Criticism

PROSAICS AND ANNA KARENINA[1]

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"Prosaics" is a term I used in my book Hidden in Plain View: Narrative and Creative Potentials in "War and Peace" and which Caryl Emerson and I are developing in our forthcoming study, Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics.[2] Coiners of a neologism have a special freedom in specifying a term's meaning, so let me state at the outset that "prosaics" has two overlapping senses. It is, first of all, a view of the world that is radically opposed to the dominant trends of modern Western thought — from "Hegel to Buckle," as Tolstoy put it, or, as we might add, from Marx to Freud. These thinkers might all be called "semiotic totalitarians" because they presume that to understand a cultural fact is to show its place in a system that can at least in principle explain everything. That is why these thinkers are totalitarian; they are semiotic in their assumption that all apparently accidental or random facts are really signs of some underlying order, to which their special hermeneutic or semiotic system provides the key.

Freud, for example, insists that there are no accidents in the psyche. All apparent accidents, slips of the tongue, or acts of forgetting derive from a disguised "intention to forget" or err; they are always "Freudian." Characteristically, Freud moves from the insight that some errors serve a purpose to the insistence that all do. "Since we overcame the error of supposing that the forgetting we are familiar with signified a destruction of the memory-trace -- that is, an annihilation," he writes in Civilization and Its Discontents, "we have been inclined to take the opposite view, that in mental life nothing which once has been formed can perish — that everything is somehow preserved and that in suitable circumstances . . . it can once more be brought to light."[3]

Prosaics takes the exact opposite view, and presumes that the fundamental state of the world is mess, and that order requires work. Whereas semiotic totalitarians presume that accidents and disorder are invitations to discover underlying laws, prosaics places the burden of proof the other way: although order may exist, it doesn't necessarily exist, and certainly cannot be presumed.

As Tolstoy rejects military strategy in War and Peace, he and

other prosaic thinkers reject all systems of history, which find order largely because they exclude evidence of disorder. To the Freudian, prosaics replies: why should we assume that the human mind is so efficient? Can it really be that each act of forgetting must be purposeful? If the natural state of the mind is mess, then most forgetting and errors may result from the simple inefficiency of all things human. Recent work in cognitive psychology supports this view. Memory requires a reason, and perhaps the forgetting of some things requires a reason. But the mere fact that I cannot remember every speck of dust on the way to work does not mean that I intend to forget it.

The anthropologist Gregory Bateson captured this prosaic insight in one of his splendid dialogues with his daughter. Bateson called these dialogues "metalogues," because their shapes illustrate their themes, and in "Why Do Things Get in a Muddle?," father and daughter muddle and meander their way to a series of prosaic insights. "People spend a lot of time tidying things," the daughter observes, "but they never seem to spend time muddling them. Things just seem to get in a muddle by themselves." If one pays no particular attention to what one is doing, tidy things get messy, but messy things never tidy themselves. Why?

Bateson at last arrives at an answer, which is disarmingly simple: there are an infinitely large number of ways in which things can be messy, but very few that one would call tidy. His daughter expresses dissatisfaction with this explanation, because she feels that there must be a reason, some sort of active force for disorder. Bateson answers that it is order, not disorder, that requires a reason in that sense:

> D[aughter]: Daddy, you didn't finish. Why do things get the way I say isn't tidy?
>
> F[ather]: But I have finished -- it's just because there are more ways which you call "untidy" than there are ways which you call "tidy."
>
> D: But that isn't a reason why --
>
> F: But, yes, it is. And it is the real and only very important reason.
>
> D: Oh, Daddy! Stop it.
>
> F: No, I'm not fooling. That is the reason, and all of science is hooked up with that reason.[4]

Whether or not all of science is hooked up with that reason, all of prosaics is. The natural state of the world is mess.

Prosaics also suggests that the most important events in history, culture, and the psyche may be the most ordinary and prosaic ones, which we do not notice just because they are so ordinary. History tends to focus on great events and grand figures; novels on dramatic incidents; and psychology on critical moments. But

assuming events are important because they are noticeable is like concluding from a view of a distant hill where only treetops are visible that the hill has nothing but trees. Tolstoy argues precisely the opposite, that it is the sum total of small events, of "swarm life," that makes history, and that great men and exceptional incidents are, by virtue of their very exceptionality, unimportant. To paraphrase Abe Lincoln: God must have loved the ordinary events, because he made so many of them.

