tolstoy adapts his art to meet every exigency of the human natures he describes. For example, in the case of Princess Helene, he wishes to convey the impression of a soulless nature, of a woman who dazzles all by her beauty, but is devoid of any inner passion or moral substance. The novel arouses in readers a sense of mystery and awe in the infinite possibilities of human life. Depicted are the joys, sorrows, struggles and

sensual delights of the world are clearly depicted. Many of the novel's greatest moments, such as Natasha Rostova's first grand ball, the Rostov's wolf hunt and Prince Andrew's vision of the "lofty infinite sky" on the battlefield at Austerlitz, are among the most moving and memorable scenes in all of world literature.

In his business of creating life as in '*War and Peace*', Tolstoy conveys the ceaseless ebb and flow as central to his purpose. At the end of the book, the old order, represented primarily by mother Rostova in her old age, has passed or is passing. The present generation, Nicholas and Pierre with their wives Princess Mary and Natasha, gathered at Bald Hills with their children, is set in the ways of married people approaching middle-age. Then, of the new generation, young Nicholas, son of the dead Prince Andrew, after listening to his Uncle Pierre's warm defence of political liberals in the capital, murmurs to himself in bed that night: "Oh, what a wonderful man he is! And my father? Oh, Father, Father! Yes, I will do something with which even he would be satisfied. . . ." (*War and Peac*, ch.3, P.89)

Tolstoy indicates by dots that this last sentence of the novel is unfinished. And so is life, he implies. It will go on and on, just as it had in '*War and Peace*'. Chapter 3 of Book 10 is worth examining here to vindicate this concern of Tolstoy.

*Frowning with vexation at the effort necessary to divest himself of his coat and trousers, the prince undressed, sat down heavily on the bed, and appeared to be meditating as he looked contemptuously at his withered yellow legs. He was not*

*meditating, but only deferring the moment of making the effort to lift those legs up and turn over on the bed. "Ugh, how hard it is! Oh, that this toil might end and you would release me!" thought he. Pressing his lips together he made that effort for the twenty-thousandth time and lay down. But hardly had he done so before he felt the bed rocking backwards and forwards beneath him as if it were breathing heavily and jolting. This happened to him almost every night. He opened his eyes as they were closing.*

*"No peace, damn them!" he muttered, angry he knew not with whom. "Ah yes, there was something else important, very important, that I was keeping till I should be in bed. The bolts? No, I told him about them. No, it was something, something in the drawing room. Princess Mary talked some nonsense. Dessalles, that fool, said something. Something in my pocket-can't remember..."*

"Tikhon, what did we talk about at dinner?"

"About Prince Michael..."

"Be quiet, quiet!" The prince slapped his hand on the table.

"Yes, I know, Prince Andrew's letter! Princess Mary read it.

Dessalles said something about Vitebsk. Now I'll read it."

He had the letter taken from his pocket and the table - on which stood a glass of lemonade and a spiral wax candle- moved close to the bed, and putting on his spectacles he began reading. Only now in the stillness of the night, reading it by the faint light under the green shade, did he grasp its meaning for a moment.

"The French at Vitebsk, in four days' march they may be at Smolensk; perhaps are already there! Tikhon!" Tikhon jumped up. "No, no, I don't want anything!" he shouted.

He put the letter under the candlestick and closed his eyes. And there rose before him the Danube at bright noon day: reeds, the Russian camp, and he, a young general without a wrinkle on his ruddy face, vigorous and alert, entering Potemkin's gaily coloured tent, and a burning sense of jealousy of "the favourite" agitated him now as strongly as it had done then.

*(War and Peace, Book 10, Ch. 3)*

Although a large portion of *War and Peace* focuses on war, which is associated in our minds with clear-headed strategy and sensible reasoning, Tolstoy constantly emphasizes the irrational motives for human behavior at both times of peace and war. Wisdom is linked not to reason but to an acceptance of how mysterious our actions can be, even to ourselves. General Kutuzov emerges as a great leader not because he develops a logical plan and then demands that everyone follow it, but rather because he is willing to adapt to the flow of events and think on his feet. He revises his plan as each stage turns out to be vastly different from what was expected. Similarly irrational actions include Nicholas's sudden decision to wed Mary after previously resolving to go back to Sonya, and Natasha's surprising marriage to Pierre. Yet almost all the irrational actions we see in the novel turn out successfully, in accordance with instincts in human life that, for Tolstoy, lie far deeper than our reasoning minds.



Tolstoy depicts a vast array of characters from all walks of life. Each character is remarkably real and irreducibly individual. In fact, Tolstoy's realism has had such a lasting impact that even today an ordinary Russian can usually recall in colorful detail how her favorite character in *War and Peace* speaks, dresses and behaves, as if they were someone from her own life.

Tolstoy was quite critical of standard history, especially the standard military history, in *War and Peace*. Tolstoy read all the standard histories available in Russian and French about the Napoleonic Wars and combined more traditional historical writing with the novel form - he explains at the start of the novel's third volume his views on how history ought to be written. History is the life of nations and of humanity. To seize and put into words, to describe directly the life of humanity or even of a single nation, appears impossible.

His aim was to blur the line between fiction and history, in order to get closer to the truth, as he states in Volume II. *War and Peace* is set 60 years earlier than the time at which Tolstoy wrote it, "in the days of our grandfathers," as he puts it. He had spoken with people who had lived through the war of 1812, so the book is also, in part, accurate ethnography fictionalized. He read letters, journals, autobiographical and biographical materials pertaining to Napoleon and the dozens of other historical characters in the novel. There are approximately 160 real persons named or referred to in *War and Peace*.

**e. Tolstoy a moral socialist.**

Philosophical dimensions in the novel make the author a moral socialist. For instance death in *War and Peace* is never just a biological end, but almost always a moral event that brings some philosophical revelation. The first major instance of death as a revelation is Andrew's near-death experience at Austerlitz, when he lies on the field blissfully aware of how little the external world matters and rejoicing that its burden has been lifted from his shoulders. Andrew does not even care that Napoleon himself passes by and comments on him, as earthly values of rank and power have lost all their meaning to him. Tolstoy's portrayals of death's revelatory power also include epiphanies some characters experience upon the deaths of others. One example is Pierre's powerful reaction to the execution of the Russian prisoners of war in the French army camp, which leads him to radical thoughts on the insanity of war and the brotherhood of mankind. Pierre's reverence for the inspirational Platon makes the latter's execution prompt an existential crisis in Pierre. Similarly, Andrew's death leads Natasha to a profound change in her outlook, making her far more reflective and serious than ever before. Perhaps Natasha, without the experience of grieving for Andrew, would never become mature enough to marry Pierre in the end. In this sense, death is not merely the end of life, but a powerful lesson in faith and philosophy. A profoundly optimistic philosophy emanates from the vast novel.

Despite the revelations of the horrors of war and acknowledgment of human failings, the general message of *War and Peace*, inspired by Tolstoy's

personal happiness during these creative years, is a zestful love of life in all its manifestations. The profundity of his life view can be cited in the lines.

*“At the approach of danger there are always two voices that speak with equal force in the heart of man: one very reasonably tells the man to consider the nature of the danger and the means of avoiding it; the other even more reasonable says that it is too painful and harassing to think of the danger, since it is not a man's power to provide for everything and escape from the general march of events; and that it is therefore better to turn aside from the painful subject till it has come, and to think of what is pleasant. In solitude a man generally yields to the first voice; in society to the second.”*

(*War and Peace*, Book 10, Ch. 17)

*War and Peace* reflected Tolstoy's view that all is predestined, but we cannot live unless we imagine that we have free will. The harshest judgement is reserved for Napoleon, who thinks he controls events, but is dreadfully mistaken. Pierre Bezukhov, who wanders on the battlefield of Borodino, and sees only the confusion, comes closer to the truth. Great men are for him ordinary human beings who are vain enough to accept responsibility for the life of society, but unable to recognize their own impotence in the cosmic flow. Optimistically Tolstoy writes

*“Love is life. All, everything that I understand, I understand only because I love. Everything is, everything exists, only because I love. Everything is united by it alone. Love is God, and to die means that I, a particle of love, shall return to the general and eternal source.”*

(*War and Peace*, Book. 12, Ch.1 )

Love and war is philosophized in contrastive tension. On war Tolstoy reflects

*“War is like a game of chess ... but with this little difference, that in chess you may think over each move as long as you please and are not limited for time, and with this difference too, that a knight is always stronger than a pawn, and two pawns are always stronger than one, while in war a battalion is sometimes stronger than a division and sometimes weaker than a company. The relative strength of bodies of troops can never be known to anyone.... Success never depends, and never will depend, on position, or equipment, or even on numbers, and least of all on position.*

*(War and peace, Book 10, Ch. 25, p. 67)*

Again he says *“War is not a polite recreation but the vilest thing in life, and we ought to understand that and not play at war. We ought to accept it sternly and solemnly as a fearful necessity”* (*War and peace, Book 10, Ch. 25 p. 354*)

## **B. ANNA KARENINA -A FAMILY NOVEL**

Family novel refers to a group of novels extolling the virtues of domesticity. Any novel that explores the idea of family and the way that family works can also be considered as “Family novel”. The opening sentence of *Anna Karenina* “All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way”. All was confusion in the Oblonskys' house. The wife had found out that the husband was having an affair with their former French governess, and had announced to the husband that she could not live in the same house with him” strikes the key note of the major thematic concern in the novel. *The novel* is considered by many critics to be Tolstoy's finest achievement. It is one of the most important novels of 19th century. Tolstoy imbues the simple tale of a love affair with rich portraits of Russian high society, politics and religion. The novel depicts a host of unhappy families, all of which are mired in some crisis of misunderstanding or misconnection. It's such a tangled web, it's nearly impossible to keep the families and characters in order and figure out how they are related: the Oblonskys struggling with the aftermath of infidelity; the Shcherbatskys attempting to marry off the eligible Kitty with varied success; Levin's interesting family dynamic with his brothers; Vronsky's apparent disdain for family life and his mother; Anna Karenina's hollow and unfulfilling marriage to the distant Karenina. It is through this dynamic lens of familial commitment that we make a thorough study of the characters. How Stiva approaches his wife Dolly after she has discovered his affair tells us a great deal not only about these two, but also about the culture in which they live

and what is considered accepted practice. In Prince and Princess Shcherbatsky's desire to facilitate a successful match between Vronsky and their youngest daughter, we begin to understand more about how parents view their children in this society. In their case, the Prince thinks Levin is an upstanding man and finds Vronsky lacking in gravitas while the Princess is taken by Vronsky's charms and thinks Levin is full of pride. The way that these families interrelate with each other, the marriages and sibling relationships between them also creates a tight-knit community within the larger community of Moscow and St. Petersburg. It gives us as readers a stage with distinct boundaries upon which to judge the play that unfolds. Keep an eye on it: In the end, this focus on family helps to bring about some of the most powerful and meaningful lessons in the universe that becomes *Anna Karenina*.

The core of *Anna Karenina* is the story of the heroine's adultery expanded in to a consideration of problem of marriage, in which the subplot of the love and marriage of Kitty and Levin underscores the tragic moral of the *marriage de convenance* of Anna and Karenina. Tolstoy integrates with this core theme layers of contemporary society observed in their manifold activities in the two capitals, in the countryside and even abroad. Tolstoy peopled the domain he created with numerous characters, many highly individualized and all contributing to the development and illumination of the action of his story. There is a greater inner unity in *Anna Karenina*, perhaps because Tolstoy was not concerned with demonstrating the applicability to his main theme of so abstract a thesis as his philosophy of history. The familial

chaos is given in the very opening part of the novel.

*Everything was in confusion in the Oblonskys' house. The wife had discovered that the husband was carrying on an intrigue with a French girl, who had been a governess in their family, and she had announced to her husband that she could not go on living in the same house with him. This position of affairs had now lasted three days, and not only the husband and wife themselves, but all the members of their family and household, were painfully conscious of it. Every person in the house felt that there was no sense in their living together, and that the stray people brought together by chance in any inn had more in common with one another than they, the members of the family and household of the Oblonskys. The wife did not leave her own room, the husband had not been at home for three days. The children ran wild all over the house; the English governess quarreled with the housekeeper, and wrote to a friend asking her to look out for a new situation for her; the man-cook had walked off the day before just at dinner time; the kitchen-maid, and the coachman had given warning. Three days after the quarrel, Prince Stepan Arkadyevitch Oblonsky--Stiva, as he was called in the fashionable world-- woke up at his usual hour, that is, at eight o'clock in the morning, not in his wife's bedroom, but on the leather-covered sofa in his study. He turned over his stout, well-cared-for person on the springy sofa, as though he would sink into a long sleep again; he vigorously embraced the pillow on the other side and buried his face in it; but all at once he jumped up, sat up on the sofa, and opened his eyes.*

(Anna Karenina Ch. 1)

The Levin's home is a portrait of domesticity and happy, effective labor. Levin is tortured by religious doubts and spiritual strivings, and these

matters are so clearly troubling him that even Kitty has begun to question what is going on in her husband's head. Levin attempts to distract himself with his family and farm duties, and in this he is moderately successful. He experiences an epiphany in a conversation with a peasant named Theodre. He realizes that he has already been living for God. The experiences renew his belief in God. Later that night, Levin reflects once more on the nature of his questions, and decides that his belief in God belongs to him alone and that he has no right to remark on others relationship with the Lord. Kitty comes in and asks him what he is thinking about, but he demurs to talk to her about it. It is a personal matter, he realizes, one that may not affect his external life but that will make all the difference to his inner peace. He believed in the sanctity of the family even to the extent of arguing for the necessity of prostitution as a protection of the institution of holy matrimony, an incredible position in the light of his later views and one which had been partly suggested to him in his reaching of Schopenavour. Moreover, he sees only evil in the destruction of the family by either a husband or wife who indulges in the egoistic love of affinity which, as in Anna's case, leads to the ruin of her life as well as that of Vronsky. No one can one ignore the contrast between the loveless situation of Anna and her husband and the mutuality of pure love of Kitty and Levin achieved by sacrifice, forgiveness and the desire to make each other happy.

Such moral values however are not unaccompanied by contradiction. The point is that Tolstoy allows his men and women freedom and avoids as much as possible paring overt judgment on their actions. He does not



condemn his beautiful, warm - hearted, Anna, with whom he was obviously a bit in love himself, and his contempt for the other characters in the novel who do is implied if not expressed.

The structural connection is not the plot or the relationship of the characters (friendship), but an 'inner link.' This link, which is really the main theme, is not hard to guess against the background of Tolstoy's experiences shortly before and during most of the writing of the novel. It is the link that connects the opposing situations of Anna's tragic experience with marriage and the relatively happy one of Kitty and Levin. The whole story of Kitty and Levin—courtship, marriage, the birth of their first child, and their family existence—is in many respects the story of Tolstoy's early years of happy married life. The theme is that the sanctity of the family can be preserved only by the mutuality of pure love of husband and wife which is achieved, as Kitty and Levin demonstrate, by sacrifice, pardon, and the desire to make each other happy. On the other hand, the family is destroyed when either husband or wife indulges in the egotistic love of affinity, which leads to complete preoccupation with one's personal happiness and, as in Anna's case, to the ruin of her life as well as that of her lover Vronsky.

**a. Marriage – the Main theme.**

The novel is one of the most superbly crafted works in which marriage has been problematised as an institution, its social and individual pros and cons, the need for the smooth running of a family and the draw backs in an individual angle. *Anna Karenina* is an account of two marriages. The story

of the ruin of Anna's in her adulterous affair with Count Aleksei Vronsky alternates with the story of the courtship and family life of Konstantin Levin and Kitty Shcherbatskaya. The two main characters, Anna and Levin, are brought together on only one occasion, however, so that while it is easy to see the contrast between these two characters and their respective fates, it is more difficult to understand the sense in which they are also comparable to one another. Containing a discussion of at least three marriages, rather than just one as in *Madame Bovary*, *Anna Karenina* provides an authoritative and thorough, if not definitive, treatment of the subject. Chapter 6 of Book 1 sets the key tone of the novel.

When Oblonsky asked Levin what had brought him to town, Levin blushed, and was furious with himself for blushing, because he could not answer, "I have come to make your sister-in-law an offer," though that was precisely what he had come for. The families of the Levins and the Shtcherbatskys were old, noble Moscow families, and had always been on intimate and friendly terms. This intimacy had grown still closer during Levin's student days. He had both prepared for the university with the young Prince Shtcherbatsky, the brother of Kitty and Dolly, and had entered at the same time with him. In those days Levin used often to be in the Shtcherbatskys' house, and he was in love with the Shtcherbatsky household. Strange as it may appear, it was with the household, the family that Konstantin Levin was in love, especially with the feminine half of the household. Levin did not remember his own mother, and his only sister was older than he was, so that it was in the Shtcherbatskys' house that he saw for

the first time that inner life of an old, noble, cultivated, and honorable family of which he had been deprived by the death of his father and mother. All the members of that family, especially the feminine half, were pictured by him, as it were, wrapped about with a mysterious poetical veil, and he not only perceived no defects whatever in them, but under the poetical veil that shrouded them he assumed the existence of the loftiest sentiments and every possible perfection. Why it was the three young ladies had one day to speak French, and the next English; why it was that at certain hours they played by turns on the piano, the sounds of which were audible in their brother's room above, where the students used to work; why they were visited by those professors of French literature, of music, of drawing, of dancing; why at certain hours all the three young ladies, with Mademoiselle Linon, drove in the coach to the Tversky boulevard, dressed in their satin cloaks, Dolly in a long one, Natalia in a half-long one, and Kitty in one so short that her shapely legs in tightly-drawn red stockings were visible to all beholders; why it was they had to walk about the Tversky boulevard escorted by a footman with a gold cockade in his hat--all this and much more that was done in their mysterious world he did not understand, but he was sure that everything that was done there was very good, and he was in love precisely with the mystery of the proceedings. In his student days he had all but been in love with the eldest, Dolly, but she was soon married to Oblonsky. Then he began being in love with the second. He felt, as it were, that he had to be in love with one of the sisters, only he could not quite make out which. But Natalia, too, had hardly made her appearance in the world when she married the diplomat

Lvov. Kitty was still a child when Levin left the university. Young Shtcherbatsky went into the navy, was drowned in the Baltic and Levin's relations with the Shtcherbatskys, in spite of his friendship with Oblonsky, and became less intimate. But when early in the winter of this year Levin came to Moscow, after a year in the country, and saw the Shtcherbatskys, he realized which of the three sisters he was indeed destined to love. One would have thought that nothing could be simpler than for him, a man of good family, rather rich than poor, and thirty-two years old, to make the young Princess Shtcherbatskaya an offer of marriage; in all likelihood he would at once have been looked upon as a good match. But Levin was in love, and so it seemed to him that Kitty was so perfect in every respect that she was a creature far above everything earthly; and that he was a creature so low and so earthly that it could not even be conceived that other people and she herself could regard him as worthy of her. After spending two months in Moscow in a state of enchantment, seeing Kitty almost every day in society, into which he went so as to meet her, he abruptly decided that it could not be, and went back to the country. Levin's conviction that it could not be was founded on the idea that in the eyes of her family he was a disadvantageous and worthless match for the charming Kitty, and that Kitty herself could not love him. In her family's eyes he had no ordinary, definite career and position in society, while his contemporaries by this time, when he was thirty-two, were already, one a colonel, and another a professor, another director of a bank and railways, or president of a board like Oblonsky. But he (he knew very well how he must appear to others) was a country gentleman, occupied in breeding

cattle, shooting game, and building barns; in other words, a fellow of no ability, who had not turned out well, and who was doing just what, according to the ideas of the world, is done by people fit for nothing else.

The mysterious, enchanting Kitty herself could not love such an ugly person as he conceived himself to be, and, above all, such an ordinary, in no way striking person. Moreover, his attitude to Kitty in the past and the attitude of a grown-up person to a child, arising from his friendship with her brother seemed to him yet another obstacle to love. An ugly, good-natured man, as he considered himself, might, he supposed, be liked as a friend; but to be loved with such a love as that with which he loved Kitty, one would need to be a handsome and, still more, a distinguished man.

He had heard that women often did care for ugly and ordinary men, but he did not believe it, for he judged by himself, and he could not himself have loved any but beautiful, mysterious, and exceptional women. But after spending two months alone in the country, he was convinced that this was not one of those passions of which he had experience in his early youth; that this feeling gave him not an instant's rest; that he could not live without deciding the question, would she or would she not be his wife, and that his despair had arisen only from his own imaginings, that he had no sort of proof that he would be rejected. And he had now come to Moscow with a firm determination to make an offer, and get married if he were accepted. Or... he could not conceive what would become of him if he were rejected.

Stiva's relationship with Dolly suggests the incomplete relationship between Karenin and Anna. The Oblonskys' problems only seem lighter because of the double standard: It is less serious for a husband to stray than for a wife, since family unity depends on the woman. Tolstoy shows us that men's primary interests are outside the home, whereas women, like Dolly, center their existence on the family. Stiva, Vronsky, and Karenin, unlike Levin, divide their lives sharply between their homes and amusements, and they are each startled, through the incidents of the novel, to confront the previously ignored feelings of their wives. The divided pattern of these marriages, moreover, allows the dissatisfied partner to seek outside fulfillment of social, emotional, or sexual needs. Anna exemplifies the divided nature of an unfulfilled spouse: During her bout of fever, she admits her affection for Karenina though another part of her soul desires Vronsky. Without solving these marital problems, Tolstoy develops his characters so they adjust to their incomplete relationships. Dolly dotes on her children, Anna gives Seriozha the love she cannot express toward Karenin (conversely lacking deep affection for her love-child Ani), while the husbands commit themselves either to work (like Karenin) or pleasure (like Stiva and Vronsky).

Tolstoy thus depicts the hopeless marriage patterns in urban society. Despite showing the blissful union of Kitty and Levin, Tolstoy ultimately states that marriage, and other sexually-based relationships, weaken the individual's quest for "immanent goodness." He prefigures this later doctrine as the love between Anna and Vronsky deteriorates and by the lighthearted intrusion of Varenka Veslovsky. While Tolstoy wrote *Anna Karenina*,

however, he still exulted in the success of his own marriage. The result is that Levin and Kitty have the only mutually complete union of the novel. Their marriage is a fulfillment, not a compromise, because Levin's family represents an integral part of his search for essential reality. His outside interests and his love are vehicles which aid him to discover the truth of inner goodness. Because Levin's life is more meaningful than the succession of superficial interests which comprise the lives of Stiva, Vronsky, Karenin, his marriage is more successful.

At the beginning of the novel Anna is a highly respected member of society. She enters into a love affair and finds herself unable to conduct it discreetly. She abhors hypocrisy and deceit. She cannot be content with the stolen moments of passion in which so many of the women and men of her acquaintance indulge. Anna is caught between the power of the passionate "aliveness" within her and the equally pressing demands of the society to which she belongs. She finds herself in the position of serving two masters: her individuality, with its striving for freedom and self-expression through love, and her social self, with its need to belong to an authentic group context. As she herself says, she is, in her affair, "guilty, and yet not to blame." Anna commits suicide when she becomes convinced that Vronsky, the only remnant of social context remaining to her, wishes to leave her.

*Levin's course is the reverse of Anna's. He begins as an acknowledged "outsider," an independent individualist, and gradually becomes ever more enmeshed in the web of social and familial constraints. Like Anna, he senses the tension between the force of his individual ideals and the obstructions*

*of recalcitrant social reality. Unlike her, he finds a middle course which allows him to function with the social group while yet retaining a part of himself, what he calls on the last page of the novel his soul's "holy of holies," under his absolute control. In this hidden part of himself he is neither constrained nor obstructed by his continuing attachment to the group. His life, in this respect at least, is "full of the meaning with which I have the power to invest it."*

*(Anna Karenina, p. 207)*

To understand why *Anna Karenina* was so unique, readers must know a little about the development of *Anna Karenina's* European antecedents. While the existence of passionate extra-marital love is timeless, the concept was linked to the rise of the intense cult of romantic passion, which seems to have been a byproduct of the Crusades. Young men left at home in French castles expressed exaggerated devotion to their Lady in romantic love-lyrics learnt from the troubadours, whose theme was perpetually unsatisfied love. Pouring out an adoration that existed by definition outside marriage, they cultivated a passion that languished after desire for its own sake. Both church and society ensured that such dangerous, life-opposing values were suppressed, but during the 19th century they reappeared in the novel, with the figure of the adulteress incarnating the overt, social threat to regular marriage.

In the novel too we find a tragic story of a married woman, who follows her lover, but finally at a station throws herself in front of an incoming train. The novel opens with the famous sentence: "Happy families are all alike, every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." Tolstoy



juxtaposed in the work crises of family life with the quest for the meaning of life and social justice. "The Oblonsky home was in turmoil," Tolstoy writes as an introduction to his themes. Anna Karenina comes to Moscow to reconcile the Oblonskys. Her love affair with Vronski parallels with another plot, Konstantin Levin's courtship and marriage to Kitty Shcherbatskaia. Tolstoy sees that everywhere the family life of the landed gentry is breaking up, but he did not accept nihilist theories about marriage. Aleksei Karenin is unable to save his career or make Anna happy. "For the first time he vividly conjured up her personal life, her thoughts, her wishes; and the idea that she might, and even must have a personal life all her won was so frightening that he hastened to drive it away. This was the chasm into which he dared not look." Through Levin, who seeks the meaning of existence, Tolstoy states, that "everything has now been turned upside down and is only just taking shape." (Anna Karenina, p. 197)

**b. Tolstoy's techniques in Characterization.**

Characterization is the process of creating characters in fiction, often those who are different from and have different beliefs than the author. A writer can assume the point of view of a child, an older person, a member of the opposite gender, someone of another race or culture, or anyone who isn't like them in personality or otherwise. Thorough characterization makes characters well-rounded and complex even though the writer may not be like the character or share his or her attitudes and beliefs. This allows for a sense of realism.

According to F.R. Leavis, Leo Tolstoy was the creator of some of the most complex and psychologically believable characters in fiction. His characterization involve developing a variety of aspects of a character, such as appearance, age, gender, educational level, vocation or occupation, financial status, marital status, social status, hobbies, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, ambitions, and so on. Often these can be shown through the actions and language of the character, rather than by telling the reader directly.

Gary R. John believes that in Tolstoy's work, the simple sentence is the norm for the narrative. Besides being comparatively short, sentences are often elliptical. In longer sentences there is a strong tendency toward a simple linking of independent clauses rather than a resort to subordinate constructions. There is a strong tendency toward the inversion of the standard order of elements within clauses--*mutatis mutandis*, the standard order of sentence elements in contemporary standard Russian (CSR) is subject-verb-object, while these stories show a frequent displacement of the subject. The stories frequently display lexical material and syntactic patterns which are characteristic of popular speech "regional". Related to item five, there is the use of directly allusive language material (quotations from the Bible, interpolation of proverbs, use of collocations typical of folktales or religious legends). The narrative voice has a popular colouration.

Like *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina* too gives a fine example for realistic narrative.

*Her dress was not uncomfortable anywhere; her lace berthe did not droop anywhere; her rosettes were not crushed nor torn off; her pink slippers with high, hollowed-out heels did not pinch, but gladdened her feet; and the thick rolls of fair chignon kept up on her head as if they were her own hair. All the three buttons buttoned up without tearing on the long glove that covered her hand without concealing its lines. The black velvet of her locket nestled with special softness round her neck. That velvet was delicious; at home, looking at her neck in the looking glass, Kitty had felt that that velvet was speaking. About all the rest there might be a doubt, but the velvet was delicious. Kitty smiled here too, at the ball, when she glanced at it in the glass. Her bare shoulders and arms gave Kitty a sense of chill marble, a feeling she particularly liked. Her eyes sparkled, and her rosy lips could not keep from smiling from the consciousness of her own attractiveness. She had scarcely entered the ballroom and reached the throng of ladies, all tulle, ribbons, lace, and flowers, waiting to be asked to dance--Kitty was never one of that throng--when she was asked for a waltz, and asked by the best partner, the first star in the hierarchy of the ballroom, a renowned director of dances, a married man, handsome and well-built, Yegorushka Korsunsky. He had only just left the Countess Bonina, with whom he had danced the first half of the waltz, and, scanning his kingdom--that is to say, a few couples who had started dancing--he caught sight of Kitty, entering, and flew up to her with that peculiar, easy amble which is confined to directors of balls. Without even asking her if she cared to dance, he put out his arm to encircle her slender waist. She looked round for someone to give her fan to, and their hostess, smiling to her, took it.*

*"How nice you've come in good time," he said to her, embracing her waist; "such a bad habit to be late." Bending her left hand, she laid it on his shoulder, and her little feet in their*

*pink slippers began swiftly, lightly, and rhythmically moving over the slippery floor in time to the music.*

*"It's a rest to waltz with you," he said to her, as they fell into the first slow steps of the waltz. "It's exquisite--such lightness, precision." He said to her the same thing he said to almost all his partners whom he knew well.*

*She smiled at his praise, and continued to look about the room over his shoulder. She was not like a girl at her first ball, for whom all faces in the ballroom melt into one vision of fairyland. And she was not a girl who had gone the stale round of balls till every face in the ballroom was familiar and tiresome. But she was in the middle stage between these two; she was excited, and at the same time she had sufficient self-possession to be able to observe. In the left corner of the ballroom she saw the cream of society gathered together. There--incredibly naked--was the beauty Lidi, Korsunsky's wife; there was the lady of the house; there shone the bald head of Krivin, always to be found where the best people were. In that direction gazed the young men, not venturing to approach. There, too, she descried Stiva, and there she saw the exquisite figure and head of Anna in a black velvet gown. And he was there. Kitty had not seen him since the evening she refused Levin. With her long-sighted eyes, she knew him at once, and was even aware that he was looking at her.*

(*Anna Karenina*, Ch. 22, Part 2)

Some critics assert that the one flaw in the characterization of Anna is Tolstoy's failure to motivate her seemingly sudden passion for Vronsky. The charge is that he fails to tell readers anything about her emotional nature before she arrives in Moscow to mediate the family quarrel caused by her Brother Stiva Oblonsky's adultery, only to be caught in the web of

circumstances that leads to her own adultery. Her falling in love, however, is not sudden, and a careful reading reveals how what Anna regards as a harmless flirtation slowly develops into an irresistible passion, a process which in no sense contradicts anything we know of her character up to that point.