This view had profound implications for Tolstoy's thinking about psychology and ethics. Let me just briefly remind you of Tolstoy's essay "Why Do Men Stupefy Themselves?", which might be taken as a canonical text of prosaics. Chapter four of the essay begins with an apparently minor point: that even an occasional cigarette or a glass of wine is harmful. People usually say that although drunkenness is harmful, surely "the trifling alterations of consciousness" produced by a cigarette or a glass of wine at dinner, are not. Arguing this way, Tolstoy replies, is like supposing "that it may harm a watch to be struck against a stone, but that a little dirt introduced into it cannot be harmful."

Tolstoy then retells the story of the painter Bryullov, who corrected a student's sketch. "Why, you only touched it a tiny bit," the student exclaimed, "but it is quite a different thing." Bryullov replied: "Art begins where the tiny bit begins." Tolstoy then draws his prosaic moral: "That saying is strikingly true not only of art, but of all of life. One may say that true life begins where the tiny bit begins -- where what seem to us minute and infinitely small alterations take place. True life is not lived where great external changes take place -- where people move about, clash, fight, and slay one another -- it is lived only where these tiny, tiny, infinitesimally small changes occur."

Tolstoy then turns to Crime and Punishment, and transforms it into a Tolstoyan novel. "Raskolnikov did not live his true life when he murdered the old woman or her sister," nor did he decide to commit murder at any single, "decisive" moment. That choice was made, and he lived his true life, neither when he entered the old woman's lodgings with a concealed axe, nor when he made plans for the perfect crime, nor when he worried about whether murder is morally permitted. No, it was made when he was just lying on his couch, thinking about the most everyday questions -- whether he should take money from his mother or not, whether he should live in his present apartment, and other questions not at all related to the old woman. "The question was decided . . . when he was doing nothing and only his consciousness was active; and in that consciousness, tiny, tiny alterations were taking place. . . . Tiny, tiny alterations -- but on them depend the most important and terrible consequences."

The novel itself is a genre of tiny alterations, of course.

The genre's concern for the particulars of daily life; its concern to date clothes, ideas, actions, and forms of speech with precision; its rich description of the unrepeatable contexts in which moral decisions are made and daily lives unfold -- all these defining features make the genre the one most adapted to exhibiting a prosaic world view. These are indeed, among the most important reasons that Tolstoy wrote novels, and that Bakhtin produced his novel-centered theory of art.

Which leads me to the second meaning of the term prosaics -- namely, a theory of literature that is radically opposed to traditional "poetics." Poetics tends to define literature in terms of poetry -- hence its name -- and to see in prose only those features that it shares with poetry -- such as "style" conceived monologically, or "plot" conceived narratologically, or structure understood formalistically. According to traditional poetics, prose is poetry without some poetic features, and with the addition of some unpoetic features; which is something like defining mammals as reptiles who don't lay eggs and have warm blood.

But what if the most important features of prose -- most important especially for a prosaic world view -- are those that it does not share with poetry? In that case, we need to replace poetics with prosaics, which is just what Bakhtin did in his novel-centered literary theory. Tolstoy took the prosaic view of art to its extreme as well, both in his fiction and in the embedded essays of War and Peace. I cannot repeat my description of all the techniques I discuss in my book on War and Peace, but let me just mention that to someone who believes that a long succession of tiny alterations is what shapes lives, length is far from an accidental feature of novels. The expansiveness of both War and Peace and Anna Karenina is central to their prosaic purposes.[5]

Let me now turn to Anna. Because time is so short, I hope you will put up with a somewhat disconnected presentation of some of the key conclusions about this book suggested by a prosaic approach. I offer eleven numbered points, each of which, I am afraid, will necessarily remain largely unsupported except by its coherence with the others. Together, they may suggest why I think that Anna is the most important work of prosaics ever written, and, in my view, also the finest novel I know.

1. If by the hero of a book, we mean the character who best exemplifies its governing values, then the hero of Anna Karenina is Dolly.[6] Above all, she lives by constant attention to the prosaic details of daily life, especially those concerned with the most prosaic of institutions, the family. That is also why she appears so much less interesting than the other characters, and why, after the opening scene, nothing of any great dramatic interest happens to her. She worries about her children's "bad qualities" and

little quarrels, takes them to church even though her own religious beliefs are unarticulated heresy; and while her children are bathing, she discusses childrearing with peasant women. Tolstoy's point here is that these are the most important events of the book and of life generally, even though -- in fact precisely because -- they are too prosaic and ordinary to have any dramatic interest. Where plot is, "true life" isn't.