The process, as in *'War And Peace'*, involves the use of subtle details that advance the action and psychologically suggest the emotional transformation taking place in Anna. The first real sign of attraction is seen at the Moscow ball, indirectly, through the eyes of Kitty who is infatuated with Vronsky. Another at the beginning of the novel occurs when Anna mounts the stairway of her brother's drawing room to fetch a picture of her son from her bedroom. At that moment Vronsky is shown into the hall. She looks down from the landing and for a moment their eyes meet. An inexplicable uneasiness troubles both of them. She is caught, as it were, on a staircase between the safety of the family drawing room and the safety of the bedroom where her son's picture is. But she quickly dismisses the feeling as of no consequence. On the train back to Petersburg Anna firmly rejects Vronsky's expression of devotion. She treats the matter lightly, but, significantly, she is vaguely disturbed. Then on arrival she notices for the first time the large ears of her husband who is waiting for her on the platform, and a strange feeling of dissatisfaction comes over her as she introduces Vronsky. That first day home she contemplates telling her husband of Vronsky's declaration, but recalling her rejection of it she decides she has nothing to tell, again a refined psychological detail. That night, however, as

she hears the familiar measured tread of the slippers feet of her stiff and pompous husband approaching their bedroom, annoyed with herself she begins to wonder what right Vronsky had to look at him the way he did at the station. Then, as she goes to bed, Tolstoy pointedly remarks: "there was not a trace of that animation which during her stay in Moscow had sparkled in her eyes and smile, but on the contrary the fire in her now seemed quenched or hidden somewhere very far away."

Technically unlike *'War and Peace'*, *'Anna Karenina'*, despite its considerable length, is limited in scope and subject matter, has a definite beginning and end, and preserves an inner unity. All the action is securely tied to the main theme, from the opening, when Anna arrives at the station platform in Moscow, hears of the railroad worker's death under a train, and murmurs that it is a bad omen, to the end, when she commits suicide under the wheels of a train, the helpless victim of a fate foretold by the novel's epigraph: "Vengeance is mine, I will repay."

Tolstoy's style in *Anna Karenina* is considered to form a bridge between realist and modernist novel. The narration is from a third-person-omniscient perspective, shifting between the perspectives of several major characters. Set in the latter half of the nineteenth century Russia, the novel gives glimpses to the country's socio-political issues. He also draws contrasts between the peace and wholesomeness of the country and the decadence of urban society. As a whole the novel contains the nucleus of Tolstoy's programme for non-violence and abstention from worldly riches. This idea

makes the novel a classic of all times and Tolstoy as one of the world's most venerated teachers.

**c. Contrasts and Contradictions.**

The contradictions in Tolstoy's works, views, doctrines, in his school, are indeed glaring. On the one hand, we have the great artist, the genius who has not only drawn incomparable pictures of Russian life but has made first-class contributions to world literature. On the other hand we have the landlord obsessed with Christ. On the one hand, the remarkably powerful, forthright and sincere protest against social falsehood and hypocrisy; and on the other, the "Tolstoyan", i.e., the jaded, hysterical sniveler called the Russian intellectual, who publicly beats his breast and wails: "I am a bad wicked man, but I am practicing moral self-perfection; I don't eat meat any more, I now eat rice cutlets." On the one hand, merciless criticism of capitalist exploitation, exposure of government outrages, the farcical courts and the state administration, and unmasking of the profound contradictions between the growth of wealth and achievements of civilization and the growth of poverty, degradation and misery among the working masses.

On the other, the crackpot preaching of submission, "resist not evil" with violence. On the one hand, the most sober realism, the tearing away of all and sundry masks; on the other, the preaching of one of the most odious things on earth, namely, religion, the striving to replace officially appointed priests by priests who will serve from moral conviction, i. e., to cultivate the most refined and, therefore, particularly disgusting clericalism.

Karenin and Vronsky provide perfect foils in the novel. A government official with little personality of his own, Karenin maintains the façade of a cultivated and rational man. He keeps up with contemporary poetry, he reads books on Roman history for leisure, and he makes appearances at all the right parties. He is civil to everyone and makes no waves. Originally, Tolstoy conceived of Karenin as a saintly figure, a forgiving husband endlessly tormented by his wife's roving search for passion. But in the final version of the novel we feel the hollowness of Karenin's façade: he is less a saint than a bland bureaucrat whose personality has disappeared under years of devotion to his duties. He reads poetry but rarely has a poetic thought; he reads history but never reflects on it meaningfully. He does not enjoy himself or spark conversations at parties but merely makes himself seen and then leaves. Karenin's entire existence consists of professional obligations, with little room for personal whim or passion. When first made aware of Anna's liaison with Vronsky, Karenin briefly entertains thoughts of challenging Vronsky to a duel but quickly abandons the idea when he imagines a pistol pointed his direction. This cowardice is an indicator of his general resistance to a life of fervent emotion and grand passions.

Karenin's limp dispassion colors his home life and serves as the backdrop to Anna's rebellious search for love at any price. We feel that he must have viewed his betrothal to Anna as an act of duty like everything else in his life: it was time to marry, so he chose an appropriate girl who happened to be Anna. He never gives any indications of appreciating Anna's uniqueness or valuing the ways in which she differs from other women. His appreciation



of her is only for her role as wife and mother. Similarly, Karenin's fatherly interaction with Seryozha is cold and official, focused on educational progress and never on Seryozha's perceptions or emotions. Karenin wishes to raise a responsible child, as he surely was himself. It is Karenin's obedience to duty, his pigeonholing of all persons and experiences as either appropriate or inappropriate, that Anna rejects. When Anna leaves, she does not simply dump Karenin the man but also the conventionalism that Karenin believes in and represents. Karenin's slide into occultism and stagnation at the end of the novel suggests indirectly how much he needed Anna, and how much she was the life behind his façade.

Vronsky on the other hand an individually oriented soul rather than a social being. In early drafts of the novel, Vronsky was a poetic hero, a dashing officer of great passion but little reliability. He was intended originally as a larger-than-life symbol of the Romantic values of independence, whim, and disobedience toward civilized society. In his final incarnation, Vronsky is a more moderate figure, less wildly rebellious and more socially conforming. He is still somewhat idealized: depicted as a handsome, wealthy, and charming person who is as willing as Anna is to abandon social standing and professional status in the pursuit of love. His commitment to his hospital-building project shows a Romantic passion for carrying out an individual vision of good. But despite his glories, Vronsky shows realistic faults and imperfections. His thinning hair, his error in judgment in the horse race, his thwarted ambitions of military glory all remind us that Vronsky is not a Romantic hero but a man like any other. He does not symbolize escape from social pressures, for he suffers from these pressures himself. He is an exceptional man, but he is only a man. This human limitation in Vronsky is Anna's greatest disappointment: we feel she yearned for a total escape into a dreamy love and that she simply cannot accept the reality of Vronsky's earthbound, limited passion. It is significant that Tolstoy gives Vronsky the same first name as Karenin, as if Anna's yearning for another Alexei only leads her to a disappointing repetition of her first one. Vronsky's inability to offer Anna a real alternative to conventional life may be the great tragedy of her later life.

Though we may feel a waning in Vronsky's devotion in the later chapters of the novel, we must be wary not to buy into Anna's paranoid fears

too much. There is no sure indication that Vronsky loves Anna any less at the end. Certainly he cares for her more than ever: he outfits his country home with unheard-of luxury and elegance, largely (we feel) in an attempt to make Anna happy. His commissioning of Anna's portrait and his prominent display of it in their home suggests that he is still enraptured by her. Vronsky occasionally feels the pang of thwarted ambition, especially after meeting his school chum who is now highly successful, but this is only natural, and there is no sign he holds it against Anna. He bends over backward to accommodate her whims and endures her paranoid fits with patience. These actions may be mere solicitude or "duty," as Anna calls it on Vronsky's part, rather than true love. But since Tolstoy rarely shows us Vronsky's thoughts as he shows us Anna's, we simply cannot know for sure.

Though each of the contrasting couples, Anna and Vronsky and Kitty and Levin, pursues its separate existence, their stories are closely interwoven, and from the contrast emerges the moral repudiation of society's marriage of convenience. Both Anna and Levin challenge the criteria in the society for a passionate involvement with their own desires which offers a taste of freedom and a trap for destruction.

This contrast involves still another one, with moral implications already broached in *'War and Peace'* - the superiority of the natural life of the country over the unnatural life of the city. Levin has in him Nicholas Rostov's passion for the land and for agricultural activity plus a large increment of the soul-searching and questing mind of Pierre Bezukhov. Kitty is the patient, tolerating wife who accepts life's blessings and sorrows as

something ordained by heaven. Though she generously sympathizes with Anna's cruel situation, she believes that there are conventional limits beyond which a married woman could not go without risking the condemnation of society. On the other hand, Levin's complex nature flowers, and the urgent language of the description of his activities could have emerged only from Tolstoy's remembered experiences. There is hardly a passage in fiction more poetic than Levin's meditation in the harvest field. But there is nothing of dream or fantasy about it. It is the poetry of fact, and its imaginative quality, its freshness and youth, again derive patently from Tolstoy's own experiences with nature.

In this respect the stories of Anna and Levin are truly comparable. Both experience the frustration of having their expression of themselves as individuals thwarted by an unmanageable social reality. As in *War and Peace* Tolstoy had shown the powerlessness of individuals to force historical reality to conform to their own ambitions and plans, so here he explores their inability to realize the ideals of the free imagination in the context of society and the family. Although the group is of a different order of magnitude, the question is the same: wherein is a person free, wherein subject to the constraints of necessity. The hopeful implication of *War and Peace* that people are at least relatively free in the context of their personal and familial affairs is replaced in *Anna Karenina* by the suggestion that they are really free only within themselves, in that "holy of holies" which they alone may enter.

That Tolstoy, owing to these contradictions, could not possibly understand either the working-class movement or its role in the struggle for

socialism, or the Russian revolution, goes without saying. But the contradictions in Tolstoy's views and doctrines are not accidental; they express the contradictory conditions of Russian life in the last third of the nineteenth century. The patriarchal countryside, only recently emancipated from serfdom, was literally given over to the capitalist and the tax-collector to be fleeced and plundered. The ancient foundations of peasant economy and peasant life, foundations that had really held for centuries, were broken up for scrap with extraordinary rapidity. And the contradictions in Tolstoy's views must be appraised not from the standpoint of the present-day working-class movement and present-day socialism (such an appraisal is, of course, needed, but it is not enough), but from the standpoint of protest against advancing capitalism, against the ruining of the masses, who are being dispossessed of their land, a protest which had to arise from the patriarchal Russian countryside. Tolstoy is absurd as a prophet who has discovered new nostrums for the salvation of mankind and therefore the foreign and Russian "Tolstoyans" who have sought to convert the weakest side of his doctrine into a dogma, are not worth speaking of.

Tolstoy is great as the spokesman of the ideas and sentiments that emerged among the millions of Russian peasants at the time the bourgeois revolution was approaching in Russia. Tolstoy is original, because the sum total of his views, taken as a whole, happens to express the specific features of our revolution as a *peasant* bourgeois revolution. From this point of view, the contradictions in Tolstoy's views are indeed a mirror of those contradictory conditions in which the peasantry had to play their historical

part in our revolution. On the one hand, centuries of feudal oppression and decades of accelerated post-Reform pauperization piled up mountains of hate, resentment, and desperate determination. The striving to sweep away completely the official church, the landlords and the landlord government, to destroy all the old forms and ways of landownership, to clear the land, to replace the police-class state by a community of free and equal small peasants. This striving is the keynote of every historical step the peasantry has taken in our revolution; and, undoubtedly, the message of Tolstoy's writings conforms to this peasant striving far more than it does to abstract "Christian Anarchism", as his "system" of views is sometimes appraised.

Tolstoy's novel exposes, by the use of these juxtapositions, the concepts of exercising patience, honoring silence, and heeding one's secret self, which are essential tools for interpreting the moral realm and for deciphering enduring realities from fleeting ones. For example, Levin and Varenka succeed in fulfilling their fates as they are" meant to be fulfilled, we feel while Anna and Vronsky are met with disaster because of their disconnection from patience and themselves. They forfeit the entrance into a clearer understanding of their own moral essence, of the difference between good and evil, for themselves. Tolstoy allows us, through his various demonstrations to conclude that the moral realm which Levin eventually perceives: so clearly has been something which "crept" up on him quietly from within and which could only be recognized through meditative silence, hard work, and slow time. Patience, slow time, and restraint are the antitheses of the kind of passion which burns in Anna and Vronsky and which

causes them to act before they are centered and can act from a solid inner prompt. Even Levin's individuality, as Orwin notes, "is built out of the harmony of thoughts that comes to him as he rests by the road". This individuality is fragile; it breaks down continually, but Levin can return to it whenever he has a moment to himself".

Tolstoy's juxtapositions contrast between the way Anna and Vronsky quickly get involved with one another and the manner in which Kitty and Levin are parted for a protracted time period. Slow time and silence allow eventual access to one's secret repository. In fact, contemplation and the silent, inner search work only in slow time. Levin is the most thoughtful character in the novel, always struggling to give meaning to his life and understand his fate. Anna and Vronsky are less introspective, allowing deliberation into their mindsets only after social complications have made them suffer beyond practical endurance. Articulation, introspection, and speaking out of one's soul are connected inextricably to slow time, and we understand that the moral life is almost imperceptibly at first ushered into consciousness from a depth within. It cannot be rushed. A seed will sprout in its own time when all conditions are met.

The novel demonstrates the superficial veneer of the false talk or noisy, empty chatter of Anna and her husband, Karenin. Matthew Arnold's concept of the "buried," inner essence of an authentic life is here demonstrated to its full capacity.

Anna is described as

*“conscious of the presence within herself of the already familiar spirit of falsehood and deceit, she immediately abandoned herself to it and began talking, hardly knowing what she was saying .... She spoke very simply and naturally, but she was saying too much and saying it too quickly”.*

*(Anna Karenina, p. 223)*

The buried life, for Arnold, is that core of inner being which is genuine and authentic but which has become submerged and therefore unconscious by custom and an aggressive external (or social) influence. From the start, Anna and her brother Oblonsky are associated with a tendency to let the outer world mold them in a way which prohibits the inner life from flowing into consciousness and becoming their main motivator. Oblonsky, for example, appears comfortable to have no inner essence, no more moral compass, or center. That he is Anna's brother seems significant and helps us see her tendency to rely on external cues rather than internal. The difference is that her brother is comic while she becomes more nearly tragic. (She exchanges cues from Karenin regarding "marital propriety" merely for other external cues regarding "the passionate life" from Vronsky). Oblonsky is described from the beginning as being almost totally compelled by external cues:

*And although he was not particularly interested in science, art or politics, on all subjects he adhered firmly to the views of the majority ... and changed them only when the majority changed theirs; or rather, he did not change them -- they Changed imperceptibly of their own accord.*

*(Anna Karenina, Book 4, Ch.6)*



Throughout '*Anna Karenina*' one perceives Tolstoy's ability to combine a sense of the accidental and inevitable which is the result not of happy chance, but of the novelist's art. He uses a variety of technical procedures, some of them designed to create a kind of symbolic atmosphere, such as the divorce lawyer who catches moths or the pattern of significant actions that take place at railway stations or in trains. Failure to savor this atmosphere is to miss an important unifying factor in the narrative schema. To some, the symbolic effects may seem too obvious, as in the case of the candle whose light, before Anna's suicide, helped her to read the book of her life and then wavered and went out forever. The force of the passage is not in the rather commonplace image, but in the rhythm and depth of the language, the words of which seem to be uttered for the first time. For rugged and solid grandeur there are few passages to compare with it in Russian literature.

**d. Anna- a psychological analysis.**

Anna is intelligent and literate, a reader of English novels and a writer of children's books. She is elegant, always understated in her dress. Her many years with Karenin show her capable of playing the role of cultivated, beautiful, society wife and hostess with great poise and grace. She is very nearly the ideal aristocratic Russian wife of the 1870s. Anna is the jewel of St. Petersburg society until she leaves her husband for the handsome and charming military officer, Count Vronsky. The lovers go beyond society's external conditions of trivial adulterous dalliances. However Vronsky's love cools and Anna cannot bring herself to return to the husband she detests. Unable to return to a life she hates, she kills herself. Tolstoy's increasing

sympathy for this adulteress suggests the mixed feelings he harbored toward her: she is guilty of desecrating her marriage and home, but is noble and admirable nonetheless. The combination of these traits is a major reason for the appeal of this novel for more than a century. However instead of characterizing the woman as guilty, he painted her picture as a pitiful woman. It is believed that Tolstoy got inspired by Pushkin's heroine Zinaida Volsky to characterize Anna. Yet we are ultimately impressed less by Anna's ideal attributes than by her passionate spirit and determination to live life on her own terms.

Anna is a feminist heroine of sorts, riding on horseback in an era when such an activity was deemed suitable for men only. Disgraced, she dares to face St. Petersburg high society and refuses the exile to which she has been condemned, attending the opera when she knows very well she will meet with nothing but scorn and derision. Anna is a martyr to the old-fashioned Russian patriarchal system and its double standard for male and female adultery. Her brother, Stiva, is far looser in his morals but is never even chastised for his womanizing, whereas Anna is sentenced to social exile and suicide. Moreover, Anna is deeply devoted to her family and children, as we see when she sneaks back into her former home to visit her son on his birthday. Anna's refusal to lose Seryozha is the only reason she refuses Karenin's offer of divorce, even though this divorce would give her freedom.

The governing principle of Anna's life is that love is stronger than anything, even duty. She is powerfully committed to this principle. She rejects Karenin's request that she stay with him simply to maintain outward

appearances of an intact marriage and family. Anna's greatest worry in the later stages of her relationship with Vronsky is that he no longer loves her but remains with her out of duty only. Her exile from civilized society in the later part of the novel is a symbolic rejection of all the social conventions we normally accept dutifully. She insists on following her heart alone. For Tolstoy, these mindset smacks of selfishness, contrasting with the ideal of living for God and goodness that Levin embraces in the last chapter. But for many readers, Anna's insistence on the dictates of her heart's desires makes her an unforgettable pioneer of the search for autonomy and passion in an alienating modern world.

Anna's tragedy unfolds slowly, naturally, remorselessly, before a large audience of the social worlds of two capitals, of the countryside, and elsewhere. But nearly all the fully realized characters, including the brilliantly portrayed Oblonsky and Shcherbatsky families, are involved in one way or another with the fate of these two star-crossed lovers. For Tolstoy, himself a bit in love with his heroine's large, generous, radiant nature, endeavors to show that she is as much a victim of the hypocrisy of this high society as of her own passion. If Anna had an affair with a handsome, socially desirable army officer, high society would not have condemned her provided she was discreet and abided by conventions that were supposed to make such affairs permissible. The only one hurt would have been her husband, but this was the generally accepted order of things. Above all, appearances must be kept up. Vronsky's mother thought it entirely '*come in fault*' that her son should have a liaison with a charming woman such as

Anna; it added a degree of social polish to a rising young careerist. So are Stiva Oblonsky's easy adulteries accepted by his society; only in the case of his wife do they cause a bit of pain, but not disaster. Her psychological trauma can be traced from the given passage.

*Anna, in that first period of her emancipation and rapid return to health, felt herself unpardonably happy and full of the joy of life. The thought of her husband's unhappiness did not poison her happiness. On one side that memory was too awful to be thought of. On the other side her husband's unhappiness had given her too much happiness to be regretted. The memory of all that had happened after her illness: her reconciliation with her husband, its breakdown, the news of Vronsky's wound, his visit, the preparations for divorce, the departure from her husband's house, the parting from her son--all that seemed to her like a delirious dream, from which she had waked up alone with Vronsky abroad. The thought of the harm caused to her husband aroused in her a feeling like repulsion, and akin to what a drowning man might feel who has shaken off another man clinging to him. That man did drown. It was an evil action, of course, but it was the sole means of escape, and better not to brood over these fearful facts. One consolatory reflection upon her conduct had occurred to her at the first moment of the final rupture, and when now she recalled all the past, she remembered that one reflection. "I have inevitably made that man wretched," she thought; "but I don't want to profit by his misery. I too am suffering, and shall suffer; I am losing what I prized above everything-- I am losing my good name and my son. I have done wrong, and so I don't want happiness, I don't want a divorce, and shall suffer from my shame and the separation from my child." But, however*

sincerely Anna had meant to suffer, she was not suffering. Shame there was not. With the tact of which both had such a large share, they had succeeded in avoiding Russian ladies abroad, and so had never placed themselves in a false position, and everywhere they had met people who pretended that they perfectly understood their position, far better indeed than they did themselves. Separation from the son she loved--even that did not cause her anguish in these early days. The baby girl--his child--was so sweet, and had so won Anna's heart, since she was all that was left her, that Anna rarely thought of her son. The desire for life, waxing stronger with recovered health, was so intense, and the conditions of life were so new and pleasant, that Anna felt unpardonably happy. The more she got to know Vronsky, the more she loved him. She loved him for himself, and for his love for her. Her complete ownership of him was a continual joy to her. His presence was always sweet to her. All the traits of his character, which she learned to know better and better, were unutterably dear to her. His appearance, changed by his civilian dress, was as fascinating to her as though she were some young girl in love. In everything he said, thought, and did, she saw something particularly noble and elevated. Her adoration of him alarmed her indeed; she sought and could not find in him anything not fine. She dared not show him her sense of her own insignificance beside him. It seemed to her that, knowing this, he might sooner cease to love her; and she dreaded nothing now so much as losing his love, though she had no grounds for fearing it. But she could not help being grateful to him for his attitude to her, and showing that she appreciated it. He, who had in her opinion such a marked aptitude for a political career, in which he would have been certain to play a leading part--he had sacrificed his ambition for her sake, and never betrayed the slightest regret. He was

more lovingly respectful to her than ever, and the constant care that she should feel the awkwardness of her position never deserted him for a single instant. He, so manly a man, never opposed her, had indeed, with her, no will of his own, and was anxious, it seemed, for nothing but to anticipate her wishes. And she could not but appreciate this, even though the very intensity of his solicitude for her, the atmosphere of care with which he surrounded her, sometimes weighed upon her. Vronsky, meanwhile, in spite of the complete realization of what he had so long desired, was not perfectly happy. He soon felt that the realization of his desires gave him no more than a grain of sand out of the mountain of happiness he had expected. It showed him the mistake men make in picturing to themselves happiness as the realization of their desires. For a time after joining his life to hers, and putting on civilian dress, he had felt all the delight of freedom in general of which he had known nothing before, and of freedom in his love,--and he was content, but not for long. He was soon aware that there was springing up in his heart a desire for desires--ennui. Without conscious intention he began to clutch at every passing caprice, taking it for a desire and an object. Sixteen hours of the day must be occupied in some way, since they were living abroad in complete freedom, outside the conditions of social life which filled up time in Petersburg. As for the amusements of bachelor existence, which had provided Vronsky with entertainment on previous tours abroad, they could not be thought of, since the sole attempt of the sort had led to a sudden attack of depression in Anna, quite out of proportion with the cause--a late supper with bachelor friends. Relations with the society of the place--foreign and Russian--were equally out of the question owing to the irregularity of their position. The inspection of objects of interest, apart from the fact that

*everything had been seen already, had not for Vronsky, a Russian and a sensible man, the immense significance Englishmen are able to attach to that pursuit .*

*(Anna Karenina, Part 8, Ch. 8).*

Anna, however, is no casual adulteress. Her love for Vronsky is a deep and lasting passion for which she is prepared to flout convention, sacrifice her security, leave her husband's home, and compromise him openly. She places herself beyond the pale of her social class, but only because of the manner in which she transgresses its hypocritical moral code. Her real suffering begins, not when she deserts her husband, but when she receives the snubs of her friends. In a happy mood just before the birth of his child, Levin is moved to visit Anna. She receives him with the gracious manner of a woman of good society, self-possessed and natural. He immediately becomes at ease and comfortable as though he had known her from childhood. But after he returns home he suffers revulsion of feeling and, encouraged by Kitty, he thinks of Anna again as a fallen woman. She is the outsider, shut off from the self-confident life of the family. Indeed, the contrast between the marriage of Levin and Kitty, which moves ever outward to include more and more of society, and the affair of Vronsky and Anna, which leaves Anna in her carriage looking out on a city that has finally exiled her socially, only serves to intensify our sympathy for her plight. It is a measure of the moral balance Tolstoy preserves in his portrayal of Anna that he persuades his readers to judge her severely, but with compassion.

**e. Tolstoy – A moral socialist.**

Widely regarded as a pinnacle in realistic fiction Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* is sketching subtlest human gestures and human emotions in a fictional canvas. Real characters, splendid imagination, dare style and a deep look into the contemporary society adds colours to the writer's pen. Although published in serial installments from 1873 to 1877 in the periodical *Ruskii Vestnik*; the novel's first complete appearance was in book form. Tolstoy wrote and rewrote the novel several times to make it a perfect masterpiece after his *War and Peace*. He created his own autobiographical character Konstantin Dmitrievitch Levin, who becomes a major protagonist in the novel. Levin is a wealthy landowner from the provinces who could move in aristocratic circles, but who prefers to work on his estate in the country. Levin tries unsuccessfully to fit into high society when wooing the young Kitty Shcherbatsky in Moscow; he wins her only when he allows himself to be himself.

As a religious and ethical thinker Tolstoy has been criticized for the extremism, and sometimes the absurdity, of his ideas. Many critics have also found it difficult to reconcile Tolstoy's lifestyle with his profession of such an extreme ethical code. Tolstoy himself was acutely aware of the contradiction between his aristocratic upbringing and his later renunciation of elitism, and some critics have speculated that this is the reason for his doctrine of often excessive asceticism. However, he has also been admired for the gigantism of his ambition to discover absolute laws governing humanity's ethical and spiritual obligations amid the psychological and social complexities of the world. Whatever form Tolstoy's doctrines took, they were always founded



on his expansive humanitarianism and based on one of the most intensive quests for wisdom in human history. Although Tolstoy ultimately believed that art should serve a religious and ethical code, he himself serves primarily as a model of the consummate artist, and his greatest works are exemplary of the nature and traditions of modern literature.

In the novel no deviations are made from human nature's exacting and often cruel demands. Anna has a premonition that she will die in childbirth. By her bedside at this solemn and crucial time her sour, formal husband and her lover are reconciled. Karenin's forgiveness has an air of finality and Vronsky's conscience seems deeply moved by the realization of the sin he had committed. At this point another novelist might have made a concession to the public's fondness for a happy ending. Dostoevsky thought it the greatest scene in the work, one in which guilt is spiritualized and mortal enemies are transformed into brothers before the specter of death. Had he been writing the story, this experience would no doubt have profoundly altered the lives of the participants for the rest of the novel. Mathew Arnold who, in praising the special quality of the work as superior to the "petri lied feeling" of Flaubert's 'Madama Bovary perceptively stresses Tolstoy's treasures of comparison' for Anna. Tolstoy's element of subjectivity in portraying Anna is objectified whereas the reverse is true in the case of some of the characters in "*War and Peace*." In the endless disharmony between life as it is and life as it should be Tolstoy directs his art, as did Chekov, to the problem of rebellion against reality in pursuit of an unrealizable ideal. Anna as a girl was thrust in to an arranged loveless marriage to Karenin, a man whose self-esteem was matched

by his utter imperviousness' to the human factors involved in the daily business of living together. Tolstoy ironically says of him that in devoting his entire life to his duties he even lacked the human weakness necessary to fall in love. According to Anna, it is a dull but socially secure relationship eventually made tolerable by force of habit and particularly by her devotion to her young son Seryozha. Chance throws her into the company of Vronsky, a handsome young Guards officer. They are attracted to each other. Some reflecting on Anna's moral scruples at this point criticize her securely quick and easy capitulation to Vronsky. Tolstoy with utmost Psychological skill, analyzes the conscious and unconscious elements of Anna's nature and the planned various circumstances of her daily existence that are transformed step by step. This dawning emotion is answered by Vronsky's persisted attentions which are an outgrowth of his equally sincere love for her. Anna's ultimate surrender comes only after long heart searching into what her marriage with Karenin had been and would continue to be, and in the full tide of a mature woman's yearning to alter that life with a love she had never experienced.

Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* was an art form, superbly designed to create life. '*Anna Karenina*' provides much information on the contemporary Russian social and cultural scene. But variegated matter artistically used to advance the novel's action and develop its characters. Levin is the focus for vivid pictures of country life but he is also deeply involved in practical agricultural questions that agitated the gentry and peasantry after the emancipation.

The argumentation positions taken by various characters in Anna

Karenina on other controversial issues such as divorce laws, spiritualism, women's education, military service and the Serbian revolt are consistent with their developing personalities. Tolstoy's views on these matters are implicit if not directly stated. In fact his mounting antagonism to governmental abuses and the failings and hypocrisy of high society flows through the novel with a superior intellect and the vibrant quality of his personality. But his interest in the classes and in social problems was by no means inclusive. If he concentrated in *Anna Karenina*, as he had done in "war and peace," on the upper classes and seemed uninterested in merchants, one character in *Anna Karenina* acts as a mouth piece for Tolstoy, it is Levin. More than this there is a considerable element of the autobiographical in his portrayal. The courtship, marriage and the life together of Kitty and Levin closely resemble Tolstoy's experiences.

Tolstoy with keen artistic insight, intentionally left the 'why' in Anna's tragic history unanswered, much as Dostoevsky avoided any detailed explanation of who Raskolnikov murdered, perhaps it is the artist's realization that among disturbed natures under terrible human stress there never is any delimitive reason why a crucial final action is taken, and it may well be that, psychologically, there can be none. Tolstoy like Dostoevsky was concerned primarily with stating with consummate skill all the problems involved in the simple or complex lives of his men and women.

Tolstoy's artistic ideals and techniques been as completely realized as in *Anna Karenina*. As in "War and Peace", there are slips in chronology and in the sequence of actions of some of the characters and critics have offered

adverse opinions, often with little justification, on matters of structure, characterization, psychology and style. But the magnificence of the whole artistic accomplishment darts these structures into insignificance. The structure, somewhat like that of *War and Peace*, is built upon on a series of contrasts and parallels involving the three main groupings of characters: Anna and Vronsky, Kitty and Levin, Dolly and Oblonsky in which the development of plot, the personality and actions are made intimately more meaningful through the interaction of the groups in which the ironies and coincidences of life play their part. There are really two novels in *Anna Karenina*, one about Anna and Vronsky and another about Kitty and Levin.

Tolstoy's art of individualizing his numerous characters, so evident in *War and Peace*, loses none of its effectiveness in *Anna Karenina*. If anything, he adds to his psychologizing a deeper, more searching moral probing. And even more so than in *War and Peace*, he creates in *Anna Karenina* the baffling impression, which is the quintessence of his realism, that somehow the characters are telling their own stories without the author's interposition beyond that of acting as an occasional commentator. At times this effect seems to be something less than illusory. That is, characters appear to retain their freedom of action and behave in ways not anticipated by their creator, or they act a new part in a new situation without ceasing to be themselves. As for style, critics are not always aware of Tolstoy's enormous labour over it.

Despite some occasional lapses *Anna Karenina* follows a perfect instrument for conveying meaning with lucidity and the tonal qualities and

speech traits of the characters. For example in the famous passages when Anna before her suicide reads the book of her life by candle light which wavers and then goes out for ever, the force of the passage is not in the symbolism of the rather common place image, but in the rhythm and suggestiveness of the language. For power and grandeur there are few passages to compare with it in Russian literature. The psychological analysis of the characters is more effective than that of war and peace. But beyond the display of extraordinary knowledge of human nature in Anna Karenina, there is a still rarer quality, especially for fiction in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Levin reflects Tolstoy's own moral struggle and the novel progresses according to its author's evolving philosophy.

### **C. RESURRECTION – A SPIRITUAL BIOGRAPHY OF TOLSTOY**

The novel is in many respects an amazingly accurate portrayal of the spiritual biography of Tolstoy, and though this may detract from it as an artistic performance, it provides rich and authoritative material for all who wish to understand the tremendous moral and religious struggle of one of the foremost thinkers in the latter half of the nineteenth century. For the essence of much that Tolstoy thought and suffered during and after his spiritual travail is condensed in the pages of this novel.

Tolstoy's realistic attitude is vindicated in the choice of the subject of the novel. The theme had been supplied by his good friend, the eminent jurist and writer A. F. Koni. He told Tolstoy the story of a man who had come to him for legal aid. As a youth this man had seduced a pretty orphan

girl of sixteen who had been taken into the home of a relative of the young man when her parents died. Once her benefactress observed the girl's pregnant condition, she drove her away. Abandoned by her seducer, the girl, after hopeless attempts to earn an honest livelihood, became a prostitute. Detected in stealing money from one of her drunken "guests" in a brothel, the girl was arrested. On the jury that tried the case fate placed her seducer. His conscience awakened to the injustice of his behaviour, he decided to marry the girl, who was sentenced to four months in prison. Koni concluded his story by relating that the couple did actually marry, but shortly after her sentence expired, the girl died from typhus.

Tolstoy's "*Resurrection*" is a long complex narrative filled with the stuff of life, and contains a more pervasive autobiographical content. It is many respect the story of his spiritual biography, for the novel's hero Nekhlyudov, not only reflects his characteristic traits, but also becomes the mouthpiece of his creator's moral and religious views. The period of the hero's youthful idealism, which is submerged in the debauchery of life in the army and high society, bears obvious parallel to Tolstoy's experiences. After his attack of conscience at the trial of Maslova, whom he had seduced ten years before Nekhlyudov's moral crisis and search for the meaning of life begin.

Like Tolstoy's earlier masterpieces of fiction, *Resurrection* is a long complex narrative filled with the stuff of life. It contains a more pervasive autobiographical content. The novel's theme appears also to have stirred Tolstoy's guilty conscience in connection with a similar incident in his own

life. Once Tolstoy told his Russian biographer about ‘a crime’ which, he said, “I committed with the maid Masha in my aunts house. She was a virgin is reduced her, and she was dismissed and came to grief”. His wife, while continuing her husband’s story, indicates that he exaggerated its unhappy consequences. Much other material from Tolstoy’s life is drawn up on and some of the characters are modeled on real people, such as Todorov.

The period of the hero’, Nekhlyudov, not only reflects his characteristic traits, but also becomes the mouthpiece of his creators moral and religious views. The period of the hero’s youthful idealism, which is submerged in the debauchery of life in the army and high society, bears obvious parallels to Tolstoy’s experiences. After his attack of conscience at the trial of the prostitute Katyusha Maslova, who as a pure girl he had seduced ten years before, Nekhlyndov's moral crisis and search for the meaning of life begin. His spiritual awakening is patterned on Tolstoy’s and he reaches much the same convictions.

“*Resurrection*” the novel by Leo Tolstoy unravels many positions and negative interpretations and evaluations in the critical world. Prominent among them are on or against it’s over all spiritual out look. But I think it’s real peculiarity lies in it’s indebtedness towards the marginalized sections of the society, such as women prisoners, peasants etc... perhaps that is why Tolstoy introduced for the fist time a poor female character as the heroine of this novel.

**a. A Novel about the marginalized.**

*“Resurrection”* is the last of Tolstoy's great novels and unlike the previous *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* the architectural lines are fairly unique. Whereas in the previous novels attention is continually shifted from one hero to another, in *Resurrection* Tolstoy follows Dimitri Nekhlydov step by step, drilling to the core of his thoughts, commenting on his actions, analyzing his motives, evincing his engendered acts, and verbalizing the purging of his soul that inexorably manifests into a non-Christian regeneration process. Tolstoy hardly lets Nekhlydov out of sight for an instant: his conscience continually demands of him to atone for his sin. Interwoven with the flow of the story is Nekhlydov's painful realization of the demoralization that develops into such perfect madness of selfishness.

The tale deeply moved Tolstoy, and its effect may well have been connected with an acute stirring of conscience. For shortly before his death he told his biographer of two seductions in his own life which he could somehow never forget. "The second," he said, "was the crime "I committed with the servant Masha in my aunt's house. She was a virgin. I seduced her, and she was dismissed and perished." At first he urged Koni, a very talented person, to publish the account for *Intermediary*, the firm that Tolstoy established to market inexpensive moral booklets for the masses. Koni agreed to do this. When a year passed and he failed to fulfill his promise, Tolstoy asked to be allowed to make use of the story.

Tolstoy's efforts to cast this incident of real life into literary form were



repeatedly interrupted by the manifold activities and extensive polemical writings growing out of his spiritual revelation. Only with some reluctance did he devote his few free hours to the creation of fiction, and it is possible that '*Resurrection*' might never have been finished if it had not been for a special set of circumstances. The government's long and cruel persecution of the Dukhobors, a peasant sect that practiced a form of Christian communism not far removed from Tolstoy's own preaching, and among other things rejected military service, had reached a crucial stage. For several years he and his followers had been aiding the Dukhobors. Now it was decided that the most practical remedy for their misfortunes was to have them emigrate. The Russian government was willing, and Canada agreed to accept them pretty much on their own terms. The problem was to obtain money to transport and settle in Canada some twelve thousand sectarians. Tolstoy helped to organize a campaign to raise funds. Although he had surrendered the copyrights of all his works written since his spiritual change and allowed anyone to publish them free, he now decided to sell a novel and devote the proceeds to the fund to aid the emigration of the Dukhobors. Going over his portfolio of unfinished manuscripts, he settled upon '*Resurrection*' as the one calculated to earn the most money, and he set to work with a will to complete this long novel.

The novel puts the readers concern mainly towards the plight of Maslova's story rather than Nekhlyudov. Maslova is an orphan girl who grew in a luxurious bungalow with two old ladies; they brought up her as half servant and half young lady. Maslova rejects many marriage proposals only

because of her complex nature; she felt that life as the wife of any working man who was courting her would be too hard for her and would spoil her easy life. She considered labour work as inferior one. Tolstoy could not afford this concept because he stood and strive for the workingmen and for their well-being. Tolstoy considered the peasants and workers are the basement of any civilization. Here Maslova has forgotten her past family background. She was born as an illegitimate child and her mother actually did not wish to bring up her.

*During that summer on his aunts` estate, Nekhludov passed through that blissful state of existence when a young man for the first time, without guidance from anyone outside, realises all the beauty and significance of life, and the importance of the task allotted in it to man; when he grasps the possibility of unlimited advance towards perfection for one`s self and for all the world, and gives himself to this task, not only hopefully, but with full conviction of attaining to the perfection he imagines. In that year, while still at the University, he had read Spencer`s Social Static`s, and Spencer`s views on landholding especially impressed him, as he himself was heir to large estates. His father had not been rich, but his mother had received 10,000 acres of land for her dowry. At that time he fully realised all the cruelty and injustice of private property in land, and being one of those to whom a sacrifice to the demands of conscience gives the highest spiritual enjoyment, he decided not to retain property rights, but to give up to the peasant labourers the land he had inherited from his father. It was on this land question he wrote his essay.*

*He arranged his life on his aunts` estate in the following manner. He got up very early, sometimes at three o`clock, and*

*before sunrise went through the morning mists to bathe in the river, under the hill. He returned while the dew still lay on the grass and the flowers. Sometimes, having finished his coffee, he sat down with his books of reference and his papers to write his essay, but very often, instead of reading or writing, he left home again, and wandered through the fields and the woods. Before dinner he lay down and slept somewhere in the garden. At dinner he amused and entertained his aunts with his bright spirits, then he rode on horseback or went for a row on the river, and in the evening he again worked at his essay, or sat reading or playing patience with his aunts.*

*His joy in life was so great that it agitated him, and kept him awake many a night, especially when it was moonlight, so that instead of sleeping he wandered about in the garden till dawn, alone with his dreams and fancies.*

*And so, peacefully and happily, he lived through the first month of his stay with his aunts, taking no particular notice of their half-ward, half-servant, the black-eyed, quick-footed Katyusha. Then, at the age of nineteen, Nekhludov, brought up under his mother`s wing, was still quite pure. If a woman figured in his dreams at all it was only as a wife. All the other women, who, according to his ideas he could not marry, were not women for him, but human beings.*

*But on Ascension Day that summer, a neighbour of his aunts`, and her family, consisting of two young daughters, a schoolboy, and a young artist of peasant origin who was staying with them, came to spend the day. After tea they all went to play in the meadow in front of the house, where the grass had already been mown. They played at the game of Gorelki and Katyusha joined them. Running about and changing partners several times, Nekhlyudov caught Katyusha, and she became his*

partner. Up to this time he had liked Katyusha`s looks, but the possibility of any nearer relations with her had never entered his mind.

"Impossible to catch those two," said the merry young artist, whose turn it was to catch, and who could run very fast with his short, muscular legs.

"You! And not catch us?" said Katyusha.

"One, two, three," and the artist clapped his hands. Katyusha, hardly restraining her laughter, changed places with Nekhlyudov, behind the artist`s back, and pressing his large hand with her little rough one, and rustling with her starched petticoat, ran to the left. Nekhlyudov ran fast to the right, trying to escape from the artist, but when he looked round he saw the artist running after Katyusha, who kept well ahead, her firm young legs moving rapidly. There was a lilac bush in front of them, and Katyusha made a sign with her head to Nekhlyudov to join her behind it, for if they once clasped hands again they were safe from their pursuer, that being a rule of the game. He understood the sign, and ran behind the bush, but he did not know that there was a small ditch overgrown with nettles there. He stumbled and fell into the nettles, already wet with dew, stinging his bands, but rose immediately, laughing at his mishap.

Katyusha, with her eyes black as sloes, her face radiant with joy, was flying towards him, and they caught hold of each other`s hands.

"Got stung, I daresay?" she said, arranging her hair with her free hand, breathing fast and looking straight up at him with a glad, pleasant smile.

*"I did not know there was a ditch here," he answered, smiling also, and keeping her hand in his. She drew nearer to him, and he himself, not knowing how it happened, stooped towards her. She did not move away, and he pressed her hand tight and kissed her on the lips.*

*"There! You've done it!" she said; and, freeing her hand with a swift movement, ran away from him. Then, breaking two branches of white lilac from which the blossoms were already falling, she began fanning her hot face with them; then, with her head turned back to him, she walked away, swaying her arms briskly in front of her, and joined the other players.*

*After this there grew up between Nekhlyudov and Katyusha those peculiar relations which often exist between a pure young man and girl who are attracted to each other.*

*When Katyusha came into the room, or even when he saw her white apron from afar, everything brightened up in Nekhlyudov's eyes, as when the sun appears everything becomes more interesting, more joyful, more important. The whole of life seemed full of gladness. And she felt the same. But it was not only Katyusha's presence that had this effect on Nekhlyudov. The mere thought that Katyusha existed (and for her that Nekhlyudov existed) had this effect.*

*When he received an unpleasant letter from his mother, or could not get on with his essay, or felt the unreasoning sadness that young people are often subject to, he had only to remember Katyusha and that he should see her, and it all vanished. Katyusha had much work to do in the house, but she managed to get a little leisure for reading, and Nekhlyudov gave her Dostoevsky and Tourgenov (whom he had just read himself) to read. She liked Tourgenov's Lull best. They had talks at*

*moments snatched when meeting in the passage, on the veranda, or the yard, and sometimes in the room of his aunts' old servant, Matrona Pavlovna, with whom he sometimes used to drink tea, and where Katyusha used to work.*

*These talks in Matrona Pavlovna's presence were the pleasantest. When they were alone it was worse. Their eyes at once began to say something very different and far more important than what their mouths uttered. Their lips puckered, and they felt a kind of dread of something that made them part quickly. These relations continued between Nekhlyudov and Katyusha during the whole time of his first visit to his aunts'. They noticed it, and became frightened, and even wrote to Princess Elena Ivanovna, Nekhlyudov's mother. His aunt, Mary Ivanovna, was afraid Dmitri would form an intimacy with Katyusha; but her fears were groundless, for Nekhlyudov, himself hardly conscious of it, loved Katyusha, loved her as the pure love, and therein lay his safety--his and hers. He not only did not feel any desire to possess her, but the very thought of it filled him with horror. The fears of the more poetical Sophia Ivanovna, that Dmitri, with his thoroughgoing, resolute character, having fallen in love with a girl, might make up his mind to marry her, without considering either her birth or her station, had more ground.*

*Had Nekhlyudov at that time been conscious of his love for Katyusha, and especially if he had been told that he could on no account join his life with that of a girl in her position, it might have easily happened that, with his usual straightforwardness, he would have come to the conclusion that there could be no possible reason for him not to marry any girl whatever, as long as he loved her. But his aunts did not mention their fears to him; and, when he left, he was still unconscious of his love for*

*Katyusha. He was sure that what he felt for Katyusha was only one of the manifestations of the joy of life that filled his whole being, and that this sweet, merry little girl shared this joy with him. Yet, when he was going away, and Katyusha stood with his aunts in the porch, and looked after him, her dark, slightly-squinting eyes filled with tears, he felt, after all, that he was leaving something beautiful, precious, something which would never reoccur. And he grew very sad.*

(*Resurrection*, Book 1, Ch. 12)

When we analyse Maslova's life we can get a different picture. When a nephew of the old ladies, a rich young prince called Nekhlyudov, visits there and stays with them. Maslova and Nekhlyudov quickly became friends and even fell in love. Two years later Nekhlyudov again visits there and in one of the nights he seduced Maslova and departs by offering her one hundred rubles. Five months later she comes to know that she was pregnant, and decides to leave the bungalow. In Nekhlyudov as in every man, exist two beings, one the spiritual, seeking only that kind of happiness of the rest of the world. At this time, this animal man ruled supreme and completely crushing the spiritual man in him. But here, Maslova is also responsible for her destiny.

Maslova wandered in search for a job, but unable to get one she had been compelled to accept the job of a registered sex-worker. The plights of sex-workers are seriously narrated in *Resurrection*. The weekend compulsory medical check-up, sleepless busy nights, financial exploitations and finally the awaiting certainty of disease related death etc... are critically

discussed in it. Besides criticizing the harassment of brothels, and the immorality of sex work Tolstoy Unveils what is happening behind the curtain of elite humanism, we could see many examples of illegal relationship between educated, married and grown up man and women in this novel.

While Maslova was being led in to court, Nekhlyudov, her seducer, lay in bed considering his position. Although he had been having an affair with a married woman, he was almost engaged to marry Princess Mary Korchaghin. When he arose he was reminded that he had to serve that day as a jury in the criminal court.

In court, Nekhlyudov was astonished to see that the defendant was Maslova, falsely accused of helping to rob and poison the merchant. The trial was disgusting because of the self-interest of the officials, who were vain, stupid and more concerned with formalities than with the fair judgment of the accused.

When Nekhlyudov was a student at the University he would spend his summer with his ants, and it was there that he first came to know and to like Maslova. He gave her books to read and eventually fell in love with her. When he next returned three years later, military life had made him depraved and selfish and he reduced her. The next day he gave her some money and left for his regiment. When he returned after the war, he learned that she had become pregnant and had gone away. Some what relived, he had tried to forget her.



Now, at the trial, Nekhlyudov saw Maslova with a mixture of loathing and pity. At first he was afraid that his relation to her would be discovered, and then he began to feel remorse for the life to which he had driven her. Because of a careless legalistic oversight by the jury, the innocent Maslova was sentenced to four years at hard labour in Siberia. Moved by his uneasy conscience, Nekhlyudov went to a lawyer to discuss the possibility of an appeal.

Later, when Nekhlyudov was with the Korchagins, he realized that their life was empty and degenerate and he felt the need to cleanse his soul. He determined that he would marry Maslova and give up his land.

Nekhlyudov went to the prison and revealed himself to Maslova, but she treated him coldly. She seemed proud of her occupation as a prostitute. Because it alone gave some meaning to her otherwise empty life. The next time he visited her, she behaved coarsely to him, and when he said that he wanted to marry her, she became angry with him and returned to her cell.

On his next visit to the prison Nekhlyudov was told that Maslova could not be seen because she had become drunk on vodka bought with money he had given her. He then went to see Vera Donkhova, a revolutionist acquaintance who had sent him a note from the prison. He was surprised at the inordinate pride Vera took in the sacrifices she had made for the revolutionary cause. Vera told him to get Maslova in to the prison hospital as a nurse, so that conditions would be better for her. Nekhlyudov arranged to have Maslova transferred.

By this time Nekhlyudov was no longer joyful at the prospect of marrying Maslova. Still determined to go through with his plan, however he started out on a journey to settle his estates in at anticipation of his departure for Siberia. At Panovo he saw the miserable conditions of the people. He saw Maslova's aunt and learned about the death of his child at the foundling hospital. He gave up his little to the land at Panovo and arranged to the peasants to have communal holdings in it, an act that brought him great joy.

Nekhlyudov then went to St. Petersburg. His chief reason was to appeal Maslova's case to the senate and to try to secure the release of Lydia shoustova, an innocent prisoner who was Vera's friend. In St. Petersburg he came within the aristocratic circle of his aunt, Katerina Ivanovna, who claimed to be interested in evangelism but who had no pity for the unfortunate of the world. Nekhlyudov went to see various prominent people on the business, which had taken him to St. Petersburg. The next day he learned that Lydia had been released.

Maslova's case was put before the senate. Because one of the senators stayed himself a Darwinian and thought that Nekhlyudov's morality in the case was disgusting, the girl's sentence was up hold. On the same day Nekhlyudov met an old friend, Selenin, now a public prosecutor, an intelligent, honest man but one who had been drawn in to the tangled web of "corrupt" society and its standards. Nekhlyudov began to see the same principle at work in all official circles. Condemn some who might be innocent in order to be assumed of catching the truly guilty.

Back in Moscow, Nekhlyudov went to see Maslova to have her sign a petition to the emperor. During his visit he felt love taking hold of him once more. Maslova also loved Nekhlyudov, but she felt that marriage to a woman like her would be bad for him.

While Nekhlyudov was preparing for his journey to Siberia with Maslova, he began to study and to think about the nature of criminal law. Although he began to react much on the subject, he could not find the answer to his desire to know by what right some people punish others. He also began to feel that the only reasonable kinds of punishment were corporal and capital, which were unfortunate but at least effective, while imprisonment was simply unfortunate.

On the long march to Siberia, Nekhlyudov followed the prisoners and saw Maslova whenever possible. He also saw the horrible conditions of the exiles. Nekhlyudov began to have a new love for Maslova, a feeling composed of tenderness and pity. He also learned to understand the point of view of the revolutionists, since Maslova had been allowed to travel with the political prisoners. One of these, Simonson, fell in love with Maslova. He told Nekhlyudov that he wished to marry her but she wanted Nekhlyudov to decide for her. Nekhlyudov said that he would be pleased to know that Maslova was well cared for. When she learned of his answer, Maslova would not speak to Nekhlyudov.

At a remote town in Eastern Siberia, Nekhlyudov collected his mails and learned that Maslova's sentence to hard labor had been commuted to exile

in a less remote region of Siberia. When he went to tell Maslova the news, he realized how much he wanted to have a family. Maslova said that she preferred to stay with Simon sons, however, she refused to stay that she loved him. She told Nekhlyudov that he would have to live his own life.

Nekhlyudov felt that he was not needed any longer and that his affair with Maslova was ended. He saw that evil existed because those who tried to correct it were themselves evil and that society is preserved, not because of systems of punishments, but because of human pity and love. Because he realized that the Sermon on the Mount could indeed be a practical law, which it connect out would establish perfectly new conditions of local life, the kingdom of heaven on earth can be attained. There a new life began for Nekhlyudov.

#### **b. Tolstoy's narrative technique in characterization**

Tolstoy used very simple narrative technique in *Resurrection*. While reading the novel many striking dramatic scenes and beautiful rural landscape come quite naturally to the reader's minds. For example; the trial scene, the compartment of the train, Siberian village etc. Rural landscape is another striking element of the novel. Tolstoy used elaborate description of natural beauties such as trees, winds, streams, climates etc... for conveying the clear atmosphere of the situation. While analyzing Maslova, it is very interesting to observe her character formation. The true bitter experiences teach her many lessons and gradually she becomes a woman of extreme quality.

The Chapter titled *The Peasants Lot* gives Tolstoy's meticulous attention to descriptive details.

*When Nekhlyudov came out of the gate he met the girl with the long earrings on the well-trodden path that lay across the pasture ground, overgrown with dock and plantain leaves. She had a long, brightly-coloured apron on, and was quickly swinging her left arm in front of herself as she stepped briskly with her fat, bare feet. With her right arm she was pressing a fowl to her stomach. The fowl, with red comb shaking, seemed perfectly calm; he only rolled up his eyes and stretched out and drew in one black leg, clawing the girl's apron. When the girl came nearer to "the master," she began moving more slowly, and her run changed into a walk. When she came up to him she stopped, and, after a backward jerk with her head, bowed to him; and only when he had passed did she recommence to run homeward with the cock. As he went down towards the well, he met an old woman, who had a coarse dirty blouse on, carrying two pails full of water that hung on a yoke across her bent back. The old woman carefully put down the pails and bowed, with the same backward jerk of her head.*

*After passing the well Nekhlyudov entered the village. It was a bright, hot day, and oppressive, though only ten o'clock. At intervals the sun was hidden by the gathering clouds. An unpleasant, sharp smell of manure filled the air in the street. It came from carts going up the hillside, but chiefly from the disturbed manure heaps in the yards of the huts, by the open gates of which Nekhlyudov had to pass. The peasants, barefooted, their shirts and trousers soiled with manure, turned to look at the tall, stout gentleman with the glossy silk ribbon on his grey hat who was walking up the village street, touching the ground every other step with a shiny, bright-knobbed walking-*

*stick. The peasants returning from the fields at a trot and jotting in their empty carts, took off their hats, and, in their surprise, followed with their eyes the extraordinary man who was walking up their street. The women came out of the gates or stood in the porches of their huts, pointing him out to each other and gazing at him as he passed.*

*When Nekhlyudov was passing the fourth gate, he was stopped by a cart that was coming out, its wheels creaking, loaded high with manure, which was pressed down, and was covered with a mat to sit on. A six-year-old boy, excited by the prospect of a drive, followed the cart. A young peasant, with shoes plaited out of bark on his feet, led the horse out of the yard. A long-legged colt jumped out of the gate; but, seeing Nekhlyudov, pressed close to the cart, and scraping its legs against the wheels, jumped forward, past its excited, gently-neighing mother, as she was dragging the heavy load through the gateway. The next horse was led out by a barefooted old man, with protruding shoulder-blades, in a dirty shirt and striped trousers. When the horses got out on to the hard road, strewn over with bits of dry, grey manure, the old man returned to the gate, and bowed to Nekhlyudov.*

(Resurrection, Book 4, Ch. 2)

Tolstoy divides his novel in to three parts. Part one, is the offence, the trial, the verdict and the discrediting of the law, its satire is directed again legal institutions. Part two is an attempt to use the law to make right the law itself and its target is the bureaucracy. Part three, tried to show that it is possible to change human beings; and the cruel satire gives way to an attempt to understand and live with the victim of state oppression.

Only in the novels first part wonderful creative exhilaration of the artist is manifested. For example, the love scene depicted between the hero and heroine on the Easter eve. In the second and third parts of Resurrection, Tolstoy ignores his former conception of the novel, which should enable people to weep and laugh over it and fall in love with the life in it. At times, in fact Resurrection becomes a blatant purpose novel in which the depiction of life is over whelmed by special pleading as the author's views trued, although he tries to disguise this with a measure of objectivity institutions and aspects of contemporary society are directly attacked. Government, the law, the administration of justice, the church bureaucracy, capital punishment, class differences and sexual morality. Occasionally the lapses of taste are also found in it, such as his blasphemously satiric account of san Orthodox Church service. And in the maligned group of revolutionary intelligentsia he portrayed, he seems to have missed their real historical significance. But in general polemical positions are argued with consummate skill in which satire, irony and paradox are effectively employed.

Throughout the novel are remarkable scenes and characterizations in the style of the "Saturated realism" of war and peace and Anna Karenina which reveal that the securely-year old author had lost none of his artistic powers. Chapter 44 of Book I furnishes finer example for descriptive narrative.