The opposite of plot in this sense is not idyllic contemplation but constant work on a small scale. The idyll, like the drama, is a falsity. Levin discovers that marriage is indeed very happy, but not at all in the way he expected. "At every step he experienced what a man would experience who, after admiring the smooth happy course of a little boat on a lake, should get himself into that boat. He saw that it was not all sitting still, floating smoothly; that one had to think too, not for an instant forget where one was floating, and that there was water under one, and that one must row; and that his unaccustomed hands would get sore; and that it was only to look at it that was easy; but that doing it, though very delightful, was very difficult"(part 5, chapter 14).

"Difficult delight" is also what work is to Levin, and work is also a central theme in Anna -- not work as Dickensian hell, or a mythic feat, but work in all its moment-to-moment effort, which involves both drudgery and creativity, habit and thought. There aren't many great novels in which people really work in this way, and I suspect that in this case Tolstoy is following and enriching the example set by George Eliot in Adam Bede.

2. The reason that all happy families resemble each other, and each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way is that unhappy families, like unhappy lives, are dramatic; they have a story, and each story is different. But happy families, filled with undramatic incidents, are not fit subjects for a story; and it is in this sense that they all resemble each other. In his notebooks and letters of the period, Tolstoy at least twice quotes a French saying, "happy people have no history." Again, plot is an index of error.

3. Popular renditions of Anna Karenina, like the Garbo film or the BBC production, usually dramatize only the Anna plot, and we properly fault them for including only one story out of two. But I think that most critical readings which tell us that there are two foci are also leaving one out. I refer to the "third family", Stiva and Dolly, with whom, after all, the novel begins. I have already indicated that Dolly is the novel's moral compass; when characters disagree with her, they are wrong. In a sense, Stiva, too is a sort of moral compass, but a negative one.

4. Perhaps Dostoevsky alone would agree with me on this point: Stiva is the villain of the book, its representation of what evil is. And the first thing to note about evil is that it is quite congenial -- as is the devil in Karamazov. Both Dostoevsky and Tolstoy had it in mind to dispute the notion that evil is grand, satanic, ugly, and alien; on the contrary, it is the most familiar thing in the world. We have met the enemy, and he is us.

Dostoevsky understood Stiva in just this way. "Yes, the Stivas would grow very angry were the Kingdom of Heaven to come," he identifies the real enemies of Christianity in The Diary of a Writer. Mediating on Stiva and his type, Dostoevsky recognizes that Stiva's very attractiveness, the fact that he can be accommodating to everyone because he has no morals at all, is what makes him so evil. The Stivas are "regarded as innocent and amiable fast livers, pleasing egoists, standing in no one's way, witty, and living for their own pleasure." They "love elegant things, arts, and they like to converse about everything"; they may have children, but "they give little thought to them." All these phrases recall Ivan's devil, with his "companionable and accommodating disposition . . . ready to assume any amiable expression as the occasion might arise"; both Stiva and the devil are chameleons. The devil, too, may have children, but the members of this type "gradually lose sight of them." It seems likely, indeed, that Stiva as Dostoevsky understood him was an important source for the petty devil.[7]

But it is important, also to recognize the difference between ordinary evil as it was understood by the two novelists. For Dostoevsky evil is ordinary because we all actively if subconsciously wish it; we all want to "kill our fathers". For Tolstoy, evil is closer to "criminal negligence". In spite of his desire to be a good husband and father, Tolstoy observes, Stiva never could remember that he had a wife and children. At the beginning of the book, Stiva, who has been caught in infidelity, is repeatedly described with great irony as a "truthful" man; by which he and his friends mean that he hates to lie. He would much prefer to have his pleasure without lying about it, and has assumed that his wife has long known about his infidelity, and had taken "an indulgent view. It had turned out quite the other way"(part 1, chapter 2). One might think that someone who could sympathize with both Vronsky's and Levin's pursuit of Kitty, and quote the same verses to each of them, would have to be lying, but in a sense Stiva isn't because he conveniently forgets at each moment what he has done before. If being truthful is nothing more than not telling a conscious lie, than Stiva would have to be called truthful; he doesn't consciously lie, because his bad memory — or rather, his excellent "forgettory" -- protects him.

Tolstoy's point here is that truthfulness and honesty involve a lot more than not telling conscious falsehoods; it involves the

moment to moment work of training oneself to remember what might contradict what one wants to say, think, or do. Honesty is active, demanding, and involves the acquisition of habits of self-questioning.