*The cell in which Maslova was imprisoned was a large room 21 feet long and 10 feet broad; it had two windows and a large stove. Two-thirds of the spaces were taken up by shelves used*

*as beds. The planks they were made of had warped and shrunk. Opposite the door hung a dark-coloured icon with a wax candle sticking to it and a bunch of everlastings hanging down from it. By the door to the right there was a dark spot on the floor on which stood a stinking tub. The inspection had taken place and the women were locked up for the night.*

*The occupants of this room were 15 persons, including three children. It was still quite light. Only two of the women were lying down: a consumptive woman imprisoned for theft, and an idiot who spent most of her time in sleep and who was arrested because she had no passport. The consumptive woman was not asleep, but lay with wide open eyes, her cloak folded under her head, trying to keep back the phlegm that irritated her throat, and not to cough.*

*Some of the other women, most of whom had nothing on but coarse brown Holland chemises, stood looking out of the window at the convicts down in the yard, and some sat sewing. Among the latter was the old woman, Korableva, who had seen Maslova off in the morning. She was a tall, strong, gloomy-looking woman; her fair hair, which had begun to turn grey on the temples, hung down in a short plait. She was sentenced to hard labour in Siberia because she had killed her husband with an axe for making up to their daughter. She was at the head of the women in the cell, and found means of carrying on a trade in spirits with them. Beside her sat another woman sewing a coarse canvas sack. This was the wife of a railway watchman, [There are small watchmen's cottages at distances of about one mile from each other along the Russian railways, and the watchmen or their wives have to meet every train.] imprisoned for three months because she did not come out with the flags to meet a train that was passing, and an accident had occurred.*



*She was a short, snub-nosed woman, with small, black eyes; kind and talkative. The third of the women who were sewing was Theodosia, a quiet young girl, white and rosy, very pretty, with bright child's eyes, and long fair plaits which she wore twisted round her head. She was in prison for attempting to poison her husband. She had done this immediately after her wedding (she had been given in marriage without her consent at the age of 16) because her husband would give her no peace. But in the eight months during which she had been let out on bail, she had not only made it up with her husband, but come to love him, so that when her trial came they were heart and soul to one another. Although her husband, her father-in-law, but especially her mother-in-law, who had grown very fond of her, did all they could to get her acquitted, she was sentenced to hard labour in Siberia. The kind, merry, ever-smiling Theodosia had a place next Maslova's on the shelf bed, and had grown so fond of her that she took it upon herself as a duty to attend and wait on her. Two other women were sitting without any work at the other end of the shelf bedstead. One was a woman of about 40, with a pale, thin face, who once probably had been very handsome. She sat with her baby at her thin, white breast. The crime she had committed was that when a recruit was, according to the peasants' view, unlawfully taken from their village, and the people stopped the police officer and took the recruit away from him, she (an aunt of the lad unlawfully taken) was the first to catch hold of the bridle of the horse on which he was being carried off. The other, who sat doing nothing, was a kindly, grey-haired old woman, hunchbacked and with a flat bosom. She sat behind the stove on the bed shelf, and pretended to catch a fat four-year-old boy, who ran backwards and forwards in front of her, laughing gaily. This boy had only a little shirt on and his hair was cut*

short. As he ran past the old woman he kept repeating, "There, haven't caught me!" This old woman and her son were accused of incendiarism. She bore her imprisonment with perfect cheerfulness, but was concerned about her son, and chiefly about her "old man," who she feared would get into a terrible state with no one to wash for him. Besides these seven women, there were four standing at one of the open windows, holding on to the iron bars. They were making signs and shouting to the convicts whom Maslova had met when returning to prison, and who were now passing through the yard. One of these women was big and heavy, with a flabby body, red hair, and freckled on her pale yellow face, her hands, and her fat neck. She shouted something in a loud, raucous voice, and laughed hoarsely. This woman was serving her term for theft. Beside her stood an awkward, dark little woman, no bigger than a child of ten, with a long waist and very short legs, a red, blotchy face, thick lips which did not hide her long teeth, and eyes too far apart. She broke by fits and starts into screeching laughter at what was going on in the yard. She was to be tried for stealing and incendiarism. They called her Khoroshavka. Behind her, in a very dirty grey chemise, stood a thin, miserable-looking pregnant woman, who was to be tried for concealment of theft. This woman stood silent, but kept smiling with pleasure and approval at what was going on below. With these stood a peasant woman of medium height, the mother of the boy who was playing with the old woman and of a seven-year-old girl. These were in prison with her because she had no one to leave them with. She was serving her term of imprisonment for illicit sale of spirits. She stood a little further from the window knitting a stocking, and though she listened to the other prisoners' words she shook her head disapprovingly, frowned, and closed her eyes. But her seven-year-old daughter

*stood in her little chemise, her flaxen hair done up in a little pigtail, her blue eyes fixed, and, holding the red-haired woman by the skirt, attentively listened to the words of abuse that the women and the convicts flung at each other, and repeated them softly, as if learning them by heart. The twelfth prisoner, who paid no attention to what was going on, was a very tall, stately girl, the daughter of a deacon, who had drowned her baby in a well. She went about with bare feet, wearing only a dirty chemise. The thick, short plait of her fair hair had come undone and hung down dishevelled, and she paced up and down the free space of the cell, not looking at any one, turning abruptly every time she came up to the wall.*

*(Resurrection, Book 1, Ch. 44)*

Among the scores of secondary characters in 'Resurrection', hardly any lack that baffling artistic touch of definition and individualization which dazzled readers and critics alike in the great novels of Tolstoy's earlier period. However fleeting their roles may be, the judges and jurymen at the trial, the amazing women inmates of Katyusha's cell, and the various political prisoners are brought to life with a few deft strokes of description and psychological observation. And still more memorably characterized are those creatures of high society and official Moscow and Petersburg life—the Korchagin family, especially the mother and her daughter Missy who vainly hopes to marry Nekhlyudov; the cynical advocate Fanarin who symbolizes the irrelevance of justice in the courts of law; the Vice-Governor Maslenikov whose official duties are regarded as mere append-ages to social climbing; and the general's pretty wife Mariette whose delicate suggestions of a liaison with Nekhlyudov

he regarded as a more reprehensible and much less honest approach than that of the streetwalker who had accosted him.

**c. Distorted family relations.**

The element of distorted family life, which is celebrated widely in, *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, is recurring in *Resurrection* also. This novel depicts the family deterioration and related problems of both the rich and poor families. The space settings of *Resurrection* can be viewed in three different angles, one is all around the peasant life, another one is centered on the upper class elite people and the third one is at the prison or had any direct personal experience of the classed who were directly connected with the prisons. But this narration of the prison life and court proceedings occupies a remarkable place in the history of world literature.

While analyzing *Resurrection* we can find many examples for proving humanitarian credentials. The element of goodness observed and appears in Nekhlyudov's attitudes also, when he comes to know about Maslova's fate. He also thinks that it is absolutely necessary to do all what he could to lighten her fate. From this incident onwards Nekhlyudov's mind and attitudes starts to change. The element of virtue began to grow in his heart and which later reflects through out his life. Now he could not get any enjoyment while spending with Korchagina family, earlier the result was just opposite. In another occasion Nekhlyudov continuously shouts the words "shameful and harried and shameful" with disgust and he thought about his mother and her death after a long period of illness, he had simply wished her to die, but now

the remembers how shameful it was. He now really feels the enormous difference between his past and present. His converted mind could now reveals that it is not greater than what Maslova had been then and what she now was. This thought even makes him free and fearless.

In another incident when Nekhlyudov thinks to pay enough money to an advocate for helping Maslova from her miserable state of conditions, but then a question arose in his mind that whether only paying money could being solace to his mind? From the past experience the answer was definitely, 'no'. So he decides to do something none. Nekhlyudov's humanitarian concerns are projected at many incidents in '*Resurrection*'. Along with Maslova's case Nekhlyudov trying his level best to do favors to other prisoners especially for political prisoners, though he could not understand their aims and motives the concepts of liberation monuments. At the end of the story, Maslova decides to marry Simonson. Nekhlyudov admits it with a heavy heart and goes on his way pursuing his intense search for the meaning of life; he finds the meaning of life in the '*sermon on the mount*'.

#### **d. Attack on social institutions**

The story is overwhelmingly the story of Nekhlyudov, who is imbued with his creator's instinct to discover the purpose of life. In the first part of the novel the hero emerges as a rather fascinating man of action who engages our sympathies in his developing personality. As a member of the gentry — Tolstoy's own class which he knew so well—Nekhlyudov has many of the appealing traits found in Prince Andrei in '*War and Peace*' and Vronsky in

*Anna Karenina*. But unlike these characters, Nekhlyudov is soon confronted by a crisis that transforms him into an intellectual Tolstoyan, a development that seems false to his nature, and more dictated by the author than by life. In the remainder of the novel he is more acted upon than active in a series of situations patently designed to aid him in his search for the meaning of life. And he finds it in the end, very much as Tolstoy did, in the Sermon on the Mount. "A perfectly new life dawned that night for Nekhlyudov", the novel concluded, "not because he had entered into new conditions of life, but because everything he did after that night had a new and quite different meaning for him. How this new period of his life will end, time alone will prove".

The novel starts with the description of Katyusha Maslova; a prisoner was being led out of prison to attend her own trial for murder. Born illegitimate, she had been taken in by Sophia and Maria Ivanova, well-to-do sisters, who cared for her. When she was sixteen, her guardian's nephew, Prince Nekhlyudov, seduced Maslova. When she learned that she was to become a mother, she went to stay with a village midwife. When her child was born it was taken to the founding hospital, where it soon died. After various tribulations Maslova became a prostitute. When she was twenty six she was accused of involving in the murder of a Siberian merchant the charge on which she was to be tried.

Tolstoy creates Maslova, the female character of '*Resurrection*', as an incarnation of tolerance. Because of her truthful and moderate behavior she

escapes from many of the danger situations in her life and remains to face any hazards.

When Maslova comes to certain that Nekhlyudov rejected her and their child, the miseries begins in her life. But she stood courageously and decides to have her life as a challenge and even accepts the life of a prostitute for living. Gradually she becomes strong and experienced character, for her man is mere a selfish being. She suffered a lot of humiliation from men folk. Many of them deceived her at several occasions. She was accused of complicity in the murder of a Siberian merchant, the charge on which she was to be tried. But actually she was innocent. Even from the jury she could not avail justice, but all these miseries are not getting capable to change her attitudes of tolerance.

Finally Nekhlyudov meets her and reveals his intention to marry her. She forgives him but firmly rejects his proposal only for the sake of his own future. Here to shines dignity of character.

In the second and third parts of '*Resurrection*' Tolstoy often ignores his former conception of the novel which should enable people to 'Weep and laugh over it and fall in 'lone' with the life in it'. In fact, *Resurrection* becomes a blatant purpose novel in which the depiction of life is overwhelmed by special pleading as the authors views obtrude; although he endeavors to disguise this with a measure of objectivity. Institutions and aspects of contemporary society are directly attacked. Government, property,

the law, the administration of justice, the church, bureaucracy, capital punishment, class differences, social injustices and sexual morality.

Nekhlyudov's portrayal wins our sympathy. As, a member of the gentry, he possess some of the enjoying qualities of prince Andrei and Vronsky in the earlier novels.

Some of Tolstoy's uncertainty in the hero's later delineation may be included in handling the situation in the final version, the truth of the artist prevails over that of the moralist.

Nekhlyudov follows Katyusha Maslova to her prison Siberia and his patient care of her finally works a moral change and her first pure love for him is restored, although the change is somewhat unconvincing, for Tolstoy strangely enough offers no detailed motivation for it, but this is supplied in her final decision not to marry him. She perceives that his wish is prompted by a self-sacrificing desire to atone for his against her love, she resources, must come from the heart, purged of all self-interest and sentimentality and this he will achieve only through turmoil and suffering in finding his way to his new faith in which she will only be a hindrance. The compromise she settles on is marriage to a fellow-prisoner who loves her with an entirely platonic love. Sex is the incredible victim of the higher synthesis of the Tolstoyan life of the spirit.

**e. Tolstoy a moral socialist.**



The first full length of the novel in twenty years from the celebrated author of '*War and Peace*' and '*Anna Karenina*', and also a man now universally known as a religious reformer and moral thinker, was an event of intense international interest.

*Resurrection* exposes the anger and compassion of a man like Tolstoy, who suffers actually as he sees around him a terrible betrayal of his mission of what man could and should be. It is the anger of the idealist, the seeker after perfection and truth, which we saw especially after his conversion, the follower of Rousseau who dreamt so ardently of a world of love and goodness, truth and happiness. To a great extent the novel reflects Tolstoy's own life. For example Tolstoy in his later years exchanging areas of land to the peasants, a similar incident has been depicted in *Resurrection* hence the protagonist Nekhlyudov performs this role. His life is almost blue print of Tolstoy's own in many ways.

Tolstoy wrote the novel *Resurrection* between the year 1889 and 1899, one of his lawyer friends. A.F. Koni told the essence of the story to him in June 1887. The novel shows the world of the living not the resurrected. The logically clear-cut plot of the novel in short is as follows; a man had committed a crime; he reduced a girl-his first-and did not marry her. The girl came to ruin, but the man, repented, he repented consciously, by finding the true religion and he changed his way to life and was resurrected. Tolstoy given impetus to it by molding the story, in a social and moral out-look.

In '*Resurrection*' there is that same wealth of precise realistic detail which conveys the appearance of indubitable actuality to imagined situations, as well as roundness, completeness, and the vitality of life to his characters. In its enchanting setting, the account of the first pure love of Nekhlyudov and Katyusha Maslova, certainly the finest section of the novel, is all compounded of that same wonderful elusive quality that transformed the girlish loves of Natasha in '*War and Peace*' into the incommunicable poetry of youthful dreams. Tolstoy never did anything more delightfully infectious in fiction than the scene of the Easter service in the village church, where the young hero and heroine, after the traditional Russian greeting "Christ is risen," exchange kisses with the carefree rapture of mingled religious exaltation and dawning affinity for each other.

*Resurrection* was in the tradition of *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*. An evocation of feelings of brotherly love and of the common purpose of all humanity. Despite some magnificent accomplishments in *Resurrection*, it is manifestly inferior to '*War and Peace*' and '*Anna Karenina*'. There is an unpleasant harshness and lack of human sympathy in it, an absence of the rich fullness and unfailing optimism of life so prevalent in the earlier works.

The chapter titled *Maslova's View of Life* is that of Tolstoy's too.

*It is usually imagined that a thief, a murderer, a spy, a prostitute, acknowledging his or her profession as evil, is ashamed of it. But the contrary is true. People, whom fate and their sin-mistakes have placed in a certain position, however*

*false that position may be, form a view of life in general which makes their position seem good and admissible. In order to keep up their view of life, these people instinctively keep to the circle of those people who share their views of life and their own place in it. This surprises us, where the persons concerned are thieves, bragging about their dexterity, prostitutes vaunting their depravity, or murderers boasting of their cruelty. This surprises us only because the circle, the atmosphere in which these people live, is limited, and we are outside it. But can we not observe the same phenomenon when the rich boast of their wealth, i.e., robbery; the commanders in the army pride themselves on victories, i.e., murder; and those in high places vaunt their power, i.e., violence? We do not see the perversion in the views of life held by these people, only because the circle formed by them is more extensive, and we ourselves are moving inside of it.*

*And in this manner Maslova had formed her views of life and of her own position. She was a prostitute condemned to Siberia, and yet she had a conception of life which made it possible for her to be satisfied with herself, and even to pride herself on her position before others.*

*According to this conception, the highest good for all men without exception — old, young, schoolboys, generals, educated and uneducated, was connected with the relation of the sexes; therefore, all men, even when they pretended to be occupied with other things, in reality took this view. She was an attractive woman, and therefore she was an important and necessary person. The whole of her former and present life was a confirmation of the correctness of this conception.*

*With such a view of life, she was by no means the lowest, but a very important person. And Maslova prized this view of life*

more than anything; she could not but prize it, for, if she lost the importance that such a view of life gave her among men, she would lose the meaning of her life. And, in order not to lose the meaning of her life, she instinctively clung to the set that looked at life in the same way as she did. Feeling that Nekhlyudov wanted to lead her out into another world, she resisted him, foreseeing that she would have to lose her place in life, with the self-possession and self-respect it gave her. For this reason she drove from her the recollections of her early youth and her first relations with Nekhlyudov. These recollections did not correspond with her present conception of the world, and were therefore quite rubbed out of her mind, or, rather, lay somewhere buried and untouched, closed up and plastered over so that they should not escape, as when bees, in order to protect the result of their labour, will sometimes plaster a nest of worms. Therefore, the present Nekhlyudov was not the man she had once loved with a pure love, but only a rich gentleman whom she could, and must, make use of, and with whom she could only have the same relations as with men in general.

“No, I could not tell her the chief thing,” thought Nekhlyudov, moving towards the front doors with the rest of the people. “I did not tell her that I would marry her; I did not tell her so, but I will,” he thought. The two warders at the door let out the visitors, counting them again, and touching each one with their hands, so that no extra person should go out, and none remain within. The slap on his shoulder did not offend Nekhlyudov this time; he did not even notice it.

(Resurrection, Ch. 44)

*Resurrection* naturally forces comparison with those supreme works, 'War and Peace' and 'Anna Karenina', and it must be admitted that it falls

below the lofty artistic achievements of these earlier novels. However, its best things, artistically speaking, belong to the narrative method of Tolstoy's earlier fiction rather than to the compressed, direct, and stylistically unadorned manner of the later period after *'What Is Art?'* was written. In *'Resurrection'* there is that same wealth of precise realistic detail which conveys the appearance of indubitable actuality to imagined situations, as well as roundness, completeness, and the vitality of life to his characters. In its enchanting setting, the account of the first pure love of Nekhlyudov and Katyusha Maslova, certainly the finest section of the novel, is all compounded of that same wonderful elusive quality that transformed the girlish loves of Natasha in *'War and Peace'* into the incommunicable poetry of youthful dreams. Tolstoy never did anything more delightfully infectious in fiction than the scene of the Easter service in the village church, where the young hero and heroine, after the traditional Russian greeting "Christ is risen," exchange kisses with the carefree rapture of mingled religious exaltation and dawning affinity for each other. In this area, however, the satirical representations of society are much less objective, and more grim and didactically purposeful than anything in *'War and Peace'* and *'Anna Karenina'*.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude we see that Tolstoy's fame rests on his insight into human behavior placing them in universal significance. All the three works discussed here are almost similar in their theme and treatment with regard to the social and individual concerns in one's life. As a realistic writer the narrative style

of Tolstoy becomes commendable especially these three works are concerned.

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## CHAPTER 2

# **THE TRAGEDY OF MISTAKEN CHOICES IN LIFE AND LOVE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is more descriptive than analytical and the three heroines, Natasha, Anna, Maslova were described under separate subtitle. Their character sketch is given with insights into their individual difference and their suffering has been highlighted. The present chapter deals with the circumstances that led to the suffering of these heroines.

#### **A. NATASHA; NOT ON THE BED OF ROSES**

Among Tolstoy's three major heroines, perhaps the one most central to Tolstoy's meaning and method is Natasha. She anticipates many of the heroines that came in the twentieth century as the spokesperson of feminism. Natasha is a representation of joyful vitality and the ability to experience life fully and boldly. The antithesis of Helene Kuragina, her eventual husband's first wife, Natasha is as lively and spontaneous as Helene is stony and scheming. From infancy to adulthood, Natasha charms everyone who meets her, from the guests of the Rostovs who witness her unintelligible comments about her doll, to Andrei Bolkonski, Anatole Kuragin, and finally Pierre Bezukhov. Yet, despite her charms, Natasha never comes across as a show off or a flirt angling for men's attentions. Whether running in the fields in a yellow dress, singing on her balcony at Otradnoe, or simply sitting in an opera



box, Natasha inspires desire simply by being herself, by existing in her own unique way.

Natasha is one of the main central characters and is notable for her desire to be free and for her intuitive responses. Her engagement to Prince Andrei and the later breakdown of this relationship are both significant events in the novel as they serve to illuminate her guilt, growth into maturity and, sadly, her loss of love for life. Her later marriage to Pierre is emblematic of this novel's favoring of the characters which reject the superficiality of high society. Their marriage also signifies an optimistic faith in regeneration and change for the better

Natasha Rostov is, for pure fascination, the most enthralling character in the book. Tolstoy seems to have drawn her from an actual person his sister-in-law and she has all the reality of a minute portrait. Natasha is beautiful or, it would be more correct to say, has the promise of beauty; she has also a lovely voice; but her most remarkable gift is her power of winning love. From her first introduction she is the idolized of all; she and her younger brother, Petya, are her mother's favourite children; Natasha is the adored of her brothers and her father, and almost every man who visits the house falls in love with her. Tolstoy makes us understand why Natasha is herself prepared to see all that is delightful and all that is good in others; she is highly vitalized; she has strong affections, and an intense joy in life; wherever Natasha is things move; it is she who is always ready to suggest games and amusements; it is she who perceives poetry and romance where others cannot

or only in much less degree. Morning in the forest, a moonlight night in spring, sledging over the snow, music all are to her enrapturing things. That magical period of youth, that period of half-childhood, half-adolescence, when the world is suffused by "the light that never was on sea or land," has nowhere been more beautifully depicted than in her.

It is this romantic charm which so powerfully attracts the somewhat cold but poetic nature of Prince Andrei. In the midst of the gloomy tragedies of bloodshed and battle Natasha Rostov shines like an incarnation of springtime, the very joy of life in a human form. The most beautiful passage in the whole novel is probably that which describes Prince Andrei's first meeting with her.

*He is in a mood of some sadness, and feels, after all his experiences, old beyond his years; he drives to the Rostov's and perceives a number of young girls running among the trees. "In front of the others . . . ran a very slender, indeed a strangely slender maiden, with dark hair and dark eyes, in a yellow chintz dress, with a white handkerchief round her head, the locks emerging from it in ringlets". It is Natasha, and, that same night, Prince Andrei hears her conversing with her cousin Sonya at the window above his own". The night was cool and calmly beautiful. In front of the window was a row of clipped trees, dark on one side and silver-bright on the other. . . . Further away, beyond the trees, was a roof glittering with dew; farther to the right a tall tree with wide-spreading branches, showed a brilliant white bole and limbs; and directly above it the moon, almost at her full, shone in the bright, nearly starless spring night. Prince Andrei leaned his elbows on the window-*

*sill and fixed his eyes on that sky. “He hears Sonya and Natasha sings a duet, he hears Sonya try to persuade her cousin to sleep and Natasha's protest: “Sonya! Sonya! How can you go to sleep? Just see how lovely it is! How lovely! Come wake up, Sonya,” she said again with tears in her voice. “Come, now, such a lovely, lovely night was never seen!” Prince Andrei meets her again at a ball in St. Petersburg, where her childlike happiness brings a breath of pure air into the artificial atmosphere; Natasha is so completely unaffected that, in the very midst of affections, she keeps her unspoilt romance”.*

*(War and Peace, Book 1, Ch.1)*

Her simplicity sometimes makes her naive, however, as when she misunderstands her momentary passion for Anatole and makes absurd plans to elope with him. But Natasha repents her error with a sincerity that elicits forgiveness even from the wronged Andrew on his deathbed. Natasha's spiritual development is not as philosophical or bookish as Pierre's, but it is just as profound. She changes radically by the end of the novel, growing wise in a way that makes her Pierre's spiritual equal.

She enters the novel on her thirteenth birthday. We hear a chair falling over, the sound of footsteps running, and she darts to the middle of the drawing room where her parents are making conversation with their lovesome callers. After leaving the grown-ups, she sees her brother Nicholas making up a quarrel with Sonya by kissing her and tries to get Boris obliged to her in the same way and, when he hesitates, jumps on to a flower tub and kisses him. That evening, when the music begins, she marches into the drawing room and

charms a twenty three years old Pierre to dance with her though she is supposedly in love with Boris. When both Boris and Pierre disappear, she falls in love with Halian, her singing teacher.

At the very outset of her appearance Natasha feels free to fling herself at life, falling endlessly in love, wanting to fly off into the moonlight, shrieking with joy, bursting into song, or may be into fears or doing whatever she feels. Natasha converts all people to her own happy mood. Her responses are volatile and immediate. So immersed in the moment that it seems pointless to her to write to Boris at army camp or write to Prince Andrew when he is abroad writing letters is living retrospectively; and she tries to remember to include what lose their meaning out of context, become dead brutalities. Like a painting or a song, or like life itself, she is enchanting, in a different way depending on each situation, impossible to recapture in retrospect.

Her actions might be startling or beguiling, impatient or even, on occasion, rude. But they are never ridiculous, because they are genuine. They express exactly what she feels, and feels whole heartedly. Even when she has formed notions of her own and wants to play some romantic role, Natasha cannot remain self-conscious long enough to follow through. At the Grane Ball, no sooner does she remember that an air of majesty in the pose to strike than her eyes begin to grow misty, her heart to pound, and there she is back is only part she ever settles for Natasha playing Natasha. Natasha is so fully engaged in matters of the moment that few would have her do so. Her

behaviour may take everyone by surprise. She may even nurse her mother mildly distressed. But for the most part Natasha is so uncalculating yet intuitive about what she can get away with and how to go about it her do so. Her behavior was wildly distressed.

Natasha is one of the most thoughtless of Tolstoy's heroines. She is so uncalculating yet intuitive about what she can get away with and how to go about it, that everyone ends up delighted. Her greatest virtue is the very impulsiveness that makes her unchanging rather than clever, self-absorbed rather than self-conscious, spontaneous rather than calculating by charming those around her she wins their approval, and their approval reinforces her. When Natasha is happy, everyone must be when she depressed.

Thus Natasha's greatest virtue, the very impulsiveness that makes her enchanting rather than clever, self-absorbed rather than self-conscious, spontaneous rather than calculating underlies her particular hubris. For by charming those around her she wins their approval, and their approval reinforces her subtly arrogant assumption that the only world worthy of her concern is the reflection of whatever mood she happens to be in an attitude unthinkable for Sonya. When Natasha is happy, everyone must be; when depressed, others surely shouldn't carry on as though nothing had happened. Natasha would no doubt be less insistent about imposing her momentary outlook on others.

It is the meeting with Prince Andrei that makes Natasha a different person. At the Grand Ball, waiting to be asked to dance she is "prepared for

despair or for rapture"- ready to go either way: the tilt toward child like ecstasy, or toward black but momentary despair from which she is cushioned by her good opinion of herself. As Prince Andrei asks her to dance and grasps her waist for the waltz, the threatened tears are replaced by a radiant smile. So averse is she to blending emotions that, having become a belle of the ball, she cannot understand Pierre's gloom and tries "to bestow on him the superabundance of her own happiness," assuming that "all people [at the ball] were good and kind, and splendid people, loving one another and so they ought to be happy" (P.9). In terms of growth-that is, of intuiting the indivisibility of such opposites as joy and sorrow her first Grand Ball is, quite literally, Natasha's debut, the threshold of her development. At the very moment when she feels so blissful, the naiveté that allows her to be that way is precisely what attracts Prince Andrei, the man through whom she will begin to learn what sorrow means.

Natasha's assumption that she need not play the piper, since he is piping her own tune, causes her no harm as long as her mother is standing guard. While she might dart too far into the middle of this or that, it always works out well. When Nicholas brings his new friend Denisov back home with him on furlough after Austerlitz, "Darling Denisov!" screamed Natasha, beside herself with rapture, springing to him, putting her arms around him and kissing him. This escape made everyone feel confused. Though she is not yet fourteen, "Darling Denisov," hooked by this child who wasn't even fishing, can't resist proposing to her before his visit ends. Natasha's mother

is there to bring everyone to their senses. Again and again, Countess Rostov comes to the rescue, repeating her first remark to this overly impulsive daughter: “There is a time for everything.”

But Natasha realizes that if she is ever to develop, she must face the reality of other people’s compulsions and of her own vulnerability; and she must do so on her own. Until the Grand Ball she has been playing girlhood games – charming at will, flirting with impunity, encouraged by her father’s permissiveness and protected by her mother’s anxiety. To expose her to the real world, Tolstoy must first neutralize the old countess.

The countess has no advice to give because her compulsions are in conflict with her instincts. Her instincts tell her that this frightening stranger, Bolkonski, will make her daughter unhappy; but her obsessive concern for the family’s future makes her equally receptive to so brilliant a match. Effectively planned, she takes the easy way out by leaving it all up to God: This fact is vividly pictured in the following conversation of Natasha and her mother.

*“Mamma, one need not be ashamed of his being a widower?”*

*“Don’t, Natasha! Pray to God. ‘Marriages are made in heaven,’” said the mother.*

*“Darling Mummy, how I love you! How happy I am!” cried Natasha, shedding tears of joy and excitement and embracing her mother.*

*(War and Peace, Book 6, Ch.13).*

The complexity of her response to Prince Andrei – fear combined with attraction – is something new to Natasha; and the ambiguities multiply. When Andrew proposes, she begins to sob – out of happiness, she assures him, but thinks to herself, “There can be no more playing with life.” When she finally realizes that this man, who had titled her so clearly toward happiness when he had first asked her to dance, is now telling her that his love, while strong enough to make him propose, is not strong enough to resist his father, Natasha again bursts into sobs.

Natasha, one who, for the first time forced to adopt an attitude toward her life as a whole, is beginning to sense that life doesn't always reflect her enthusiastic (or gloomy) perception of it; that sorrow cannot always be separated from joy; to feel one is often to settle for the other. With her mother's protection nullified, her father effectively awed by Prince Andrei, her older brother absent, and her friend Pierre even more subtly stymied that Countess Rostov, Natasha is right where Tolstoy needs her to be on her own.

For the first time in her life Natasha is actually contemplating her own impulsive behavior. Later, sleighing home in the dark with Nicholas, they play ‘penny-for-your-thoughts’. Nicholas's thoughts have been about the home and “Uncle,” but Natasha's are about Nicholas, a deliciously ridiculous, indeed forbidden daydream about herself and Nicholas living together in Fairyland, like “Uncle” and his Anisya.

Natasha is the very embodiment of joy in life, all poetry, passion, and romance. She entralls Prince Andrei, he is happy as he has never been, and



they are betrothed, but the opposition of his family causes the marriage to be postponed. Unfortunately Natasha has the defects of her qualities; she allows herself to be fascinated (though only momentarily) by a hopelessly inferior man. Prince Andrei, deeply wounded both in his love and in his pride, refuses to forgive; the old bitterness against life, the old anger return once more. He seeks his rival, Kuragin, and, not finding him, re-enters military service.