Levin has those habits, which is why one frequently sees him stopping in mid-sentence, as he recalls something that might make him look hypocritical. In arguing with Stiva about women, he suddenly breaks off because he has remembered his own impurity, and asks himself who he is to speak of Platonic love. When his brother Nikolai condemns institutions of local government, Levin becomes uncomfortable because he immediately reflects on the fact that these views are his own, and maybe he has been wrong to hold them. These are the reflexes of an honest man with honest mental habits.

Both the popularity and the evil of Stiva derive from his utter responsiveness to the moment. When the trainman is run over Stiva is deeply moved, but by the time Vronsky returns from giving money for the widow, Stiva is once again in a pleasant conversation. Still more horribly, in part 8, the sight of Vronsky reminds him of his sister and he grows deeply and sincerely sad for a few seconds, but then he gladly greets Vronsky as an old friend in whom to take his usual companionable pleasure. His neglect of his wife and children, his wasting of the resources they need -- and Tolstoy is unsentimental about the importance of money — is Stiva's worst and most habitual crime, enacted in the small, and by omission, at every moment of his life.

5. The key to understanding Anna is that she is Stiva's sister, Anna Oblonskaya. It is a truism that Tolstoy had the special ability to create families that were not mere collections of individuals but a sort of small cultural unit of their own; so that when Vera behaves very properly but not like a Rostov, she becomes the exception proving the rule. We are given several Oblonskys in the book -- two aunts, and that professional procurer of unrepayable loans, Piotr Oblonsky -- and all share the characteristics of dishonest geniality and chameleon-like responsiveness to present company. In Anna's case, we see these traits from the very beginning, when she is persuading Dolly to forgive Stiva, telling her the utter falsehood that the act of infidelity cannot be repeated, which is technically true if one is thinking only of that particular mistress. Anna tells Dolly: "He's good-hearted, but proud and now he's humiliated. What touched me most" -- and here Tolstoy interrupts Anna to comment: "and here Anna guessed what would touch Dolly most"(part 1, chapter 19). Dolly doesn't notice this falsehood, but she does comment later in part 1 that Anna speaks very much like Stiva.

6. Anna is unlike Stiva in one key respect, though. She is capable of feeling guilty. The combination of Stiva's responsiveness and dishonesty with a conscience leads her into habits of protective lying to herself. She wants to be unfaithful to Karenin,

and knows there is no justification for it. Therefore, step by step, alteration by tiny alteration, she "schooled herself to despise and reproach him"(part 3, chapter 23), to magnify each of his faults and to give the worst interpretation to all of his actions and habits, to the point where the mere sight of him causes her loathing; and then she tells herself that it is not a matter of choice, that she simply cannot live with someone she loathes in that way. At the end of part 1, she is still able to look at her husband's weaknesses indulgently and -- I emphasize -- with love: "Anna smiled as people smile at the weaknesses of those they love"(part 1, chapter 33).

In Trollope's novel Can You Forgive Her?, one heroine tells another not to say bad things about her husband even in private lest she teach herself to think that way by habit; and this is precisely what Anna does with Karenin. The famous remark about Karenin's ears is not only a sign of changes in Anna, but also the first cause of her later view, the first in a chain of self-taught habits of distaste. And once she has acquired these habits over hundreds of pages, taught herself to think that way, she carries these habits over to Vronsky, until she totally loses touch with reality and moves into a world of utter falsity. In that world, everything has a meaning, and she knows what it is; in that final carriage ride, in the new terrible light "that revealed to her the meaning of human relations" she assigns a meaning to everything she sees: Tiutkin, coiffeur, and every other shop sign. She becomes the perfect semiotic totalitarian.[8]

7. By now it should be apparent, that, like Dick Gustafson, I entirely and without reservation adhere to the minority camp that holds that the book condemns Anna. The majority view, which holds that Tolstoy began with the intention of condemning her but ended up doing the opposite, is I think entirely mistaken. To be sure, much happened in the course of writing Anna — too much to be described here -- but I think that what readers take as sympathy for Anna is rather an attempt to avoid a two-dimensional character, and to create one whose evil is real and understandable, but nonetheless evil. The favorable reading of Anna also derives in part from readers sharing some of Anna's values, including Romantic love, which Tolstoy emphatically did not share. The pro-Anna critics have had to wrestle with what one of them, Boris Eikhenbaum (in Tolstoy in the Seventies), calls the puzzle of the epigraph: it is a puzzle not only because it seems to condemn Anna, but also because after completing the book Tolstoy explicitly endorsed the interpretation that it condemns Anna. Thus, the pro-Anna people have had to say that Tolstoy didn't understand his own novel. For me, there is no puzzle in that sense.