At the battle of Borodino Prince Andrei is wounded again, and this time, as it proves, fatally; he lingers for some weeks, and, before his death, fate grants him one last happiness. He and Natasha meet again. In all Tolstoy's pages none are more lovely and pathetic than those depicting this union on the edge of the grave; for a time there is hope the renewal of his heart's joy assisting the wounded man to rally but it is only for a brief space, and there succeeds the tragic and terrible yet beautiful alienation of death.

Prince Andrei is one of the few Tolstoyan heroes who have no physical fear of death, who meet it, not with shuddering nausea, but with noble and grave composure. If he clings to life it is not from any weak fear but because life means Natasha, poetry, and joy; when the pang of resignation is once over, all is peace. " Prince Andrei not only knew that he was going to die, but he also felt that he was dying, that he was already half-way towards death. He experienced a consciousness of alienation from everything earthly, and a strange beatific exaltation of being. Without impatience and without anxiety, he waited for what was before him. That ominous Eternal Presence,

unknown and far away, which had never once ceased, throughout all his life, to haunt his senses, was now near at hand and, by reason of that strange exhilaration which he felt, almost comprehensible and palpable." (p 76)

Natasha and his sister grieve for themselves, but they cannot really grieve for him. "They both saw how he was sinking, deeper and deeper, slowly and peacefully away from them, and they both knew that this was inevitable, and that it was well. He was shrived and partook of the sacrament. All came to bid him farewell. "When his little son was brought, he kissed him and turned away, not because his heart was sore and filled with pity, but simply because this was all that was required of him." In this lofty and beautiful isolation the hero passes away. Prince Andrei has something in him of Byronism; there is the Byronic ideal in his aristocratic disdain, his mental solitude, his melancholy; he is Byronic also in his courage, his love of glory and his disillusionment with glory, but no mere Byronist could ever have drawn the portrait.

The marvelous thing in Tolstoy's art is that he so plainly reveals the change and development of human character; we never feel that his people are static and finished; before our very eyes Prince Andrei changes from Byronic pride to sweetness and tenderness, a bitter disillusion brings him back to pride, but, once more, the depths of the man's nature are stirred and his fundamental sweetness is revealed. Many times in his epic novel Tolstoy makes us feel the bitter cost of war, but never more than in the death of this. Pierre Bezukhov, the second hero is a wholly different type. He is much

more Russian and national than Prince Andrei; the two are so unlike that the friendship between them strikes us with the same surprise as it would in real life. Pierre is clumsy and awkward, and not sufficiently strong-willed; he is continually led away to do things he does not desire; his chief fault is sensuality, and this is the rock on which he all but wrecks his life. It leads him into marriage with a woman whom he desires but does not love the beautiful, profligate Elena.

The analysis of his motives is wrought with a terrible somber power, which anticipates *The Kreutzer Sonata*. Pierre, in the toils of his own sensuality, is, in the beginning a most unattractive character, and we wonder why Tolstoy has allowed him a position so prominent, just as we wonder why the fastidious Prince Andrei can have selected him as a friend; but, by degrees, we realize his true nature; he has indeed a heart of gold and, little by little, his goodness and kindness and simplicity shake his character free from its coarsest faults. He has a genius for sympathy, and he appears to understand all those who surround him better than they understand themselves. The real love of his life is Natasha Rostov, but he does his best, most unselfishly, to reconcile her to Prince Andrei; in a sense he deserves her better of the two, for, even when her betrothed turns against her, Pierre still loves and appreciates, and his devotion helps her through the darkest hours of her life. It is only fitting that, in the end, Natasha should make him happy.

Prince Andrei proposes for her hand, but the Rostovs' family affairs are in confusion, and Prince Andrei's father insists on a year's delay; for that

space of time he goes abroad. Prince Andrei does not find the time of delay unreasonably long, and cannot understand that Natasha should do so, but the girl suffers the dangers of her inexperience; Prince Andrei has roused her to a full consciousness of womanhood, and her sensuous and passionate nature cannot endure the blank of his absence; also, since she is extremely sensitive, she is grieved by the cold attitude his family persistently maintain. She meets Anatole Kuragin, a man exceedingly handsome but unscrupulous, who at once makes violent love to her; she writes a letter to Prince Andrei breaking off their engagement, and consents to elope with Kuragin, this plan being discovered and frustrated by her family. Natasha awakens from her brief madness, realizes how badly she has behaved to her betrothed, and, in her remorse and shame, attempts suicide. Prince Andrei, returning, learns the whole story; he is stung to the quick in his haughty pride; his spiritual nature makes him totally unable to understand the temptation, and he cannot forgive.

It is Natasha's innate generosity which gives them, however, their last chance of reconciliation; the Rostovs' are carting their family property away from Moscow, which is threatened by the French, but there are not sufficient horses to transport the Russian wounded, and Natasha, keenly opposing her mother, demands that the family property shall be sacrificed, and the wounded rescued instead; the Rostovs discover Prince Andrei's presence and forbid Natasha to see him, but her own daring takes her to his side, and there follows the most simple but touching of reconciliations. Natasha becomes his nurse, and proves the depth of her nature by her skill and tenderness. But

the brief tune of joy is soon over; Prince Andrei's sufferings are agonizing, and he passes away. Natasha feels bereavement with the same intensity as everything else; she herself seems to sink out of the world; thin and pale and visibly wasting away, she sits for hours in silence, gazing at the place where Prince Andrei was laid. Her family have lost all hope of saving her life, but tragic news arrives; the younger brother Petya has been killed in battle, and the mother is mad with grief; she screams for her beloved Natasha, who is the only person who can comfort her, and, in straining every nerve to save her mother's reason, the girl herself is restored to life. She lives again by virtue of those profound and passionate affections which had almost destroyed her. She is so greatly changed, however, that, when Pierre meets her again, he does not know her; he cannot recognize in her thin, pale, and stern face the Natasha of adorable and abounding life; yet the moment he shows that he loves her, the old Natasha, with her radiant joy, flashes back into his view, and she is willing, almost at once, to become Pierre's fiancée.

Natasha is a continual marvel, and, though she is glad of her friend's happiness, the Princess grieves at the inconstancy to her brother. The whole portrait is wonderful in its realism, glowing with vitality and with charm, and, just as in the case of the men; Natasha deepens and changes before our very eyes. In the end of the novel Tolstoy shows us Natasha as Pierre's wife and the mother of four children; she is loving but exacting, very jealous, almost parsimonious in her care for her children, she has become untidy in her personal appearance, and the old poetic charm only in the rarest moments

returns. Natasha, in fact, seems to show us the limitations in Tolstoy's patriarchal view of woman; he regards her not really as an individual, an end in herself, but as a means towards the race, and the individual loss is nothing to regret; he seems to realize and rejoice in the shock he gives us when he tells us of Natasha the generous become parsimonious, of Natasha the anxiously tearing round in a dirty morning wrapper; but we are inclined to resent the admiration accorded to this second Natasha, who limits her sympathies to such a narrow circle, and who has become a maternal egoist of the most colossal type. Tolstoy himself found, as we have seen, in his relations with his wife, that the maternal egoist is not quite the finest ideal of humanity. It is impossible to study in any detail the crowded canvas of *War and Peace*, but the minor characters are often among the best-drawn and the most attractive. The whole Rostov groups are delightfully depicted.

Natasha's perception of the phoenix pattern in her life will soon be brought about by Petya's death, but in order to dramatize her climactic fusion of life with death Tolstoy first maneuvers her into an ironic parody of her girlhood hubris. When Prince Andrei dies, she reverts to her habitual separation of opposites, only this time turning her back on life and dedicating her extraordinary vitality to keeping his memory as immediate and vivid as possible. Proudly aloof and even hostile to her family, whose routine lives "seemed an insult to the world of sorrow' in which she had been living," Natasha sometimes gazes "intently at whatever her eyes chanced to fall on,"

as though “she might at any moment penetrate” the barrier that separates them and join him “on the other side of life.”

What returns Natasha to the land of the living and to Pierre is her mothers’ compelling need for love. Thus Natasha is revived by Petya’s death . but revived on new terms. Prince Andrew’s death led to her withdrawal from life, yet without that withdrawal she could not have experienced the *combination* of anguish and release brought on by Petya’s death and her mother’s collapse. It is the combination that Natasha has never felt so strongly before, the almost physical germination of life by death. After experiencing it, she can never return to her previous self – to the Natasha who, a few years earlier, assumed that the world could be charmed into reflecting her image of it. With her new perception of life and death (anguish and release) as interdependent, Natasha is able to accept reality on its own terms – for example, to talk openly about Prince Andrei.

After Petya’s death, for the first time she senses the symbiotic relationship between death and life, realizing that, without death, life would lose its value. This is what she must feel with her entire being before she is ready for marriage and motherhood – what prepares her for the moment when she and Pierre become committed to each other.

That moment occurs near the end of their first postwar meeting, after Natasha has unburdened herself about her last weeks with Prince Andrew, and Pierre has then told her and Princess Mary about Borodino and captivity.

From the way Pierre looks at her, and the intent way in which Natasha listens, it becomes obvious to Princess Mary that they are falling in love.

Pierre is totally rejecting this self-destructive evasion. He is telling her to live, to love, and to marry him, that her life is more to be valued than ever, because of Andrei's death; that the choice isn't and wasn't between Andrei's living and Natasha's (in effect) dying with him; that nothing is ever completely lost. Without change, there would be no life, for change is the very essence of life. And Natasha, in a sudden rush of gratitude at realizing that Pierre has not, after all, been giving her the opposite advice, cries and smiles by turns.

Because she can now smile through her womanly tears, Natasha no longer needs her girlish shriek. In the First Epilogue, when her babies have arrived with all their runny noses to wipe and every occupant of a blooming household needing her, Natasha's whole life is finally transposed into one soundless shriek of affirmation. Her "too much of something" has been converted (as "Uncle" hoped it would be) into motherhood, into rising the next generation – which is to say, into feathering the nest of the phoenix.

One of Tolstoy's best known female characters, Natasha is similar to Kitty in *Anna Karenina*. Natasha represents the purity of the Russian soul. At the beginning of the novel she lights up other peoples' lives with her childlike spontaneity and her creative energy, and she eventually matures into a calm, responsible adult. Tolstoy believed that this process had to happen in



order for Natasha to embrace her noblest calling of all: to become a loving wife and mother.

## **B. ANNA: MORE SINNED AGAINST THAN SINNING**

Tolstoy's portrayal of Anna in *Anna Karenina* has been considered by the world of critics as well as readers to be one of the most lives like and original of characterizations in European Fiction. His attitude towards Anna moreover changed in the course of the book, almost as though the creator had gradually been seduced by his creation. Behind the love story of Anna and Vronsky lay the love story of the author and Anna. At first Tolstoy did not like his heroine: he condemned her in the name of morality. He saw her as an incarnation of lechery and to be strange about that did not even make beautiful. In one of the early drafts of the book, devoted to a description of Anna, is entitled *The Devil*. She is the agent of evil in the world. Both husband and her lover are her victims. Hence Karenin, the government official is initially portrayed as a warm, sensitive soul, cultivated and kind.

Anna is one of the main characters of the novel. She starts an affair with Vronsky and is overcome with guilt, grief at giving up her son and anguish at her position in Society. She and Vronsky fight often about her jealousy and what she sees as his diminishing love. In the end she does not know what to do and sees no way out for herself. Remembering a man who had been run over by a train earlier in the novel, she chooses the same fate for herself and jumps under one.

As the novel progresses we see Tolstoy unconsciously begins to be intrigued by his sinner. She moves him, disturbs him, and disarms him. He is on the verge of declaring his love. Suddenly no longer deprive her of beauty. In the latter part on Anna's portrayal we see Anna as more an individual than a puppet in Tolstoy's hand. She moves about the world led by passion rather than her moral thoughts. It's this vehemently reckless travel that led her to her tragic doom as the novel ends.

As the title of this chapter suggests Anna is more sinned against than sinning. She is not the conscious cause of the tragedies brought about by her implacable beauty: she was born under an evil spell, and at a moment chosen by fate, the spell simply begins to work. As the author continued with infinite pains, to model each contour of this lost soul, he became increasingly irritated by the healthy ordinary mortals around her.

In the beginning she was the assassin and Karenin and Vronsky her victims. Now the tables were turned. Neither of the two men was worthy of her. With cold rage Tolstoy divested them, one by one, of the qualities he had freely bestowed upon them. He debased them in order to elevate and justify Anna.

Painful and slow is the descent of Anna's love into disaster. There are no sudden changes such as marked its upward surge; her life is slowly and irrevocably pulled apart. In her last hours, she is unable to imagine any life for herself at all; she finds herself standing over against her life, seeing it in the pitiless glare of her utter isolation from it, with no further desire to

participate, without sympathy or hope, not even for herself. When she looks into a mirror, she momentarily does not recognize herself: a familiar literary device, which Tolstoy can use to particularly good effect, since it reminds us of that change and division in her identity which we have had occasion to comment on before; in her treatment of her husband, in her behavior towards Vronsky, even in her understanding of herself, deep self division has been a recurrent feature of her passion under the stress of her domestic and social situation needless to say from the start.

Anna's husband plays a vital role in shaping her tragic destiny. He typifies social affectations and falsity of feeling, and he is so lacking in passion, indeed in common human warmth and sympathy, that Anna's truly physical loathing for him communicates itself to the reader. Tolstoy makes Karenin's refusal to fight a duel, out of respect for his official duties, like his later refusal to grant a divorce out of respect for Christian teaching, appear to be so much self deceiving cant; how open and natural and generous Anna's passionate nature looks by comparison.

Anna's tragedy is rooted somewhere in herself and in her own very nature. When she feels that she is completely lost, her husband, her family, her friends, society at large are all ready to be accommodating herself to the reality of her situation. Her very integrity forbids it. Husband and society coupled together resulted in the institution of marriage, an institution that has been much extolled by Tolstoy. With the beginning of Anna's and Vronsky's life together, and the marriage of Kitty and Levin, Tolstoy

increasingly exploits moral contrast as one of the central effects of the novel; in the first half of the book it is present in a rather more subdued and distant form. Tolstoy makes sure we notice it now, by having the great event which transforms his lovers into husbands and wives for Kitty and Levin, their marriage, for Anna and Vronsky, the decision to live together – occur for the two couples at about the same time, and in consecutive chapters. The contrast has the effect of throwing into relief the distinctive moral character of each relationship, which requires no further judgment from Tolstoy; these utterly different experiences of love and marriage appear to carry an inexorable moral law within themselves, whose operation in one case indirectly explains what happens in the other.

Though each of the contrasting couples, Anna and Vronsky and Kitty and Levin, pursues its separate existence, their stories are closely interwoven, and from the contrast emerges the moral repudiation of society's marriage of convenience. This contrast involves still another one, with moral implications already broached in *War and Peace*, the superiority of the natural life of the country over the unnatural life of the city. Levin has in him Nicholas Rostov's passion for the land and for agricultural activity plus a large increment of the soul-searching and questing mind of Pierre Bezukhov. Kitty is the patient, tolerating wife who accepts life's blessings and sorrows as something ordained by heaven. Though she generously sympathizes with Anna's cruel situation, she believes that there are conventional limits beyond which a married woman could not go without risking the condemnation of

society. The idea of the family agrees with the main theme of the novel. "Passionate loves that transgress all boundaries". Tolstoy's main heroine of the novel Anna, the beautiful woman is so charmingly depicted when we first meet her. Tolstoy writes: "Her shining gray eyes, that looked dark from under the thick lashes, rested with friendly attention on his face, as though she were recognizing him" (Anna Karenina, p 180). In that brief look Vronsky had time to notice the suppressed eagerness, which played over her face, and flitted between the brilliant eyes and the faint smile that curved her red lips. It was as though her nature were brimming over with something that against her will show itself now in the flashes of her eyes, and now in her smile.

Originally conceived of as a dumpy and vulgar housewife, Anna evolved in successive versions of Tolstoy's manuscript into the beautiful, passionate, and educated woman we know in the novel. For a long time Tolstoy cherished the theme of the novel "*Anna Karenina*" in his mind. During that period he was in untold agonies both spiritually and mentally. His married life with Sophia was not to be satisfactory one. There was a long difference of 20 years between their ages. Sophia was said to be an embodiment of selfishness that was not at all bearable for him who at that time was on the peak of fame and recognition. Bit by bit their relationship turned to be worse and therefore Tolstoy lost his faith in married life. He arranged all his possessions for her who on the other hand wanted more. She wanted to get the royalty of all the books written by him. When her attempt to get it turned to be in ruin. She tried to commit suicide by throwing herself

under a train. The failure in committing suicide made her a patient of epilepsy.

At the very outset Anna arrives in Moscow to mediate the family quarrel caused by her Brother Stiva Oblonsky's adultery. But she was caught in the web of circumstances that leads to her own adultery. Her falling in love however is not sudden and a harmless flirtation slowly develops in to an irresistible passion. Soon Anna and Vronsky began to be seen together at soirees and the theater apparently unaware of gossip, which circulated about them. As concerned with Anna's husband Karenin he was coldly ambitious and a dispassionate man. He felt that his social position was at stake. One night he discussed these rumors with Anna and pointed out the danger of her flirtation. Karenin forbade her to entertain Vronsky at home and cautioned her to be more careful. Karenin take over all the precaution in illegal connection of his wife. But it was not out of his jealous towards his wife; he only worried over the social consequences of her behavior and illegal connection towards Vronsky. He reminded her of her duty to her son Seryozha.

At the initial phase of love affair Anna obeyed Karenin. But Anna was unable to conceal her true feelings when Vronsky was injured in a racetrack accident. Karenin upbraided her for her indiscreet behavior in public. Karenin considered a duel, separation, and divorce but rejected all of the courses. When Karenin finally decided to keep Anna under his roof he

reflected that he was acting in accordance with the laws of religion. But Anna continued to meet Vronsky in secret.

Against Karenin's orders Anna sent a letter to Vronsky and told him that she is carrying his child. In one occasion occurs when Anna has confessed her love affair with Vronsky to her husband. Karenin leaves for town and Anna is alone at their summer villa trying to collect herself by packing things for her own return. "While she is standing at table in her boudoir packing her traveling bag" a courier brings her a letter from Karenin that shatters all her expressions of a "change". He informs her that "our life must go on as it has done in the past".

When Anna is pregnant with Vronsky's child, aware of his responsibilities to Anna, Vronsky begged her to petition Karenin for a divorce so that she would be free to marry him. At this time all the three Anna, Vronsky and Karenin are in "a position of misery ". Karenin informed her coldly that he would consider the child his and accept so that the world would never know his wife's disgrace. Karenin refused to think of going through shameful divorce proceedings. Karenin refused Anna's Submission by warning her that he would take Seryozha away if she persisted in making a fool of herself. In this condition the husband and wife live in the same house as complete strangers to one another.

Anna is waiting for a 'solution' without however taking any steps towards it. Just like her brother Stiva Oblonsky. But she was hoping that "things will shape themselves".

The strained family relationship continued unbroken. One night Karenin had planned to go out and Anna persuaded Vronsky to come to the house. As he was leaving Karenin met Vronsky on the front steps. Enraged, Karenin told Anna that he had decided to get a divorce and that he would keep Seryozha in his custody. But divorce proceedings were so intricate, the scandal so great, the whole aspect of the step so disgusting to Karenin that he could not bring himself to go through with the process. As Anna's confinement drew near, he was still undecided after winning an important political seat he became even more unwilling to risk his public reputation.

At the birth of her child Anna became deadly ill. Vronsky overcame with guilt, attempted suicide, but failed. Karenin was reduced to a state of such confusion that he determined to grant his wife any request since he thought her to be on her deathbed. The sight of Vronsky seemed to be the only thing that restored her. In fact it revealed Vronsky's love for Anna was represented as profound and entirely sincere and it was made clear that he was dedicated his whole existence to secure her love. After many months of illness she went with her lover and baby daughter to Italy, where they lived under strained circumstances.

Anna Karenina and Vronsky returned to Russia after their pleasurable honeymoon days and went to live in his estate. It was now impossible for Anna to return home. Although Karenin had not gone through with divorce proceedings, he considered himself separated from Anna and was everywhere thought to be a man of fine loyalty. At the same time Anna devotes herself



more and more to her outward appearance. She starts reading on "every subject that was of interest to Vronsky" takes part in the building of the hospital but as Tolstoy says her chief thought was still of herself. How far she was dear to Vronsky, how far she could make up to him for all he had given up. Vronsky appreciates Anna's desire "not only to please but to serve him...but at the same time he was worried of the loving snares in which she tried to hold him fast". (Anna Karenina, p 67)

But Vronsky is always worried about the unclear status of his daughter. According to him legally his daughter is not his but is Karenin's. This troubles him widely. Anna lives increasingly in the present and having started to take opium during the birth of her daughter. She becomes increasingly dependent on drugs. To feel the worth of her existence she demands Vronsky's constant presence. But Vronsky on his part was suffering from the indefinite status of their relationship. According to Vronsky he cannot live in this "make-believe world". Even the repeated effort of Oblonsky about the divorce procedure is failed again. As a result a quarrel flares up between Anna and Vronsky.

In her loneliness Anna imagines Vronsky uttering cruel words to her, forcing her back to her husband "and she could not forgive him as though he had actually said them". Confusing reality with her own fantasies she wants to avenge herself for imagined offence by making Vronsky feel guilty.

Sometime Anna stole in to town to see Seryozha but her fear of being discovered there by her husband cut these visits short. After each visit she

returned bitter and sad. She became more and more demanding towards Vronsky, with the result that he spent less time with her. She took little interest in her child. Before long she convinced herself that Vronsky was in love with another woman.

When Anna sets out on her last journey with a confused idea of going to find Vronsky to "tell him all"- she again packs her little traveling bag. During the journey through Moscow she looks out of the carriage window and in her rumbling thoughts she projects onto passerby and the world outside her feeling of squalor and hatred.

*"They want that dirty ice-cream, that they do know for certain," she thought, looking at two boys stopping at an ice-cream seller. "We all want what is sweet and tasty. If not sweetmeats then dirty ice cream".*

*(Anna Karenin, p. 194)*

After a quarrel with Vronsky Anna feels a kind of loneliness in life. The mental conflict which she suffers evokes a feeling of disgust towards life and she thinks that she will give Vronsky a punishment by throwing herself under a train. As she stood on the platform gazing at the tracks below, the thunder of an approaching train roared in her ears. When the train pulls in to the station Anna gets out and asks for a message from Vronsky, but is informed that a carriage is waiting for princess Sorokina and her daughter (Whom Anna imagines Vronsky is about to marry). Vronsky's coachman gives Anna a note in which he repeats that he will be home late. Perhaps

because of the coincidence of Sorokina's name being mentioned just before Anna receives Vronsky's note, Anna, not knowing what she is doing, starts to walk along the platform ("My God where am I to go"?) Further and further. At that moment a freight train comes in and Anna, already at the edge of the platform, remembers the man crushed by the train on the day she met Vronsky. Then she feels about to plunge into water and cross, as children used to do before bathing. Childhood memories rush over her. But the iron wheels mesmerize her and when the spaces between the wheels come opposite her, she falls on her hands and knees under the carriage. At the last moment she still does not know why and what she is doing? ("Where am I? What am I doing? What for?") And she begs the Lord to forgive her. She threw herself in under the iron road.

Anna's tragedy unfolds slowly, naturally, remorselessly, before a large audience to the social worlds of two capitals of the countryside and elsewhere. But nearly all the fully realized characters including the brilliantly portrayed Oblonsky and Shcherbatskya families are involved in one way or another with the fate of these two star-crossed lovers. Tolstoy himself is a bit in love with his heroine's large, generous, radiant nature. Here Tolstoy endeavors to show that she is as much a victim of the hypocrisy of this high society as of her own passion. If Anna had had an affair with a handsome socially desirable army officer, high society would not have condemned her provided she was discreet and abided by conventions that were supposed to make such affairs permissible.

The only one hurt would have been her husband, but this was the generally accepted order of things. Above all appearances must be kept up. Vronsky's mother thought that it is entirely not in fault that her son should have a liaison with a charming woman such as Anna. It added a degree of social polish to a rising young careerist. So Stiva Oblonsky's easy adulteries accepted by his society only in the case of his wife do they cause a bit of pain, but not disaster.

Anna however is not a casual adulteress. Her love for Vronsky is deep and lasting passion for which she is prepared to flout convention, sacrifice her security, leaves her husband's home and compromises him openly. Anna places herself beyond the pale of her social class, but only because of the manner in which she transgresses its hypocritical moral code. Her real suffering begins, not when she deserts her husband, but when she receives the snubs of her friends. In a happy mood just before the birth of his child, Levin is moved to visit Anna. She receives him with the gracious manner of a woman of good society, self-possessed and natural. He immediately becomes at ease and comfortable as though he had known her from childhood. But after he returns home he suffers revulsion of feeling and encouraged by Kitty he thinks of Anna again as a fallen woman. She is the outsider shut off from the self-confident life of the family.

Tolstoy's increasing sympathy for this adulteress suggests the mixed feelings he harbored toward her: she is guilty of desecrating her marriage and home, but is noble and admirable nonetheless. The combination of these traits is a major reason for the appeal of this novel for more than a century.

Anna is intelligent and literate, a reader of English novels and a writer of children's books. She is elegant, always understated in her dress. Her many years with Karenin show her capable of playing the role of cultivated, beautiful, society wife and hostess with great poise and grace. She is very nearly the ideal aristocratic Russian wife of the 1870s.

Indeed the contrast between the marriage of Levin and Kitty, which moves ever outward to include more and more of society. After the conflict between Anna and Vronsky, Anna leaves in a carriage looking out on the city that has finally exiled her from society. It only serves to intensify our sympathy for her plight. It is a measure of the moral balance Tolstoy preserves in his portrayal of Anna that persuades his readers to judge her severely with compassion.

The one flaw in the characterization of Anna is Tolstoy's failure to motivate her seemingly sudden passion for Vronsky. The charge is that he fails to tell readers anything about her emotional nature before she arrives in Moscow to mediate the family quarrel caused by her Brother Stiva Oblonsky's adultery. Her falling in love however is not sudden and a careful reading reveals how what Anna regards as a harmless flirtation slowly develops into an irresistible passion, a process, which in no sense contradicts anything, we know of her character up to that point.

The process as in *'Anna Kerenina'* involves the use of subtle details that advance the action and psychologically suggests the emotional transformation taking place in Anna. The first real sign of attraction is seen at

the Moscow ball indirectly through the eyes of Kitty who is infatuated with Vronsky. Another at the beginning of the novel occurs when Anna mounts the stairways of her brother's drawing room to fetch a picture of her son from her bedroom. At that moment Vronsky is shown into the hall. She looks down from the landing and for a moment their eyes meet. An inexplicable uneasiness troubles both of them. She is caught, as it were on a staircase between the safety of the family drawing room and the safety of the bedroom where her son's picture is. But she quickly dismisses the feeling as of no consequences. On the train back to Petersburg Anna firmly rejects Vronsky's expression of devotion. She treats the matter lightly but significantly she is vaguely disturbed. Then on arrival she notices for the first time the large ears of her husband who is waiting for her on the platform, as she introduces Vronsky.

That first day home she contemplates telling her husband of Vronsky's declaration. But recalling her rejection of it she decides she has nothing to tell, again a refined psychological detail. That night however as she hears the familial measured tread of the slippers feet of her stiff and pompous husband approaching their bedroom, annoyed with herself she begins to wonder what right Vronsky had to look at him the way he did at the station.

Vronsky's love for Anna is represented as profound and entirely sincere and it is made clear that he has dedicated his whole existence to secure her love. Nurtured by his endless attention the seed slowly grows and eventually flowers. Yet Anna's passionate capitulation comes only after long

heart searching into the lost cause of a conventional marriage to a man whose colossal egoism is matched by his unrelatedness to the human factors involved in the daily business of living. At last she is in the mid of unreasonable but understandable jealousy. It is a consequence of Anna's illegal connection with Vronsky and it also brought her into a suicidal death.

Anna is a feminist heroine of sorts, riding on horseback in an era when such an activity was deemed suitable for men only. Disgraced, she dares to face St. Petersburg high society and refuses the exile to which she has been condemned, attending the opera when she knows very well she will meet with nothing but scorn and derision. Anna is a martyr to the old-fashioned Russian patriarchal system and its double standard for male and female adultery. Her brother, Stiva, is far looser in his morals but is never even chastised for his womanizing, whereas Anna is sentenced to social exile and suicide. Moreover, Anna is deeply devoted to her family and children, as we see when she sneaks back into her former home to visit her son on his birthday. Anna's refusal to lose Seryozha is the only reason she refuses Karenin's offer of divorce, even though this divorce would give her freedom.

The governing principle of Anna's life is that love is stronger than anything, even duty. She is powerfully committed to this principle. She rejects Karenin's request that she stay with him simply to maintain outward appearances of an intact marriage and family. Anna's greatest worry in the later stages of her relationship with Vronsky is that he no longer loves her but remains with her out of duty only. Her exile from civilized society in the later

part of the novel is a symbolic rejection of all the social conventions we normally accept dutifully. She insists on following her heart alone. For Tolstoy, this mindset smacks of selfishness, contrasting with the ideal of living for God and goodness that Levin embraces in the last chapter. But for many readers, Anna's insistence on the dictates of her heart's desires makes her an unforgettable pioneer of the search for autonomy and passion in an alienating modern world.

### C. MASLOVA, LIKE A PHOENIX BIRD

Maslova, the main character of the novel *Resurrection* evolves from a mere prostitute to revolutionary. In the stories of Maslova and other convicts, Tolstoy depicts the hard lot of women and the disenfranchised in nineteenth century Tsarist Russia. The secret of Tolstoy's ongoing relevance is to speak to and for the individual, with fearless disregard of the consequences for institutions, no matter how entrenched or respected. But he also holds individuals to high moral standards, and thereby enables their lives

Tolstoy traces the development of his heroine in relation to the hero Prince Dmitrii Nekhlyudov who is a member of a jury trying Maslova for murder, but it is not long before he puts himself on trial and proceeds to condemn all of upper-class and official Russia. In drawing the character sketch of these two characters in *Resurrection*, Leo Tolstoy combines a love story and a ferocious attack on the Russian regime of the time. It tears down Tsarist society while rebuilding the lives of these memorable characters in a fictional frame work.



Tolstoy has no sentimentality, and he cannot pretend that the horrible life which his heroine has led has not made any essential difference; on the contrary, it is her profound moral corruption which is, as Nekhlyudov at once realizes, the most hideous consequence of his sin. When Maslova first recognizes his interest, she has no special feelings towards him, but only wishes to make use of him in order to extract from him money for drink. But, when Nekhlyudov asks her forgiveness, she overwhelms him with foul abuse. She cannot believe in his real penitence, but thinks that, just as he once used her for his physical pleasure, so now he wishes to make use of her to save what she calls his "dirty soul."

In the novel we find a prolonged crisis of conscience for Prince Nekhlyudov who has seduced Maslova, a young servant girl. Then flash forward 10 years, he's on a jury for a trial in which she has been accused of murder. In an instant, he knows: he is responsible for everything that has happened to her. He divests himself of his land, follows her to Siberia and tries to repay for the wrong he has done to her.

Tolstoy now tells us the story of the seduction as it appeared to her, and adds details of a terrible and haunting pathos. The poor deserted girl realised that she was about to become a mother; she was aware that the train in which her lover travelled would pass through the station at a certain hour, and determined to make an appeal to him, but she lost her way in the darkness and arrived too late. She was not able to speak though she saw him through the lighted carriage window; in the night and storm, and darkness, injuring his

child whom she wore, she rushed along by the tram as far as she could go, and saw it carry him away faster and faster. In that hour something vital belief in God and in man snapped in Katyusha. Tolstoy's narration of the scene marvels any narration ever so made in literature.

Unable to free herself, she sank lower and lower into vice, until she arrived where Nekhlyudov found her. When he implores her forgiveness she is roused to fury because he tortures her by reminding her of her lost innocence, and forces her to realize all the abominable degradation she has endured. Nekhlyudov is, however, true to his repentance; he insists that he is willing to marry her if she will consent, but, if not; he will follow her to Siberia, and do all in his power to alleviate her lot. As soon as she realizes that this is being done genuinely, for her and not for "other-worldliness," she is touched and moved. From this point onwards she begins to return to her true self not her former self, but a self deepened and saddened by suffering.

There is no love story in literature rendered with a more poignant charm than that of Maslova. She is the one woman whom Nekhlyudov had really and truly and poetically loved; he loved her when he was himself innocent, and his love had the aroma of Paradise, never, in all his later life, to be recalled again. She was a poor girl, the daughter of a gipsy tramp, whom his aunts had educated, half as a servant and half as a companion. She is very beautiful, refined in her manners, exquisitely tender; he loves her with a love full of reserves and mysteries, incredibly sweet, transfiguring the whole world. Nekhlyudov goes away; he returns, but, in the meantime, he has

tasted of vice, and he is no longer the same. When he sees Katyusha again the old innocent poetic charm revives once more, but it has now to contend with what Tolstoy called "the dreadful, animal man". For a moment the better nature conquers.

No scene in all Tolstoy's pages is more lovely than that of the Easter Mass, when Nekhlyudov rides to the church early in the morning across the snow, sees it brilliantly lighted, the priests in their gorgeous vestments, hears the glorious Easter hymns, and feels as if all the joy, the tenderness, and the beauty were for Katyusha and for her alone. "For her the gold glittered round the icons; for her all these candles in candelabra and candlesticks were alight; for her were sung these joyful hymns. . . . All ... all that was good in the world was for her". But Nekhlyudov has been corrupted by his own evil life; he cannot for long control his passions, and, in spite of the poor girl's piteous fear, he takes advantage of the fascination he possesses over her to ruin her. Tolstoy comments that "it is a night of spring, with a white mist above the melting snow, the ice tinkling and breaking in the river". (Resurrection, p70).

Nekhlyudov twice summons Maslova , and twice she evades him, but in the end it happens. Never has the charm and romance of passion been more wonderfully rendered, but Tolstoy makes us feel this seduction terrible as a murder. And the worst detail of all, the one that Nekhlyudov remembers with burning cheeks, is that, when he left, he paid Maslova by thrusting into the pocket of her apron a hundred-ruble note.

The novel narrates the contrast between the wretched lives of the prisoners, who suffer and have always suffered from every form of privation, and the debasing luxury of the Korchagins, which produces, not happiness but only ennui and fatigue. We see the contrast between the conventionality and tiresomeness of Nekhlyudov's relations with the young princess and the pure poetry of those earlier relations with Maslova. The marriage for convenience is evident in all its weariness. These scenes are closely linked with the main purpose of the book: what Tolstoy wishes is to make his reader feel that the whole penal system is wrong and false, partly because the people who come under it are mainly the victims of a cruel form of society, and partly because those who condemn them are, in their own way of life, no better but probably far worse. The Korchagins have to their credit a long series of evil deeds, floggings and judicial murders, gluttony and sexual offences. Nekhlyudov sees that, compared with these people, Maslova and the rest are almost innocent, and grows more and more disgusted with the life of his set.

This gradual awakening is wonderfully depicted; the daring title which Tolstoy gives his book is truly merited; indeed the revival of a dead body seems almost a small thing as compared with this amazing transformation of a human soul. The novel combines a love story with a ferocious attack on the Russian regime. Prince Dmitrii Nekhlyudov is a member of a jury trying Katyusha Maslova for murder. He puts himself on trial and condemns all of upper class and official Russia. Meanwhile, once convicted, Maslova evolves from prostitute to revolutionary. In the stories of Maslova and other convicts,

Leo Tolstoy depicts the hard lot of women and the disenfranchised in nineteenth century Tsarist Russia.

The story of Maslova is based on a true story acquired from a lawyer friend, in which a member of a jury in the trial of a prostitute accused of theft recognized her as the former ward of a relative, whom he had seduced many years before. This story appealed to Tolstoy both personally, because it addressed his guilt about casual sex in his youth, and as a social thinker concerned about the exploitation of the lower classes. Tolstoy was of the view that the social disfunction and injustice characteristic of late nineteenth century Russia could only be solved through a transformation in each individual from a self-centered quest for happiness to a self-conscious embrace of the happiness of others. In the case of Prince Nekhlyudov and Maslova, each model's transformation in a very personal way. Nekhlyudov proposes to Maslova ,although he does not love her, but Maslova, although she loves him, rejects him so as not to tie him to her. Instead she plans to marry a political prisoner whom she does not love and join him in his idealistic work, while Nekhlyudov is freed to start a new, presumably moral life.

The evolution of Maslova's character can be traced in the three plot lines that parallelly develop in the novel. The first introduces Nekhlyudov and Maslova and tells their intertwined story up to the present time, when each begins to face the consequences of their early sexual encounter. In part two, a newly enlightened Nekhlyudov travels to St. Petersburg to rescue

Maslova and other convicts from miscarriages of justice. He also visits his country estates to rearrange his relations with his impoverished peasant neighbors along lines suggested by American social thinker Henry George, whose nationalization of land and single tax scheme Tolstoy greatly admired. Having failed to get Maslova's conviction overturned, Nekhlyudov departs for Siberia by third-class train, on which he meets peasant artisans, whose hard-working simple ways Tolstoy hoped would replace the decadent life of the upper classes. In part three, continuing his journey, Nekhlyudov has arranged for Maslova to travel with the political prisoners, whom he therefore gets to know, and he also witnesses the degradation of prison life.

In the concluding chapter he states that the Russian criminal justice system has corrupted the entire nation for centuries, in the most extreme cases producing convicts who kill and eat comrades in the marshes to which they escape from prison. Tolstoy calls this cannibalism "Nietzschean" (and hence beyond good and evil) in contrast to his own implicitly Kantian "reasonable self-consciousness," the principle laws of which Nekhlyudov discovers in the Gospel of St. Matthew at the end of the novel.

The story of Maslova is a ferocious satire that snarls from the pages of this novel *Resurrection*, it is achieved by an Enlightenment technique that Russian Formalist critic Victor Shklovsky dubbed "making strange" the purpose of which is to focus readers' attention on things that they take for granted and therefore do not judge. The depiction of Christian communion as the literal devouring of the body and blood of Christ especially shocked Tolstoy's contemporaries. The Church excommunicated him for it but throughout the novel he uses "making strange" to dismantle the Tsarist regime

piece by piece. Moscow gentry' life, St. Petersburg high society, the bureaucracy, the military, the criminal justice system, and peasant life in the country, even the Church: nothing withstands his terrible, simplifying gaze. Every public institution is reduced to an instrument of force and self-interest. Unlike revolutionaries like the ruthless Nodorov or the raging Kriltsov, however, Tolstoy hated violence, and he does not simply dehumanize Tsarist officials so that readers might wish to kill them. Officials like Toporov, modeled on Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod Konstantin Pobedonostsev, are depicted as spiritually dead, but others, for instance, the alcoholic governor of the Siberian district, or Nekhlyudov's old comrade Selenin, themselves suffer from lives of injustice that they cannot escape. Furthermore, if a man can go badly, he can also recover, or at least perform good deeds. So Selenin, despite his "lifeless eyes," is touched by Maslova's case and succeeds eventually in having her sentence of hard labor reduced to exile to Western Siberia. With bureaucrats and soldiers, as with the convicts they hound, the problem as Tolstoy sees it lies not in human nature, but in a society that does not put love for individuals first.

Through the portrayal of Maslova, Tolstoy's vision that of redemption is achieved through loving forgiveness, and his condemnation of violence, is reiterated in the novel. An intimate, psychological tale of guilt, anger, and forgiveness, the novel is at the same time a panoramic description of social life in Russia at the end of the nineteenth century, reflecting its author's outrage at the social injustices of the world in which he lived. It tells the story of a nobleman's attempt to redeem the suffering his youthful philandering inflicted on a peasant girl who ends up a prisoner in Siberia.

The presentation of Maslova becomes a platform for Tolstoy to distinguish two kinds of love, animal and Christian. The latter is most definitely an ideal for individuals and society alike, but Tolstoy does not totally reject animal love in the novel. If he had intended readers to hate sex, he could have left it as disgusting as it appears in the relations between Nekhlyudov's sister and her husband, the hairy Rogozhinsky. But unlike the vignette in which convicts prepare for intercourse near an overflowing latrine, Nekhlyudov's seduction of Maslova takes place at Easter time, and is described with a passion that has made it favorite reading for generations of adolescent Russian boys. Young, uncorrupted people feel a mixture of animal love and agape, and Tolstoy never gets over his earlier opinion that the higher one rarely appears without the lower, especially in men. Hence almost all the political radicals are "in love," and, as the asexual Mary Pavlovna observes impatiently, even Simonson, although he doesn't realize it, loves Maslova sexually. After all, if there were nothing attractive about personal fulfillment through love and family, Nekhlyudov would not struggle so to relinquish his dreams of them. And struggle he does, right up to the end, when he admires the governor's daughter and her love for her babies. He goes directly from this domestic haven to the hell of the prisons.

Tolstoy must count on the stark contrast between the two settings, and their hidden connection through the governor who heads them both, to bolster Nekhlyudov's determination to devote himself to society rather than family. Sex is natural and therefore cannot be made totally strange in the way that power and politics are. The annual spring breakup of the river accompanies



Nekhlyudov and Maslova's fall from innocence, and each of them eventually wonders whether what happened to them then was not for the best.

Maslova's slight squint represents the uniqueness and mysterious potentiality of every individual. Tolstoy presents that the human personality is a combination of universal personality traits and changeability. All healthy, normal people have access to the same potential traits, but many circumstances, including heredity, body type, present situation, education, and others, may influence the shape of a particular personality at a particular time. Usually people act automatically, but at certain times they are able to choose among impulses and alter their personalities henceforth, perhaps forever, or perhaps only until another opportunity for change presents itself. At any given moment, each individual is unique for two opposing reasons: he or she is composed of a particular and to some extent chance combination of traits and habits, and he or she, through access to an inner moral voice, has the potential to change for the better. That potential remains even in the likes of the generals and aristocrats whom Tolstoy can therefore judge so harshly.

Maslova's role in *Resurrection* proves that fiction has the power to reconstruct the lowly figures of history that the historian must necessarily leave out, as history itself forgets small individuals in its focus on great men and great leaders. Tolstoy's philosophy of history insists that great men are illusions, and that the high and the low alike are swept along by networks of circumstances. Therefore, he has a vested interest in depicting the significance of nobodies like Platon Karataev or Pierre's executed prison mates. History books may be forced to overlook these small figures, but the

novelist has the power to conjure them up before our eyes, to restore their rightful importance in the overall scheme of things.

Tolstoy indeed values love and courtship in the portrayal of Maslova. The choice of spouses is a very serious matter for Tolstoy, a philosophical statement about who one is and what one wants out of life. Maslova's greatest disappointment in life, for instance, his greatest spur to find the positive meaning in existence, is her bad decision to marry. Tolstoy emphasizes that a good partner is a prerequisite not just for contentment at home, but for fulfillment as a person overall. Tolstoy for this reason emphasizes how characters' choices of mates change over time as their personalities develop and their lives unfold.

### **Conclusion**

To put in a nutshell we see in this chapter Tolstoy's concern with the age old conflict between man and his immediate surroundings. As the title of this chapter signifies the heroines were caught between different options in their life whether to be sincere to their individuality or to the societal roles they represent. It is the mistake that took place in the choice according to the contemporary value that led to their doom.

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CHAPTER 3

**BETWEEN FACT AND FICTION:  
THE MOTHER AND THE LOVER IN  
TOLSTOY'S NOVELS**

The present chapter is exclusively on the different roles of the heroines whose character sketches analysed in previous chapters. The chapter sensitively dwells on individual and social aspects of these roles and the circumstances that led to the same. Family becomes a major point of discussion in these chapters and it is taken as a link between the two. A wider background of how a woman is represented in literature is given.

Tolstoy's works are characterized by deep insight into human nature. His heroines pass through different stages of life as girls, wives, and mothers and later as widows. The novel in the western world focuses on the women's ability to choose, while in the Indian reality the women are pushed from one set of no choices to another, from father to husband to son in fixed cycles of their lives. Manu, the Hindu code of law says: "In childhood a woman must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband and when her lord is dead, to her sons. The women must never be independent" (qtd in status of women in India). Women's selfhood or personality are widely discussed in the western world but in actual literary practice numerous characters are found to adhere to classic prototypes especially the women of fiction who persistently re-enact the sufferings and sacrificing roles. In Indian English fiction the writer Raja Rao writes "woman is the earth, air, water, sound woman is the

microcosm of the mind, the articulation of space, the knowing is the knowledge; the woman is fire, movement, clear and rapid as the mount air stream, the woman is that which seek against that which is sought". (Serpent and the Rope, p.67)

It is rare to see male writers dealing with the psychological and societal preoccupations of women. It has been noticed that women writers focus on women characters, on women's lives and experiences right from the beginning of women is writing. They also present detailed accounts of women's emotions, ideas and preoccupations. In the gallery of a male writer, Leo Tolstoy assumes a noted position in the area of problematising women issues. Tolstoy deals with the inner world of the Russian women in the three novels under study. He portrays his heroines in a realistic manner. Leo Tolstoy is one of the celebrated writers of Russian literature who achieved a worldwide recognition as a distinguished writer. Tolstoy believed that a work in order to be good must come springing from the author's soul. He writes from the perspective of a country in turmoil and how his social commentary is there closely intertwined with the more general search for personal fulfillment.

Tolstoy in these novels under consideration carefully portrayed the Russian culture in a very specific way. The socio political circumstances that gave birth to these novels is significant to note. *Anna Karenina* was written during the Franco-Prussian war and at this time great changes were taking

place during mid – 1870's in Russia. The serfs had been liberated in 1861. This was a long-overdue economic change in Russian society. At the same time Russia was slowly and painfully under going a process of modernization. Western Europe had already completed many stages of Industrializations and Russia was far behind. Many of the changes that were happening within Russia were in response to the changes in Europe.

Tolstoy in *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina* and *Resurrection* introduced themes of family life, husband–wife relation, extra marital relationship with special insights into the psychological working of the heroines whose responses to their circumstances analyze and criticize society. Tolstoy exposes how far husband-wife relation gets diverted into extra marital love affairs and its disapproval by the upper class aristocracy sacrificing individual lives.

All the characters are married women and bound by the familial setup and they are the central point of family. Anna, Natasha and Maslova are housewives. In the initial phase of the novels we find the heroines appearing as a traditional housewife. Their behavior and love towards their husbands also show this. But in the later part of the novel they change completely surrendering themselves to the lovers forgetting their position in the family.

Even though many contradictions occur in the initial phase of their married life, their life moves with outer smooth and inner turmoil. Their cultural and selves got into conflicts in their love and marriage. They maintained extra marital love affairs during their little span of life. They meet

their lovers and suddenly and impulsively fall in love with them. Their feelings, mental tension could reach true union when they maintain relationship with their lovers. It reveals a great fact that , these heroines expressed intensive instinct for love.

Anna meets Vronsky and she immediately falls in love with him. Ignoring her husband and son she maintains relationship without thinking of the social consequences. This projects her search for true love and intensive passion for hot and expressive love. Anna's illegal connection with Vronsky indicates her dissatisfaction with life and love. She expects more affection from her husband. The light fascination, admiration, infatuation that is characteristic of woman's mind is the reason for the troubles in her married life. Anna falls in love with her lover only because of the special circumstances of unhappy married life and infatuation of her mind.

Anna is not only fascinated by the external appearance of Vronsky but also the richness of true love in the inner mind of Vronsky. Anna expressed her love affair ignoring the society and the social norms. Her innocence and boldness are seen in her love. Anna's husband Karenin was always against in every stages of their relationship. Karenin interrupted and questioned Anna by several times but she answered Karenin with boldness that she loved Vronsky much. Karenin gave less importance of love and more important to the social consequences so that he was more afraid of the society than the possessiveness towards his wife.



In the last phase of the novel Anna is struggling with herself. Her inner conflicts, mental tension and psychic agony have no ends. She is in a prick of consciousness of sin they had committed in a little span of life.

Levin's courtship and marriage to Kitty is of paramount importance to Anna Karenina. Tolstoy frames the marriage as a stubborn individualist's acceptance and commitment to another human being, with all the philosophical and religious meaning such a connection carries for him. Levin is something of an outcast thought in the early part of the novel. His views alienate him from noblemen and peasantry alike. He is frustrated by Russian culture but unable to feel comfortable with European ways. He is socially awkward and suffers from an inferiority complex, as we see in his self-doubts in proposing to Kitty. Devastated by Kitty's rejection of his marriage proposal, Levin retreats to his country estate and renounces all dreams of family life. We wonder whether he will remain an eccentric isolationist for the rest of his days, without family or nearby friends, laboring over a theory of Russian agriculture that no one will read, as no one reads his Brother Sergei's "magnum opus". When the flame of Levin's and Kitty's love suddenly rekindles, leading with lightning speed to a marriage, it represents more than a mere betrothal. Rather, the marriage is an affirmation of Levin's connection with others and his participation in something larger than himself. The cornerstone of the religious faith he attains after marriage. Levin starts thinking about faith when he is forced to go to confession in order to obtain a marriage license. Although he is cynical towards religious dogma, the

questions, the priest asks him set in motion, a chain of thoughts that leads him through a crisis and then to spiritual regeneration. Similarly, Levin's final affirmation of faith on the last page of the novel is a direct result of his near loss of the family that marriage has made possible. It is no accident that faith and marriage enter Levin's life almost simultaneously, for they are both affirmations that one's self is not there center of one's existence.

Another heroine that attracts our attention is Natasha in *War and Peace*. The novel is a generic combination of the psychological novel, the *Bildungsroman*, the family novel, and the historical novel, with a liberal admixture of the scope and tone of the epic.

Natasha, the central character is a representation of the ability to experience life fully and vigorously. Right from her infancy she becomes a source of charm to all. Despite her charms, Natasha never comes across as a show-off or a flirt angling for men's attentions and infatuations. Natasha inspires desire simply by being herself, by existing in her own unique way quite unconsciously.

Natasha Rostov is, perhaps, the most enthralling character in *War and Peace*. Natasha is beautiful or, it would be more correct to say, has the promise of beauty; she has also a lovely voice; but her most remarkable gift is her power of winning love. She is introduced in the novel idolized of all; she and her younger brother, Petya, are her mother's favorite children; Natasha is the adored of her brothers and her father, and almost every man who visits the house falls in love with her. Tolstoy makes us aware of the reason behind this

extraordinary charm. Natasha is highly vitalised; she has strong affections, and an intense predilection for the jollies in life. Her poetic temperament and romance make her singular in among the vast panorama of characters in the novel.

Tolstoy says that morning in the forest, a moonlight night in spring, sledging over the snow, music all are to her enrapturing things. It is this romantic charm which so powerfully attracts the somewhat cold but poetic nature of Prince Andrei. She becomes the only solace in the midst of the gloomy tragedies of bloodshed and battle. Like an incarnation of springtime, Natasha Rostov shines the very joy of life in a human form. The meeting between Prince Andrei and Natasha become the most beautiful passage in the whole novel. Her positive attitude to life helps her to see all that is delightful and all that is good in others. The different nuances of her personality have been pictured in the novel but the thread of goodness that binds the whole aspects has never been broken. Tolstoy points out:

*When Natasha ran out of the drawing room she only went as far as the conservatory. There she paused and stood listening to the conversation in the drawing room, waiting for Boris to come out. She was already growing impatient, and stamped her foot, ready to cry at his not coming at once, when she heard the young man's discreet steps approaching neither quickly nor slowly. At this Natasha dashed swiftly among the flower tubs and hid there. Boris paused in the middle of the room, looked round, brushed a little dust from the sleeve of his uniform, and going up to a mirror examined his handsome face. Natasha, very still, peered out from her ambush, waiting to see what he*

would do. He stood a little while before the glass, smiled, and walked toward the other door. Natasha was about to call him but changed her mind. "Let him look for me," thought she. Hardly had Boris gone than Sonya, flushed, in tears, and muttering angrily, came in at the other door. Natasha checked her first impulse to run out to her, and remained in her hiding place, watching as under an invisible cap- to see what went on in the world. She was experiencing a new and peculiar pleasure. Sonya, muttering to herself, kept looking round toward the drawing-room door. It opened and Nicholas came in.

(*War and Peace*, Book 2, Ch. 13)

Tolstoy's preoccupation with her weakness as an emotional being has been highlighted. Her simplicity sometimes makes her immature, however, as when she misunderstands her momentary passion for Anatole and makes absurd plans to elope with him. But Natasha repents her error with a sincerity that elicits forgiveness even from the wronged Andrei on his deathbed. Her spiritual development is profound and universal and not as philosophical or bookish as Pierre's. The change that takes place to her personality becomes the major focus on the author. She changes radically by the end of the novel, growing wise in a way that makes her Pierre's spiritual equal.

Like Anna, Natasha too is one of the most thoughtless of heroines of Tolstoy. She is so uncalculating yet intuitive about what she can get away with and how to go about it, that everyone ends up delighted. Impulsiveness is seen as her greatest virtue. It makes her unchanging rather than clever, self-absorbed rather than self-conscious, spontaneous rather than calculating. Like

almost all the heroines of Tolstoy she too becomes an embodiment of mixed emotions.

If we make a brief sketch of her life we can see that at the start of the novel in 1805, Natasha is a 13-year old girl, the daughter of Count Ilya Rostov and Countess Natalya Rostova. She has fallen in love with young Prince Boris Drubetskoy, who lives with his mother in the Rostov estate. She becomes close friends with Count Pierre Bezukhov, who frequently visits the Rostovs. When Boris leaves to pursue a career in the staff of General Mikhail Kutuzov, their friendship evaporates, and at her first ball, Pierre introduces her to Prince Andrei Bolkonsky. They fall in love and become engaged, but Andrei's father objects to the match. He forces Andrei to postpone the marriage for a year, in which he should stay in a resort abroad to better his health. A visit to Andrei's father ends in a falling out between Natasha and Princess Marya, Andrei's sister. During Andrei's absence, Prince Anatole Kuragin takes advantage of the situation by courting Natasha, even though he is already married. She succumbs to his charms, and tries to elope with Kuragin. Although this is thwarted by Natasha's cousin Sonya, Natasha hastily writes to Princess Marya, breaking off the engagement. After her plan to elope is ruined, Natasha attempts suicide. She is rescued by the doctor before she dies.

As Napoleon advances in Russia, the Rostovs are forced to evacuate their estate and retreat to their Moscow residence. When the Rostovs plan to evacuate Moscow, her parents use the carts for transportation of the wounded

soldiers, and Natasha discovers that Andrei is among the wounded soldiers. She devotes all her time to nursing him. After the French forces depart Moscow, Natasha again meets Andrei's sister Marya and together they nurse Andrei until he dies. They are reunited with Pierre, whose estranged wife Helene has died. Natasha and Pierre fall in love. Eventually, they marry and have four children. Their pleasant family life is clearly expressed in the novel.

*A feeling of aloofness from all the world, that Natasha experienced at this time, she felt in an even more marked degree with the members of her own family. All her own family, her father and mother and Sonya, were so near her, so everyday and ordinary that every word they uttered, every feeling they expressed, was jarring in the world in which she had lived of late. She felt more than indifference, positive hostility to them. She heard Dunyasha's words of Pyotr Ilyitch, of a misfortune, but she did not understand them.*

*“What misfortune could they have, what misfortune is possible to them?”*

*Everything goes on in its old, regular, easy way with them,”*  
*Natasha was saying inwardly.*

*As she went into the drawing-room, her father came quickly out of the countess's room. His face was puckered up and wet with tears. He had evidently run out of the room to give vent to the sobs that were choking him. Seeing Natasha, he waved his arms in despair, and went off into violent, miserable sobs, that convulsed his soft, round face.*

*“Pet ... Petya ... Go, go in, she's calling ...” And sobbing like a child, he tottered with feeble legs to a chair, and almost dropped on to it, hiding his face in his hands.*

*An electric shock seemed to run all through Natasha. Some fearful pain seemed to stab her to the heart. She felt a poignant anguish; it seemed to her that something was being rent within her, and she was dying. But with the pain she felt an instant release from the seal that shut her out of life. At the sight of her father, and the sound of a fearful, husky scream from her mother through the door, she instantly forgot herself and her own sorrow.*

*She ran up to her father, but he feebly motioned her towards her mother's door. Princess Marya, with a white face and quivering lower jaw, came out and took Natasha's hand, saying something to her. Natasha neither saw nor heard her. With swift steps she went towards the door, stopped for an instant as though struggling with herself, and ran in to her mother.*

*The countess was lying down on a low chair in a strange awkward attitude; she was beating her head against the wall. Sonya and some maid-servants were holding her by the arms.*

*“Natasha, Natasha!...” the countess was screaming. “It's not true, not true ... it's false Natasha!” she screamed, pushing the maids away. “All you go away, it's not true! Killed...ha, ha, ha! not true!...”*

*Natasha knelt down on the low chair, bent over her mother, embraced her, with surprising strength lifted her up, turned her face to her, and pressed close to her.*

*“Mama! ... Darling! ... I'm here, dearest mamma,” she whispered to her, never ceasing for a second.*

*She would not let her mother go; she struggled tenderly with her, asked for pillows and water, unbuttoned and tore open her mother's dress. "Dearest ... my darling ... mamma ... my precious," she whispered without pausing, kissing her head, her hands, her face, and feeling the tears streaming in irrepressible floods over her nose and cheeks.*

*The countess squeezed her daughter's hand, closed her eyes, and was quieter for a moment. All at once she sat up with unnatural swiftness, looked vacantly round, and seeing Natasha, and began hugging her head to her with all her might. Natasha's face involuntarily worked with the pain, as her mother turned it toward her, and gazed a long while into it. "Natasha, you love me," she said in a soft, confiding whisper. "Natasha, you won't deceive me? You will tell me the whole truth?"*

*Natasha looked at her with eyes swimming with tears, and in her face seemed only imploring her love and forgiveness.*

*"Mamma ... darling," she kept repeating, putting forth all the strength of her love to try somehow to take a little of the crushing load of sorrow off her mother on to herself.*

*And again in the helpless struggle with reality, the mother, refusing to believe that she could live while her adored boy, just blossoming into life, was dead, took refuge from reality in the world of delirium. Natasha had no recollection of how she spent that day and that night, and the following day and the following night. She did not sleep, and did not leave her mother's side. Natasha's love, patient and persistent, seemed to enfold the countess on all sides every second, offering no explanation, no consolation, simply beckoning her back to life. On the third night the countess was quiet for a few minutes, and*



*Natasha closed her eyes, her head propped on the arm of the chair. The bedstead creaked; Natasha opened her eyes. The countess was sitting up in bed, and talking softly.*

*“How glad I am you have come home. You are tired, won't you have tea?”*

*Natasha went up to her. “You have grown so handsome and manly,” the countess went on, taking her daughter's hand.*

*“Mamma, what are you saying ...?”*

*“Natasha, he is gone, he is no more.” And embracing her daughter, the countess for the first time began to weep.*

*(War and Peace, Book 15, Ch. 2)*

This passage sums up the traumatic experience through which Natasha spent her life. To put shortly, Natasha is Tolstoy's ideal woman. Attractive and bewitching as a child, her expressiveness and spontaneity are the natural outpourings of a creature imbued with life forces. She is compassionate, intense, with a soul responsive to music and dance, Tolstoyan symbols of her emotional spontaneity, and every moment of her being manifests the qualities of "instinctive life."

Tolstoy equates her with springtime, Andrei's "renascence," Nikolay's affirmation of the "intensity of life" after his humiliation from Dolohov, and she is, as well, the agency of love for her bereaved mother and the reconciler of family quarrels. Vehemently opposed to women being sexual objects, Tolstoy sees the feminine destiny entirely constrained within the limits of child rearing and familial harmony. Sexuality for Tolstoy must be directed

toward its natural end of reproduction; else it is decadent and destructive. His own passionate nature attesting to sensual temptations, Tolstoy believed the only "safe" women were those who sublimated their seductiveness into the natural cares of womanhood. Thus Natasha is her author's example of a successful woman: As she grows stout with child-bearing, she directs her enthusiasm and affectionateness toward her household responsibilities. Her femininity is no longer an empty gesture as in the days of Anatole, but now is participant in the biological continuity of life. Tolstoy writes:

*Natasha and Pierre, left alone, also began to talk as only a husband and wife can talk, that is, with extraordinary clearness and rapidity, understanding and expressing each other's thoughts in ways contrary to all rules of logic, without premises, deductions, or conclusions, and in a quite peculiar way. Natasha was so used to this kind of talk with her husband that for her it was the surest sign of something being wrong between them if Pierre followed a line of logical reasoning. When he began proving anything, or talking argumentatively and calmly and she, led on by his example, began to do the same, she knew that they were on the verge of a quarrel.*

*From the moment they were alone and Natasha came up to him with wide-open happy eyes, and quickly seizing his head pressed it to her bosom, saying: "Now you are all mine, mine! You won't escape!"- from that moment this conversation began, contrary to all the laws of logic and contrary to them because quite different subjects were talked about at one and the same time. This simultaneous discussion of many topics did not prevent a clear understanding but on the contrary was the surest sign that they fully understood one another.*

*Just as in a dream when all is uncertain, unreasoning, and contradictory, except the feeling that guides the dream, so in this intercourse contrary to all laws of reason, the words themselves were not consecutive and clear but only the feeling that prompted them.*

*Natasha spoke to Pierre about her brother's life and doings, of how she had suffered and lacked life during his own absence, and of how she was fonder than ever of Mary, and how Mary was in every way better than herself. In saying this Natasha was sincere in acknowledging Mary's superiority, but at the same time by saying it she made a demand on Pierre that he should, all the same, prefer her to Mary and to all other women, and that now, especially after having seen many women in Petersburg, he should tell her so afresh.*

*Pierre, answering Natasha's words, told her how intolerable it had been for him to meet ladies at dinners and balls in Petersburg.*

*"I have quite lost the knack of talking to ladies," he said. "It was simply dull. Besides, I was very busy."*

*Natasha looked intently at him and went on:*

*"Mary is so splendid," she said. "How she understands children! It is as if she saw straight into their souls. Yesterday, for instance, Mitya was naughty..."*

*"How like his father he is," Pierre interjected.*

*Natasha knew why he mentioned Mitya's likeness to Nicholas: the recollection of his dispute with his brother-in-law was unpleasant and he wanted to know what Natasha thought of it.*

*"Nicholas has the weakness of never agreeing with anything not generally accepted. But I understand that you value what opens up a fresh line," said she, repeating words Pierre had once uttered.*

*"No, the chief point is that to Nicholas ideas and discussions are an amusement- almost a pastime," said Pierre. "For instance, he is collecting a library and has made it a rule not to buy a new book till he has read what he had already bought- Sismondi and Rousseau and Montesquieu," he added with a smile. "You know how much I..." he began to soften down what he had said; but Natasha interrupted him to show that this was unnecessary.*

*"So you say ideas are an amusement to him...."*

*"Yes, and for me nothing else is serious. All the time in Petersburg I saw everyone as in a dream. When I am taken up by a thought, all else is mere amusement."*

*"Ah, I'm so sorry I wasn't there when you met the children," said Natasha. "Which was most delighted? Lisa, I'm sure."*

*"Yes," Pierre replied, and went on with what was in his mind. "Nicholas says we ought not to think. But I can't help it. Besides, when I was in Petersburg I felt (I can this to you) that the whole affair would go to pieces without me- everyone was pulling his own way. But I succeeded in uniting them all; and then my idea is so clear and simple. You see, I don't say that we ought to oppose this and that. We may be mistaken. What I say is: 'Join hands, you who love the right, and let there be but one banner- that of active virtue.' Prince Sergey is a fine fellow and clever."*

*Natasha would have had no doubt as to the greatness of Pierre's idea, but one thing disconcerted her. "Can a man so important and necessary to society be also my husband? How did this happen?" She wished to express this doubt to him. "Now who could decide whether he is really cleverer than all the others?" she asked herself, and passed in review all those whom Pierre most respected. Judging by what he had said there was no one he had respected so highly as Platon Karataev.*

*"Do you know what I am thinking about?" she asked. "About Platon Karataev. Would he have approved of you now, do you think?"*

*Pierre was not at all surprised at this question. He understood his wife's line of thought.*

*"Platon Karataev?" he repeated, and pondered, evidently sincerely trying to imagine Karataev's opinion on the subject. "He would not have understood... yet perhaps he would."*

*"I love you awfully!" Natasha suddenly said. "Awfully, awfully!"*

*"No, he would not have approved," said Pierre, after reflection. "What he would have approved of is our family life. He was always so anxious to find seemliness, happiness, and peace in everything, and I should have been proud to let him see us. There now- you talk of my absence, but you wouldn't believe what a special feeling I have for you after a separation...."*

*"Yes, I should think..." Natasha began.*

*"No, it's not that. I never leave off loving you. And one couldn't love more, but this is something special.... Yes, of course-" he did not finish because their eyes meeting said the rest.*

*"What nonsense it is," Natasha suddenly exclaimed, "about honeymoons, and that the greatest happiness is at first! On the contrary, now is the best of all. If only you did not go away! Do you remember how we quarreled? And it was always my fault. Always mine. And what we quarreled about- I don't even remember!"*

*"Always about the same thing," said Pierre with a smile. "Jealo..."*

*"Don't say it! I can't bear it!" Natasha cried, and her eyes glittered coldly and vindictively. "Did you see her?" she added, after a pause.*

*"No, and if I had I shouldn't have recognized her."*

*They were silent for a while.*

*"Oh, do you know? While you were talking in the study I was looking at you," Natasha began, evidently anxious to disperse the cloud that had come over them. "You are as like him as two peas- like the boy." (She meant her little son.) "Oh, it's time to go to him.... The milk's come.... But I'm sorry to leave you."*

*They were silent for a few seconds. Then suddenly turning to one another at the same time they both began to speak. Pierre began with self-satisfaction and enthusiasm, Natasha with a quiet, happy smile. Having interrupted one another they both stopped to let the other continue.*

*"No. What did you say? Go on, go on."*

*"No, you go on, I was talking nonsense," said Natasha.*

*Pierre finished what he had begun. It was the sequel to his complacent reflections on his success in Petersburg. At that moment it seemed to him that he was chosen to give a new direction to the whole of Russian society and to the whole world.*

*"I only wished to say that ideas that have great results are always simple ones. My whole idea is that if vicious people are united and constitute a power, then honest folk must do the same. Now that's simple enough."*

*"Yes."*

*"And what were you going to say?"*

*"I? Only nonsense."*

*"But all the same?"*

*"Oh nothing, only a trifle," said Natasha, smilingly still more brightly. "I only wanted to tell you about Petya: today nurse was coming to take him from me, and he laughed, shut his eyes, and clung to me. I'm sure he thought he was hiding. Awfully sweet! There, now he's crying. Well, good-by!" and she left the room.*

*Meanwhile downstairs in young Nicholas Bolkonski's bedroom a little lamp was burning as usual. (The boy was afraid of the dark and they could not cure him of it). Dessalles slept propped up on four pillows and his Roman nose emitted sounds of rhythmic snoring. Little Nicholas, who had just waked up in a cold perspiration, sat up in bed and gazed before him with wide-open eyes. He had awaked from a terrible dream. He had dreamed that he and Uncle Pierre, wearing helmets such as*

were depicted in his *Plutarch*, were leading a huge army. The army was made up of white slanting lines that filled the air like the cobwebs that float about in autumn and which Dessalles called *les fils de la Vierge*. In front was *Glory*, which was similar to those threads but rather thicker. He and Pierre were borne along lightly and joyously, nearer and nearer to their goal. Suddenly the threads that moved them began to slacken and become entangled and it grew difficult to move. And Uncle Nicholas stood before them in a stern and threatening attitude.

"Have you done this?" he said, pointing to some broken sealing wax and pens. "I loved you, but I have orders from Arakcheev and will kill the first of you who moves forward". Little Nicholas turned to look at Pierre but Pierre was no longer there. In his place was his father- Prince Andrew- and his father had neither shape nor form, but he existed, and when little Nicholas perceived him he grew faint with love: he felt himself powerless, limp, and formless. His father caressed and pitied him. But Uncle Nicholas came nearer and nearer to them. Terror seized young Nicholas and he awoke.

"My father!" he thought. (Though there were two good portraits of Prince Andrew in the house, Nicholas never imagined him in human form.) "My father has been with me and caressed me. He approved of me and of Uncle Pierre. Whatever he may tell me, I will do it. Mucius Scaevola burned his hand. Why should not the same sort of thing happen to me? I know they want me to learn. And I will learn. But someday I shall have finished learning, and then I will do something. I only pray God that something may happen to me such as happened to *Plutarch's* men, and I will act as they did. I will do better. Everyone shall



*know me, love me, and be delighted with me!" And suddenly his bosom heaved with sobs and he began to cry.*

*"Are you ill?" he heard Dessalles' voice asking.*

*"No," answered Nicholas, and lay back on his pillow.*

*"He is good and kind and I am fond of him!" he thought of Dessalles. "But Uncle Pierre! Oh, what a wonderful man he is! And my father? Oh, Father, Father! Yes, I will do something with which even he would be satisfied...."*

*(War and Peace, Book 2, Ch. 16)*

If we compare her with other women characters in the novel she stands apart. Although Tolstoy presents the concept of the inability to create one's own destiny, as mentioned before, he makes clear that a larger destiny is at work. Regardless of the fact that man may occasionally find himself as a pawn in another person's vision for a future, there is a larger power at work that will unravel on its own, pushing the pieces back into their rightful places. He explores this concept further through Pierre. He says, about Pierre's forced courtship of Helene, "how it would be and when, he did not know; he did not even know whether it would be good (he felt that it was not good for some reason), but he knew that it would be" (War and Peace, p. 206). In this, Tolstoy is saying that although Pierre's soon-to-be marriage to Helene is not a "good" thing, Pierre's life will eventually be "good" in a larger sense. This will happen when Pierre no longer allows others to control him, allowing his life to fall into place naturally. Just because he is being pulled into a vortex of

expectations and pre-laid foundations, Pierre will one day make his way out, and live out the life he is supposed to live.

On the battlefield, the fog acted as a way to emphasize Tolstoy's point of a person being unable to see and map out the future. In relation to this temporary blindness caused by nature, Tolstoy builds on the element of Pierre's sight to help highlight his lack of control in his situation. Pierre, as Tolstoy makes apparent, is nearsighted and must wear glasses to see properly. At the beginning of the night, Pierre is able to see, "the living loveliness of Helene's shoulders and neck" (War and Peace p. 206) because she is so close to him. This helps to illuminate that Pierre can accurately see her beauty, and that although their marriage will prove itself to be a falsity, her beauty is nevertheless a known truth. It is Helene's beauty, along with the persuasive nature of her and those around her that lead Pierre into blindness. Tolstoy then writes, "She already had power over him. And there were no longer any obstructions between them, except for the obstruction of his own will" (War and Peace, p. 206). As soon as he is tricked by the outer appearance of Helene, he has given up any control he had owned previously.

Further proof of his marriage to Helene being unnatural and the cause of multiple lives interfering with Pierre's occur when Tolstoy allows us a glimpse into Pierre's mind. He says of his inevitable marriage, "Now I know that, not for her alone, not for me alone, but for all of them, this inevitably had to come about. They all expect this so much, they're so certain it will be, that I simply cannot disappoint them" (War and Peace, p. 211). The "love" that

transpires between Pierre and Helene only exists because of the pressure being exerted by those around them. They are not in actuality supposed to be with one another. Pierre realizes, while sitting next to Helene, that it should be somebody other than he who is sitting beside her at the gathering. Pierre is, “ashamed; it seemed to him that here, beside Helene, he was occupying someone else’s place” (War and Peace, p. 212). If it had not been for those around the couple, Pierre would not have given Helene a second thought. He says, earlier in the night before recognizing the beauty in her shoulders that he used to call her beautiful in passing without much weight behind his words. He merely acknowledged the presence of her beauty and did not allow himself to focus on the details surrounding Helene. The details that he now, under artificial circumstances, is being forced to see and is becoming blinded by.

The scene ends with another reference to Pierre’s sightlessness. Helene herself asks Pierre’s to take his glasses off his face. Without the ability to see, Pierre no longer has the ability to fight against the route his life is being subjected by others to take. It is during this scene, with a lack of clarity and a lack of control over the situation, that Pierre tells Helene he loves her.

Another character who finds herself thrown into the realm of other’s plans and preconceived notions is Natasha, the woman Pierre finds himself with in the end. Natasha is depicted as a girl living always in the present moment. This admirable quality proves itself to be a weakness when it exists

in the midst of manipulation and the urge to control. This happens to be exactly the case when Natasha finds herself at the Opera. At the opera, not only does Natasha find herself under the influence of Helene, but her path crosses Anatole's, temporarily altering the course her life was previously taking.

Once again, Tolstoy creates a scene that seems unnatural and unnerving. It is in these conditions that Natasha temporarily loses sight of what is truly happening around her. Although the reader is able to clearly observe that Natasha's behavior is not fitting to Natasha, she herself is unable to recognize the shift. Since Natasha lives in the present, and because everything seems to be natural to her, she finds herself slipping into a consciousness that is not her own. At the opera, Natasha loses control and begins to step foot onto a new path, all while under the influence of those around her.

In the opera scene, Tolstoy juxtaposes the actors on the stage and those watching the performance. He uses this juxtaposition to accentuate the element of control. After depicting an elaborate image of the players on stage, Tolstoy focuses in on Natasha and her reaction to the performance. To her, the opera seemed, "pretentiously false and unnatural" and she, "felt embarrassed for the performers, and then found them ridiculous" (*War and Peace*, p. 561). This acts as a way for the reader to gain some insight into Natasha's character as well as to recognize the moment her descent takes shape. She innately accepts the idea of living life naturally, that is, script-

less, carefree and entirely in the present. The moment Natasha views the opera as something other than disgusting is the moment she has given in to other's attempts to control.

In the midst of Tolstoy's juxtaposition, Natasha catches sight of Helene, who is watching the opera intently. Suddenly, Natasha is no longer thinking about the ridiculousness of the opera. Tolstoy says: Natasha was gradually beginning to get into a state of inebriation... She did not remember who she was and where she was and what was happening before her. She looked and thought, and the strangest thoughts flashed through her head unexpectedly, without connection. Now the thought came to her of jumping up to the footlights and singing the aria the actress was singing (*War and Peace*, p. 561).

Just moments before, Natasha had thought the opera to be unnatural. Then suddenly, and in a completely contradictory fashion, she is beginning to see herself as a part of it. This symbolizes the element of Natasha's descent. Being a part of the production, even if it is only in her mind, equates with the concept of somebody else stepping in to map out her life for her. It is a representation of Natasha's eventual submission to Helene and Anatole. Eventually, the reader finds Natasha becoming pretentious and unnatural. In other words, Natasha is becoming more and more like an actor: more controlled, more artificial, and more likely to make a mistake. At one point, she realizes Anatole was talking about her as he looked in her direction. When she realizes this, she puts herself on display for him. Tolstoy writes,

“She even turned so that he could see her in profile, which, to her mind, was the most advantageous position” (War and Peace, p. 562).

Soon enough, Tolstoy no longer highlights the juxtapositions between the opera and the spectators, but instead, he draws up parallels. In the opera, there is a girl that had originally been dressed in white. Since this scene is being played out during the moral possession of Natasha, the girl on stage can be directly associated with her. Tolstoy writes, “The girl, who had first been in white, then in light blue, was now dressed in nothing but a shift, with her hair down” (War and Peace, p.563). In this, Tolstoy is physically representing the decline of Natasha. The white, which is usually associated with purity and marriage, that the girl had been dressed in before can be linked to Natasha’s innocence as well as her betrothal to Andrei. The fact that the girl’s dress had become blue expresses the first step taken toward Natasha’s fall from grace, as well as her current ability to forget Andrei. It also represents her current ability to show Anatole an indecent kind of attention. The final transition of the girl on stage happens when she is wearing a shift, which is a loose fitting dress. In addition to this, the girl’s hair is down, or in other words, free. Both of these elements highlight the lack of control and boundaries in Natasha’s present situation.

Soon after the girl’s final transition, the rest of the players on the stage come out with bare legs and begin dancing to a manic and “shrilly” played piece of music on violin. This helps to highlight the hysteria that is ensuing in the audience without any of the characters being attuned to it. Soon,

everybody in the auditorium is acting unnaturally and has succumbed to an external form of control. When Tolstoy uses this mechanism in his writing, the reader sees that Natasha has lost all sense of the present situation. Against her own will, or lack thereof, she has sacrificed herself accidentally by taking on the personas of the people around her. It is in this moment that Natasha begins to take the tension between Anatole and herself and allow it to become a flirtation. Tolstoy states, “She turned and their eyes met. He, almost smiling, looked her straight in the eye with such an admiring, tender gaze that it seemed strange to be so near him, to look at him that way, to be so certain that he liked her” (War and Peace, p. 562). Due to the fact that Prince Andrei had gone away for a substantial period of time after he and Natasha became engaged, the present moment allows for Natasha to gain a false sense of security. In being “certain that Anatole liked her,” Natasha has gained an illusionary sense of control. Since she is unable to see the future between her and Anatole because he is not available in the present, and as a result, Natasha clings on to something more tangible.

Maslova is the third heroine whose intense vitality provides ample material for critical discussion in Tolstoy. It is the revolutionary spirit that becomes the major focus of the novel *Resurrection*. The novel is basically about Prince Dmitry Ivanich Nekhlyudov, a man humbled by the results of his past sins and attempting to right wrongs and redeem himself, is a timeless criticism of human attempts at civilization and self-rule. In the process of the story, Tolstoy skewers high society, the church, the government, the military,

the courts, lawyers, land-owners, revolutionaries, the prison system, and anything else he passes on the way. But he also reveals his life view of Christian anarchy, the idea that man should follow the teaching of Christ despite any contravening man-made institutions, forms, and influences.

The vessel for this criticism is a story about Nekhlyudov, a child of privilege who falls to the temptations of his society. He seduces a peasant girl on his aunt's farm and never looks back. He recognizes her years later as he sits on a jury trying her for murder. He finds out that he had left the girl pregnant, and that she has eventually become a prostitute. This shakes him so deeply that he decides to reform and do what is right. He slips a few times, but does not fall, in his resolve to do right by the girl. He eventually follows her to Siberia, intending to live at least close to her throughout her sentence. Tolstoy with total unsentimentality presents the awe inspiring aspects of Maslova, the heroine's personality. She evolves from prostitute to revolutionary. Among the heroines of Tolstoy Maslova perhaps is the most interactive character. The way she responds to the situations in her life is a result of her interaction with others. In tougher times she resorts to unpredictable resolves.

In drawing the character sketch of Maslova, Leo Tolstoy combines a love story and a ferocious attack on the Russian regime of the time. It tears down Tsarist society while rebuilding the lives of these memorable characters in a fictional frame work. The presentation of the heroine is so complicated as she is going through different enigmas in her life. For instance in the



novel we find a prolonged crisis of conscience for Prince Nekhlyudov who has seduced Maslova, a young serving girl. Then flash forward 10 years he's on a jury for a trial in which she has been accused of murder. In an instant, he knows: he is responsible for everything that has happened to her. He divests himself of his land, follows her to Siberia and tries to right his wrong to her. In the chapter titled *Maslova's Decision* we get insight to her personality.

*The imposing inspector came up to the gate and read the pass that had been given to Nekhlyudov and the Englishman by the light of the lamp, shrugged his fine shoulders in surprise, but, in obedience to the order, asked the visitors to follow him in. He led them through the courtyard and then in at a door to the right and up a staircase into the office. He offered them a seat and asked what he could do for them, and when he heard that Nekhlyudov would like to see Maslova at once, he sent a jailer to fetch her. Then he prepared himself to answer the questions which the Englishman began to put to him, Nekhlyudov acting as interpreter.*

*How many persons is the prison built to hold?" the Englishman asked. "How many are confined in it? How many men? How many women? Children? How many sentenced to the mines? How many exiles? How many sick persons?"*

*Nekhlyudov translated the Englishman's and the inspector's words without paying any attention to their meaning, and felt an awkwardness he had not in the least expected at the thought of the impending interview. When, in the midst of a sentence he was translating for the Englishman, he heard the sound of approaching footsteps, and the office door opened, and, as had*

*happened many times before, a jailer came in, followed by Katyusha, and he saw her with a kerchief tied round her head, and in a prison jacket a heavy sensation came over him. "I wish to live, I want a family, children, I want a human life." These thoughts flashed through his mind as she entered the room with rapid steps and blinking her eyes.*

*He rose and made a few steps to meet her, and her face appeared hard and unpleasant to him. It was again as it had been at the time when she reproached him. She flushed and turned pale, her fingers nervously twisting a corner of her jacket. She looked up at him, and then cast down her eyes.*

*(Resurrection, Book 2, Ch. 25)*

The realistic nature of the narrative is to be highlighted. Tolstoy tells us the story of the seduction as it appeared to her, and adds details of a terrible and haunting pathos. The poor deserted girl realised that she was about to become a mother; she was aware that the train in which her lover travelled would pass through the station at a certain hour, and determined to make an appeal to him, but she lost her way in the darkness and arrived too late. The grim reality of a mother's realization of motherhood is very touching in the novel.

The evolution of Maslova's character can be traced in the three plot lines that parallelly develop in the novel. The first introduces Nekhlyudov and Maslova and tells their intertwined story up to the present time, when each begins to face the consequences of their early sexual encounter. In part two, a newly enlightened Nekhlyudov travels to St. Petersburg to rescue Maslova

and other convicts from miscarriages of justice. He also visits his country estates to rearrange his relations with his impoverished peasant neighbors along lines suggested by American social thinker Henry George, whose nationalization of land and single tax scheme Tolstoy greatly admired. Having failed to get Maslova's conviction overturned, Nekhlyudov departs for Siberia by third-class train, on which he meets peasant artisans, whose hard-working simple ways Tolstoy hoped would replace the decadent life of the upper classes. In part three, continuing his journey, Nekhlyudov has arranged for Maslova to travel with the political prisoners, whom he therefore gets to know, and he also witnesses the degradation of prison life.

The presentation of Maslova becomes a platform for Tolstoy to distinguish two kinds of love, animal and Christian. The latter is most definitely an ideal for individuals and society alike, but Tolstoy does not totally reject animal love in the novel. If he had intended readers to hate sex, he could have left it as disgusting as it appears in the relations between Nekhlyudov's sister and her husband, the hairy Rogozhinsky. But unlike the vignette in which convicts prepare for intercourse near an overflowing latrine, Nekhlyudov's seduction of Maslova takes place at Easter time, and is described with a passion that has made it favorite reading for generations of adolescent Russian boys. Young, uncorrupted people feel a mixture of animal love and agape, and Tolstoy never gets over his earlier opinion that the higher one rarely appears without the lower, especially in men. Hence almost all the political radicals are "in love," and, as the asexual Mary Pavlovna observes

impatiently, even Simonson, although he doesn't realize it, loves Maslova sexually. After all, if there were nothing attractive about personal fulfillment through love and family, Nekhlyudov would not struggle so to relinquish his dreams of them. And struggle he does, right up to the end, when he admires the governor's daughter and her love for her babies. He goes directly from this domestic heaven to the hell of the prisons.

### **Conclusion**

In short we understand from the presentation of these heroines that Tolstoy's moral consciousness as a social realist is very sketchy. The issue of women as a mother and lover is presented with philosophical and universal insights. The natural feeling of love and the cultural institute of marriage are neatly balanced in the novel. The different roles especially that of a mother and how this special role is shaped by other social roles become the major focus of the chapter.

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## CONCLUSION

When we trace the history of novel we find a thematic progression from sociology to psychology in treatment by the novelists. For instance first English novel, *Pamela* by Samuel Richardson and the novel by his contemporaries were sociological in content and treatment. But in modern novel we find psychological treatment having an upper hand. James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and many other novelists marked this shift. In Malayalam novel too we find this difference theme as time passed. Pioneers in Malayalam novels like Appu Nedungadi's *Kunthalatha* and Chandumenon's *Indulekha* are more sociological than psychological in treatment. But modern Malayalam novels by writers like Mukundan and M.T. Vasudevan Nair are more psychological than sociological in treatment.

Writers who created a balance between these two aspects became classics in the world of fiction. Vaikom Muhammed Basheer is always a well read writer in Malayalam Literature as he is noted for this fine balance. In the Western scenario Tolstoy can be positioned as the one writer with this kind of a balancing between social and psychological elements in the stuff of fiction. As he is popularly known to be, he is the master of psychological realism in European fiction.

As the novels *Anna Karenina*, *War and Peace* and *Resurrection* thematically progress we find Tolstoy bringing about a psychological probe into these novel's heroines Anna, Natasha and Maslova respectively and the

social conditions that design their destiny and the response of these heroines to such a social destiny. Marriage as a social institution has been problematised in these three novels, the pros and cons of the system have been put into the readers attention in a detached objectivity by Tolstoy. Though the author's personal experiences have contributed much to the composition of these novels, he maintains a detached treatment in the explication of the characters in the novel.

This detachment has been exploited by Tolstoy as an artistic device and Shklovsky the formalist critic in Russian has pointed out that Tolstoy's writings have permanent air of surprising and the unfamiliar. Tolstoy's descriptions' said Shklovsky, "Make it strange". That is to say we are present as readers at a party, or at a ballet, as a child might be present, seeing everything not in its conventional familiar shapes as an adult sees, but as a primary phenomenon ,strange or wonderful or terrifying.

Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, *War and Peace* and *Resurrection* abound in illustrations of these defamiliarizations through out, and sometimes in his didactic way he makes a special point out of it. When Natasha in *War and Peace* goes to the ballet for the first time she cannot find the point of a man in comic tights waving his legs about; it all seems to her affected and ridiculous. But from other people's reactions, and from what she hears and is told, she soon comes to accept the normal evaluation and appreciation of art. In this context she has learnt quickly to be no longer natural or child like.

As it is mentioned above marriage becomes a major concern in any analysis of Tolstoy's fiction. In *Anna Karenina*, *War and Peace* and *Resurrection* he shows himself as an expert on marriage, and all the marriages he describes so well are based on his own direct and indirect personal experience, not even excluding the loveless marriage of Anna and her husband in *Anna Karenina* and her long and finally fatal liaison with Vronsky. Tolstoy knew it all from the inside. For writers in the midst of 19th century marriage was virtually an unexplored territory, and it was Tolstoy's greatest strength as a writer to be an inflexibly curious explorer of what such things in human life were really like.

In *War and Peace* too, the role of love and marriage in shaping the design of the novel. *War and Peace* as everyone knows, is the archetypal nineteenth-century blockbuster. It is an epic study of birth, marriage, life and death set against the background of Napoleon's invasion of Russia, the sacking of Moscow, and his tragic retreat in 1812. Tolstoy does a very good job of depicting war as a shambolic mess, and he is successful in undermining the idea that historical events are shaped by Great Men.

In the light of Tolstoy's novels we see marriage as the career goal of the Russian woman, though she would find it ultimately a restrictive, confining institution. Among nobility, matches were often arranged through parents, who chose husbands from the same class or better, seeking aristocratic backgrounds that would add to a family's social and financial status. Character was of lesser importance, if considered at all. It was not



uncommon for women to select their own husbands, though they were expected to choose from upper class men they met at social occasions such as parties and balls organized by relatives for that purpose. Once married, a wife's duties were to take care of her husband, preside over the household, and bear children. The 1836 Code of Russian Laws stated, "The woman must obey her husband, reside with him in love, respect, and unlimited obedience, and offer him every pleasantness and affection as the ruler of the household." Husbands determined when their wives traveled, conducted business, studied with tutors (perhaps French or literature, though not in academic terms), or gained employment (extremely rare). Many dictated daily activities, such as deciding when wives could leave the house. Children were the property of a woman's husband, even if she had a child with another man via an adulterous affair.

Tolstoy argued out his stance in contrastive frame work in his fictional universe. He contrasted Anna's search for meaning in life with that of Levin, the Tolstoy stand in character. And Tolstoy did something shocking for his time: He made Anna , an adulteress and a sympathetic character. Anna wasn't unhappy because she disobeyed her insufferable, stifling husband and had to be punished; she was unhappy because she didn't find, in Tolstoy's eyes, meaningful love. Tolstoy believed, at the time he wrote *Anna Karenina*, that true love and happiness could be achieved only through a marriage of equals. Anna finds temporary happiness outside marriage; ultimately, however, her lack of independence and social inequality within an adulterous relationship

causes her grief. Tolstoy contrasts Anna's story with his character Levin, an enlightened man who succeeded in his quest for meaning in life by choosing a wife he considered his partner rather than his subordinate. Throughout the book, Tolstoy shed much light on hypocrisy in society, particularly the double standard under which men could stray in marriage without punishment whereas women could not. He also described a "don't ask, don't tell" policy among many high born adulterers, including discreet women who cast Anna out of their circle for actions similar to their own.

Though the Russian male writers like Tolstoy were the most public voices arguing for legal and social equality between the sexes, female reformers began to organize around mid-century. The groups that emerged are often divided by historians into three categories: feminists, nihilists, and radicals. Most members of all three groups were from the upper class, though the growing stream of women into the workplace after the liberation of the serfs and the start of the industrial age saw a slow but steady change in social status among female reformers.

Feminists sought not revolution, but legal equality and reform by women on behalf of women. They achieved much: charity for poverty stricken women, the eventual opening of universities and medical schools to women, and self-direction in a country that saw little. Mostly nobility, they believed specifically in greater independence for women of their own class, with assistance to women in lower classes. The resistance of women

characters in Tolstoy has been lauded to be feminist in a conceptual plain though not ideological one.

Such a social problem we find in *Anna Karenina* more powerfully than in *War and peace* and *Resurrection*. *Anna Karenina* is, perhaps, considered as a whole, a more artistic work than *War and Peace*; the very fact that its scope is less gigantic permits Tolstoy to make it clearer and more concentrated; everything is directed towards the one end the tragic death of Anna and though the novel has an under plot, that is very skillfully blend with the main plot, and is everywhere kept subordinate. *Anna Karenina* is much less distinctively Russian and rational than *War and Peace*; it shows very plainly the influence of the French novel, and its plot is of the type that French novelists are fond of selecting, though the moral intensity with which Tolstoy invests it is unusual with them. Notwithstanding the power and beauty of its telling, it seems, however, somewhat restricted when compared to the vast spaces and terrific issues of *War and Peace*, where individual tragedies, however great, are forgotten in the crisis of a nation.

*Anna Karenina* is a great novel, but no one would dream of saying that it suggested Homer. It is a domestic tragedy only, but, like Shakespeare in *Othello*, Tolstoy has known how to make his domestic tragedy a revelation of the heights and depths, of the passionate potentialities of the human soul. Tolstoy openly refrains from judging his heroine, and it is a mistake to consider *Anna Karenina* as being essentially a protest against the breaking of the marriage bond.

Tolstoy does believe in the indissolubility of marriage, but the book is just as much a protest against the dangers of marriage without love or the cruel injustice of society. The truth is that it is a picture of life, and expresses, as Tolstoy acutely says an artistic work always should, a moral relation rather than a moral judgment. Anna Karenina, is, of all Tolstoy's heroines, the most perfect human being; she is a mature woman, possessed of wit, grace, and beauty, and above all, the gift of sympathy; she is one of those people who have strong affections, who love profoundly and appreciate readily all that is best in others, who are also possessed of keen intellectual powers, but who live mainly from impulse and not from principle. Such people are, perhaps, the most attractive characters in the world, and their impulses, springing from a warm heart, are usually right: but it is their peril that, in moments of moral stress, their emotions may be too much for them, and may fatally mislead them. There is a certain resemblance, though not too close, between Anna and Natasha Rostov; both possess the poetic and emotional temperament; they add, wherever they are, to the romance of life; it may be noted too that, though Natasha's fate is happier, that is due mainly to accident, and not to her own achievement, for she twice escaped the ruin of her life only by the intervention of others, and she also came very near to death by her own hand. There is no surer proof of Anna's sweetness than the charm she possesses for members of her own sex. She appreciates the beauty of the young girl who is her unconscious rival, Kitty Shcherbatsky, and she can enter into the family griefs and troubles of Kitty's sister Dolly, who, although most virtuous herself, clings to Anna through all her ostracism. Even the frivolous and

immoral Betsy Tverskaia is grieved to the heart when her own cowardice compels her to desert Anna.

Even before the heroine enters the story the effect of her presence is felt. Her brother who, owing to a matrimonial infidelity, has quarreled with his wife, looks to her as his only hope; he and Dolly both love her dearly, and they hope that she may find for them a way out of the intolerable situation; she does, in fact, prevent the breakup of the home, though she cannot (and this is another example of Tolstoy's quiet ironic truth) either reform her brother or leave Dolly really happy. Tender and sympathetic as Anna at once shows herself to be, she has yet a void in her own life. When quite a young girl she had been married to a government official, Aleksei Karenin, who held an important position but who was twenty years her senior, stiff, dry, and cold; the marriage was entirely due to the intrigues of Anna's clever and unscrupulous aunt. Anna has one child, her son Seryozha, and in the effort to fill her life completely with her maternal affection, she has almost made it an affectation. Though she herself hardly suspects it, the real emotional capacities of her nature have never been developed. It is a stroke of tragic irony that Anna, who comes to Moscow to avert the destruction of her brother's home, should find there what is to prove the ruin of her own. She meets Count Aleksei Vronsky young, handsome, attractive. Vronsky has been regarded by everyone, including Kitty herself, as the suitor of Kitty Shcherbatsky, but he is not deeply stirred, and, the moment he meets Anna, he yields to her far greater charm. Had there been the slightest disrespect in

Vronsky's attentions, Anna would have known how to defend herself, but Vronsky is perfectly reverent. His family, on discovering the intrigue, considers Anna simply as an amusement for Vronsky, but he himself has never regarded her in that light; from the first moment he has loved her seriously and profoundly, with all the strength of his nature. Against all the ordinary infidelities, the light and cheap loves of the society in which she lives, Anna is immune, but she is helplessly ensnared by this love, so immediate that she has no time to be on her guard, so tender and reverent that she cannot feel insulted. The reader is, at first, somewhat inclined to resent Anna's overwhelming passion, and to consider Vronsky as commonplace, he seems so much the typical military dandy, his whole life's aim (as he vows even to himself) being the desire to be come in fault in everything in dress, speech, manners, and sentiments. He attempts to make his passion for Madame Karenina fit in the conventional framework, but Vronsky is finer than he himself suspects; he really is what Anna had, at the first glimpse, divined to be her nature's destined mate; under the exterior of the St. Petersburg dandy, he conceals a nature capable of extraordinary generousities and the most enduring devotion. He realises all the charm of Anna's nature; he realises that her heart is as yet unawakened and that he has the power to arouse it; there is nothing in his moral code to hold him back; he and his society consider the pursuit of a married woman as being quite futile.. Our first real surprise with regard to Vronsky does not occur in his relations to Anna, but comes when we discover that he has, with almost quixotic generosity, sacrificed the greater part of his fortune in favour of his younger

brother, for no reason except that his brother wished to marry into a distinguished family, and the fortune would greatly aid. With the same generosity, Vronsky, when he discovers the need, makes real sacrifices for Anna. He had at first regarded his passion for her as being only an additional joy in life, entailing no responsibility; but Tolstoy, with his unerring accuracy, shows that the responsibilities of an illicit love are not only as great as those of a legal one, but far more difficult and galling, because society, having ordained the responsibilities of marriage, assists the individual to execute them, whereas, in the other case, it incessantly hinders and impedes. Vronsky is compelled either to leave Anna or to sacrifice his ambition, hitherto the dearest thing in his life, and he gives up his ambition.

Matthew Arnold, in his criticisms on *Anna Karenina*, remarks that it is difficult to imagine an Englishwoman yielding herself as readily as Anna to an illicit love. But we may doubt if this is not a piece of British Phraism, for an emotional Englishwoman, living in a society as corrupt as Anna's (and many periods of English society have been as corrupt), would probably yield in the same way. Tolstoy, with his usual insight, has shown us how natural this yielding really is. Anna, though quite young, is well accustomed to marital infidelity; her own brother's, though it distresses, does not shock her; moreover, in the character of this brother, Stepan, we have a subtle side-light thrown upon Anna's; Stepan is a far inferior type, but there is undoubtedly a family affinity. Stepan is affectionate, kind-hearted, and cheerful; wherever he goes he is thoroughly liked; but he altogether fails to realise his

obligations, even to those he loves, and in Anna's nature, incomparably more refined, there is, none the less, a touch of the same carelessness. Anna's husband is not the person to exercise any restraining influence. Tolstoy never agrees with the wife's conception of him as a mere official machine, but he makes us understand how inevitable it is that Anna should take such a view.

Karenin is cold by nature, and, in her sense of the word, he has never really loved her; her relations with Vronsky do not so much wound and grieve his affections (Anna could readily understand that), but they fill him with an overmastering fear for his dignity, his place in society, and, to an idealist like Anna, this very fear appears as contemptible. The course of the long, ever-changing drama between these three is traced with acutest psychological skill. Anna yields to her lover only after long solicitation, and with an instant shame and regret; for a time she hides the truth from Karenin, but concealment of any sort is hateful to her candor, and soon becomes impossible; she is present at a dangerous steeple-chase when Vronsky is thrown, and her emotion is so manifest that her husband rebukes her; she gives way to her own passionate desire for truth, and, notwithstanding her bitter humiliation, acknowledges her infidelity. She hopes that the confession will end an intolerable situation, but her hope is disappointed; her husband simply forbids her to receive Vronsky in his house, and Anna finds that one insufferable situation has only given place to another still worse; to deceive Karenin was a torture, but to live on terms of cold hostility with him, seeing her lover by stealth, is even more wretched. Karenin meditates a divorce, but neither Anna nor he really desires



it; he cannot bear to yield her entirely to Vronsky, and Anna knows that it would mean a final separation from her son. In the meantime Vronsky is sacrificing his whole career in order to remain in St. Petersburg. Anna longs for death, and nature seems about to send it; her daughter Vronsky's child is born, and for a week she hangs between life and death. In her extremity her mind is oppressed by remorse for the suffering she has caused her husband; she entreats his forgiveness, and with great compassion he does, really and genuinely, forgive; he even consents to be reconciled to Vronsky, and, at Anna's bedside, they clasp hands. But destiny reveals its customary irony. Tolstoy, we may remark, is as firm a believer in tragic irony as any of the Greeks. The touching reconciliation is based really upon one condition that Anna dies and this does not happen. Moreover she, who had, for a moment, exalted her husband above her lover, soon finds the balance redressed. Vronsky discovers himself in a position for which his philosophy has no remedy; instead of being the triumphant lover he finds himself a humiliated offender, pardoned by the man whom he had most grievously injured; there was also the terrible anguish of believing Anna's death inevitable. Vronsky shoots himself, bungles it, and is wounded seriously though not fatally. His attempted suicide is, in part, a supreme sacrifice to his doctrine of come in fault an attempt to escape humiliation and ridicule, in part a manifestation of the feeling, so strong it amazes even himself, that life without Anna is impossible. But Anna recovers; Vronsky's attempted suicide has turned her sympathies almost wholly to him, and when once she is convalescent (here again is the tragic irony) she finds her husband as tiresome and tedious as

before. Vronsky and Anna end the intolerable situation by taking flight. For a time all seems well with them; after so many brief and stolen interviews, so many harsh separations, they find it unalloyed bliss to be together without let or hindrance; they spend in Italy an ideally happy honeymoon. But Tolstoy's art is inexorable, as inexorable as life. Neither Vronsky nor Anna can remain content in isolation; they are both rich and generous natures, meant for fruitful intercourse with their fellows, and they cannot, in their position, obtain either suitable society or suitable duties. Vronsky has resigned his military profession, which he really loved, and for which he was admirably adapted; he does his best to find occupation in other ways; in Italy he attempts art, but soon discovers that he is a mere dilettante, wasting his efforts and his time. They return to Russia, and he devotes himself to the duties of a landed proprietor, becoming quite reasonably successful. So far as he himself is concerned Vronsky could get along, but he is stabbed through his affection for Anna; the really intolerable burden of the situation falls upon her; men will associate with her, but not her own sex; she is ostracized from the society of good women, and even women who are, morally speaking, infinitely her inferiors venture to insult her; moreover she knows that Vronsky's mother tries to enrich him away from her and get him married; she has had to resign her son, and the thought of his destiny, misunderstood, and perhaps neglected, tortures and grieves her. She attempts to obtain a divorce from Karenin, so that her position can be regularized, but her husband, fallen under the sway of a malevolent woman, refuses. Thrown, as she is, entirely upon Vronsky's honour, she is desperately jealous; every hour

that he spends away from her is an anguish, and she is continually tortured by the fear of desertion; conscious that her jealousy exasperates and alienates him, she is still unable to control it.

Vronsky is really a gentleman, and he has true and deep love; he shows great consideration, but the incessant scenes of jealousy followed by passion and passion followed by jealousy strain his patience to the breaking-point. At length, having tried, as he thinks, everything else, he believes that the only way left is to try indifference; Anna, however, is on the edge of the abyss, and his coldness drives her over. Vronsky is absent for the day; in terror at her own despair she sends him a note, beseeching him to return; he answers coldly that he will be back at the appointed time, and, yielding to her anguish, she flings herself beneath a train.

All Anna's feelings at this crisis of her fate are depicted with the deepest truth and tragedy. The unhappy creature herself knows whether she is tending, and struggles frantically, but her views of life grow ever more and more gloomy; hatred of herself, hatred of her lover, well up in her heart, and, at last, her only desire is to punish him". 'There,' she said, looking at the shadow of the carriage thrown upon the black coal dust which covered the sleepers, ' there, in the centre, he will be punished and I shall be delivered from it all ... and from myself.' "Her little red traveling bag caused her to miss the moment when she could throw herself under the wheels of the first carriage, as she was unable to detach it from her arm. She awaited the second. A feeling like that she had once experienced just before taking a dive

in the river came over her, and she made the sign of the cross. This familiar action awakened in her soul a crowd of memories of youth and childhood. Life, with its elusive joys, glowed for an instant before her, but she did not remove her eyes from the carriage, and when the centre part, between the wheels, appeared, she threw away her red bag, lowered her head upon her shoulders, and, with outstretched hands, threw herself on her knees beneath the vehicle, as though prepared to rise again. She had time to feel afraid. 'Where am I? What am I doing? Why?' Thought she, trying "to draw back; but a great inflexible mass struck her head and threw her on her back. 'Lord! Forgive me all,' she murmured, feeling the struggle to be in vain. A little muzhik, who was mumbling in his beard, leant from the step of the carriage on to the line. "And the light which, for the unfortunate one, had lit up the book of life with its troubles, its deceptions, and its pains rending the darkness, shone with greater brightness, then flickered, grew faint, and went out for ever". On Vronsky the terrible punishment takes effect; he rejoins the service a crushed and broken man, having henceforward only one desire to lose his life in battle.

Mingled with the main story of Anna and Vronsky is the companion one or "under plot" of Kitty and Konstantin Levin. We may notice that Tolstoy's method of construction differs essentially from that of Turgeniov; Turgeniov, making his work briefer and more concentrated, omits all that is not essential to his main theme, but Tolstoy amiss at giving, not so much the drama of life itself. He wishes to show us the slow, deliberate motion of

reality, and when in Anna's life there are no events, he fills up the space with the acts and experiences of his other characters. Kitty Shcherbatsky's story is very simple: she at first refuses Levin, believing herself in love with Vronsky; he, however, deserts her for Anna; she is cruelly mortified, passes through a period of ill-health and depression, but Levin ultimately returns, she marries him, and they are happy. Kitty is a charming girl, but her character seems slight and even common place beside the depth and richness and passion of Anna's; the two heroines in this book do not balance so well as in *War and Peace*, though Tolstoy has most skillfully used them as foils to each other, and helped, by their mutual relations, to reveal their characters; thus there is no stronger proof of Anna's wonderful charm than the fact that Kitty, who has hated her, both from jealousy and because she thinks her wicked, has only to meet her in order to be overwhelmed by love and compassion.

Konstantin Levin is, in some ways, more interesting than Vronsky; he has a much more complex mental development. It is agreed that Levin represents, to some extent, Tolstoy himself points out resemblance are many and close; Levin works among his peasants just as Tolstoy did, mowing and reaping in the fields, rejoicing in the health and activity of such a life, and in the lovely pictures of nature that it reveals. Levin's proposal to his wife follows, detail by detail, Tolstoy's proposal to Sophie Behr's; the death of Levin's brother from consumption is like the death of Tolstoy's even the name is the same Nicolas; Levin, like Tolstoy, is happy in his family life, but is, nevertheless, so greatly distressed by religious doubts and difficulties that he

is driven almost to suicide. The resemblance being so strong, it is noteworthy and significant that Tolstoy has painted Levin as a great egoist. He is a good fellow at heart, and the reader is thoroughly interested in his mental development, but his egoism is so strong that it continually exasperates and annoys. When Kitty refuses him, Levin is deeply wounded in his affections, but still more hurt in his pride; he cannot get over the fact that Levin has been "refused by a Shcherbatsky," and feels as if the whole world must be cognizant of his disgrace in fact he becomes really comic. Again, when he hears from her sister that Kitty's affection for Vronsky was really very slight, that her only real regret is the alienation from him, he will not even call at the house and this though he knows that the whole Vronsky entanglement was due mainly to his own eccentric behaviour. Even when he is married he is incessantly and unnecessarily jealous of his wife, and always, on the slightest pretext, tormenting her with this jealousy.

This irritable self consciousness is shown no less strikingly in his relations with men who, although they esteem his integrity and talents, find it exceedingly difficult to like him. The same self consciousness makes him clumsy in society, and, when he has to act with other people in public business, he grows caustic and angry because they do not agree with him in everything. The worst egoism of all occurs in his attitude towards his dying brother. When he sees his brother visibly perishing from consumption, he pities him deeply, but, none the less, his chief concern lies in the thought that this horrible and degrading misfortune of illness and death will one day befall

himself; he positively disturbs the invalid in the night how terrible to break that hard-won sleep of the consumptive by rising to look in the glass, dreading to find that he has wrinkles and grey hairs and is growing old. When he and Kitty attend Nikolai's death-bed we see the strongest possible contrast between the unselfish courage of the young wife, thinking only of the sick man, and doing everything possible for him, and the distressing egoism of Levin, who is filled with fear, disgust, and almost anger at the sight of death". Levin, though terrified at the thought of lifting this frightful body under the coverlet, submitted to his wife's influence, and put his arms around the invalid, with that resolute air she knew so well " : and again, "The sight of the sick man paralysed him; he did not know what to say, how to look or move about. . . . Kitty apparently did not think about herself, and she had not the time. Occupied only with the invalid, she seemed to have a clear idea of what to do; and she succeeded in her endeavor". *Anna Karenina* shows already that fear of death which is such an obsession in Tolstoy's later works. In *War and Peace* he takes the soldier's view of it, as something almost trifling in comparison with greater matters; his noble Prince Andrei grieves over many things, but neither the utmost extremity of peril, nor the anguish of his gangrened wound, nor the immediate presence of dissolution can shake discourage or dismay his soul. It is different with the pitiful, almost animal terror of death shown by poor Nikolai Levin and it plays an increasing part in Tolstoy's mind until, as he describes in *My Confession*, it becomes an obsession which occupies the whole of his mind, and from which he can only shake himself free by an entire conversion. Even then, like a mediaeval

monk, he allows the thought of death to colour almost the whole of life. The truth is that he thinks too much of it.

Tolstoy had reached, more than once, the height of the heroic age. It is a pity his soul ever condescended to our modern and craven fear of death. The canvas of *Anna Karenina* is rich in minor characters, almost as excellently drawn as the main one. Stepan, Anna's brother, has been already referred to; he is an ironically complete portrait of the man of the world, drawn with a Thackerayan lightness and zest. There are not, as a rule, many resemblances between Thackeray and Tolstoy, for Tolstoy is so much the deeper, but the portrait of Stepan might have come from the same pen as that of Major Pendants. Stepan is always kind, but his kindness is as purely constitutional as a good digestion. He is faithless to his wife, not once nor twice, but habitually; he deserts the "adorable" women who confide themselves to his protection; he claims an excellent post, and thinks he has fulfilled all its duties by keeping himself invariably well-dressed; he is, of course, a connoisseur in meats and wines, and, however well-spread the table may be, must always show his fastidiousness by ordering something else. He is very generous, and pays all his debts of honour, but the money for this has to be found by his unfortunate family, who economise even in the necessities of life; one summer they spend their time in a miserable tumbledown house; next year, as the place is positively uninhabitable, they are driven to take refuge with the Levins. But it does not grieve Stepan that Konstantin Levin should support Stepan's wife and six children; he doubtless thinks that Levin



enjoys that sort of thing as much as he Stepan the spending of money. Yet Stepan is invariably liked, for he will do a good turn for anyone if he can, and is always tactful and sympathetic. If Tolstoy has drawn a candid and unflattering picture of his own type of egoism in Konstantin Levin, he has drawn in Stepan a portrait of the other type of egoism the amiable, Epicurean type which is still more drastically complete. Stepan's wife Dolly, sister to Kitty Shcherbatsky is a thoroughly natural and lovable creature; terribly disillusioned by her husband's infidelity, she is yet persuaded, for the children's sake, to forgive him and reunite the family; she bears with endless patience the worries his extravagance entails, and copes single handed with the debts and the six children. It is hardly surprising if, at moments, she murmurs, and is almost inclined to think that the people who lead irregular lives (like Anna) have the best of it; it is only after a visit to Anna and Vronsky that she realises her own blessings, and understands that the tortures of a dissatisfied conscience are worse even than debts and a faithless husband. Dolly, however, stands by Anna in all her misfortunes; while women full of secret sins insult Anna in public, Dolly, the irreproachably virtuous, loves her to the end.

Aleksei Karenin, the husband of Anna is brought before us in all his reality. We see the ugliness which so exasperates Anna the ears that stick out straight, the habit of cracking the finger-joints and we realise his cold vanity. And yet it is impossible not to be sorry for Karenin; he suffers a veritable martyrdom; that which he dreads worse than death ridicule overwhelms him

at all points; he is crushed by the undeserved contempt of his fellows. Tolstoy shows us how little Anna's persecution was dictated by morality, for the cruelty accorded to the guiltless husband is just as great. For a moment, when Karenin pardons Anna and Vronsky, he rises to real heroism, but it is a height to which he cannot keep; the poor man really is, as Anna well knew, a pretentious mediocrity; he is found out as a husband, found out as an official, found out even as a martyr; for a brief space, after the scene of the pardon, the reader is inclined to feel as if Karenin had been all along misjudged, but he returns to his usual self. When Anna has left him he falls under the influence of the stupidly sentimental Lidia Ivanovna; he becomes a convert to the most foolish form of spiritualism, submits Anna's fate to the decision of a medium, and refuses her a divorce because the medium pronounces against it a course of procedure so extravagantly silly that it amazes even Stepan.

There are in the book many amusing and caustic portraits. One group Lidia Ivanovna, Betsky, the Princess Miagkaia, and Veslovsky might have come from the pen of some eighteenth century Tsarist; they have a Sheridan like keenness and lightness of touch. Lidia Ivanovna, especially, is excellent: she is a sentimentalist of the rankest type; having disgusted her own husband within a fortnight of marriage, she has ever since been incessantly conceiving romantic affections for one distinguished person after another; most of them are completely unconscious of her adoration, others ignore it, and the remainder are supremely bored; in poor deserted Karenin she finds at last a

responsive object for her sentimentality and brings about, indirectly, Anna's tragedy.

In *Resurrection* we are taken to the same social issue in a different angle. Throughout the novel is one of the most real women in Tolstoy's fiction. As the pages turn in Maslova, we see every detail of her appearance the white skin, the black curb over her forehead, the eyes black as sloes and slightly squinting, the expression of willingness with which she turns to anyone who addresses her. It is strange how Tolstoy insists on that detail of the "slightly squinting" eyes; it haunts us as it must have haunted Nekhlyudov. And her mind and heart are as real as her bodily personality. Tolstoy, as we have seen, always did possess a character's marvelous power of maintaining a consistent personality while permitting his to change and develop, but nowhere else has he shown it in a manner quite so magical.

From the pure romantic young girl to the prostitute, from the prostitute to the woman redeemed and sweetened and saved his heroine is still herself throughout. It is in the hero that Tolstoy's talent for once fails him, since Nekhlyudov is too obviously only a mouthpiece for Tolstoy's own reflections. We could understand him if the change in him were essentially a spiritual one similar to that in Maslova, but what Tolstoy has portrayed is rather a profound intellectual dissatisfaction, so deep and so far reaching that it could only have been experienced by a man of the greatest intellectual and moral power, a man of genius, while there is nothing in Nekhlyudov's previous life to suggest that he was in any way out of the ordinary. He is too slight to undergo the

tremendous mental experiences of a Tolstoy, and we cannot believe that he does; nevertheless, the experiences remain, and tremendous they are. *Resurrection* is an indictment of the whole of society as we know it now, and it is impossible to read it without the gravest searching of the heart.

It is true that some of the most serious counts in the indictment apply mainly to Russia. More than with the West, Russian society is divided into two great classes the rich who have everything and are idle, and the poor, who have nothing and labour; in England we have in the professional classes and the better artisans' numbers who possess a very fair share of the amenities of life and also do valuable work. Again, it is impossible to say of any large class in our prisons, what Tolstoy says of the Russian political prisoners: that they get there because they are the best members of the community, more intelligent, more unselfish, and more courageous than their fellows. Still, when all allowances are made, the greater part of Tolstoy's indictment lies good against the whole of modern society: in all countries there are classes ruined by idleness, leading lives which, as Tolstoy says, are "a mania of selfishness", consuming in senseless luxury the toil of thousands. Everywhere there are other classes, degraded by poverty and misery, which spend then: whole lives in labour, and reap for themselves hardly any of the benefits of their toil. Everywhere men permit many thousands of people to become criminals simply because they are helpless and defective, and then, when they have made them criminals, debase and torture them further by imprisonment. Tolstoy is convinced from the bottom of his heart that the

whole penal system is cruel, savage, and unjust, and it is almost impossible to read him without feeling the same. He is certain that the majority of men are naturally good, and that the so-called "wicked" are either the victims of our social system, or else of a physical and mental weakness they cannot control. It is easy to object to the "sordid realism" of *Resurrection*, and to declaim against its morbidness and misery, but this morbidness and misery are not Tolstoy's fault; they are inherent in the social system which we, all of us, uphold and, in wishing to escape from them, we are trying to escape from the consequences of our own acts and principles. To use one of Tolstoy's own phrases, he "rubs our noses" into the mess we have made of civilization; he makes us realise the horrors in which our depths abound the vice, the dirt, the foul obscenity, the vermin and people who think that great literature exists merely to amuse and soothe object with furious vehemence.

The great heart of the writer is stung with anger and pity and shame that men our brothers should be so debased and tortured. He is goaded to madness by this outrage on our common humanity, this insult to God. Tolstoy is a realist because he has the courage to face facts as they are, because he believes that the cause of true morality is never served by evasions and concealment, because this concealment is, in itself, one of the chief allies of vice. Though a realist, Tolstoy is not, in essence, a pessimist. There is more real pessimism in one chapter of Thackeray than in the whole of *Resurrection*, for Thackeray thinks men despicable, and despairs of their being otherwise. Tolstoy, like Rousseau before him, is convinced that human

beings are naturally good, and that, if human nature becomes base, it is only because it has slipped from the divine ideal, the spark of God, which exists in each one of us. Like his Master, Tolstoy is assured of the redeeming power of penitence and tenderness. Our redemption may come to us from within, through the struggles of our own soul, or by the aid of another, but it is always accompanied by sweetness and compassion; loving kindness is the true centre of our being; the supreme sin the sin against the Holy Spirit is to transgress, no matter for what motive, the law of love in our dealings with our fellows. Our so-called "principles" and "ideals" do not excuse us; any ideal, whether patriotism or justice or honour or religion, becomes reprehensible when it makes man.

His greatness as a writer came precisely from his quiet unusual power of personifying contradiction. He loved the society and he hated it. He believed in pacifism and non resistance, but could himself be the most arrogant and quarrelsome of men. He was in every way a profound conservative, and yet he was sure that the future must be transformed by a whole new philosophy of peace, progress and love.

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