8. There is a very interesting reason for the reading that is sympathetic to Anna and unsympathetic to Karenin. In order to show Anna's mental process of constructing a false image of her

husband, Tolstoy uses what I like to call "the Emma technique," because Jane Austen makes that technique central to the whole experience of reading that novel -- and was probably the first to use it so consistently. Readers of Emma (and of Pride and Prejudice to a considerable extent) construct a false image of what is going on because Austen narrates in a misleading free indirect discourse which describes Emma's thoughts in the third person, and so misleads the reader into taking her interpretations as facts attested by the author. Much of what readers of Anna take as objective descriptions of Karenin are in fact Anna's purposeful misperceptions. Tolstoy only rarely interrupts to dispute his heroine; occasionally even Vronsky tells her she is being unfair to Karenin. But on the whole, we are likely to see Karenin through Anna's increasingly false gaze because that is the perspective we are given.

9. But we are given clues to another view. In line with Tolstoy's idea that the least dramatic and most inconspicuous facts are the most important, Tolstoy uses what might be called "the decoy technique": the most noticeable evidence is unreliable, whereas more reliable evidence is given haphazardly, often buried in long paragraphs or subordinate clauses, or dropped at moments when one is primarily led to think about something quite different. In this way, we learn that some of what Anna claims to feel about Seryozha is the result of role-playing; we are told that little Annie would have died had Karenin not looked after her; and we are on a few occasions given evidence that before the events described in the book, Anna and Karenin had a relatively good, though not especially passionate and certainly an unromantic, marriage. When Anna answers one of Karenin's early attempts to discuss her behavior with feigned incomprehension -- she is at this point still capable of surprise at how well she can play false — Karenin immediately understands that this very incomprehension is significant. "But to him, knowing her, knowing that whenever he went to bed five minutes later than usual she noticed it and asked him the reason; to him, knowing that every joy, every pleasure and pain that she felt she communicated at once to him; to him, now to see that she did not care to notice his state of mind, that she did not care to say a word about herself, meant a great deal" (part 2, chapter 9). To me, that does not sound like a description of a bad marriage. How many readers remember how Anna and Karenin got married: that he was tricked into proposing to her by being invited to Anna's, and then told it would be dishonorable not to propose — a story whose parallel is the Vronsky-Kitty courtship, where Vronsky, unlike Karenin, does not do the honorable thing.

"As he [Mikhailov] corrected the foot he looked continually at the figure of John in the background, which his vistors had not even noticed, but which he knew was beyond perfection" (part 5, chapter 12); in art as if life the unnoticed figures hidden in plain view may be the most important.

10. On the train back to Petersburg, Anna is reading an English novel, which Tolstoy describes. Although the book is evidentally some distillation of the English tradition as a whole, it is clear that the writer Tolstoy primarily has in mind is Trollope, especially his Palliser novels.[9] The novel contains fox-hunting ("Lady Mary riding to the hounds") and speeches in parliament, both of which were Trollope's signatures, objects of parody. Tolstoy, we know, greatly admired Trollope. There are least three important reasons for using him here. I have already indicated that Trollope's central theme is honesty, and that he treats dishonesty as a matter of acquiring bad mental habits. This idea is itself important to the English novelistic tradition, which Tolstoy apparently opposes to the French tradition: the English novel is a prosaic tradition, and is dedicated to the prosaic values Levin loves and Anna grows to hate. Trollope, above all, is aggressively prosaic.

Finally, the Palliser novels center around a couple much like Anna and Karenin; the advice about mental habits is given to the Anna character, Lady Glencora. Most important, Palliser himself is a sort of Karenin viewed positively, and was probably a model for Karenin: a politician, he is cold, stiff, bureaucratic, extremely inept at expressing emotion, but fundamentally decent and honest. When Lady Glencora is tempted to forsake "the worthy man" for "the wild man" as Trollope defines the opposition, she too indulges for a while in teaching herself to see her husband as incapable of feeling pain because he is incapable of expressing it. Can You Forgive Her?, in fact, narrates three stories of the choice between a wild and worthy man, though Trollope does none of them with the psychological insight of Tolstoy.

11. My final observation is about prosaics and ethics. Tolstoy's novel repeatedly teaches the lesson that good behavior is not at all what the Western Cartesian and Kantian tradition has taught us it is, the instantiation of the right moral norms. If morality were a matter of following rules, then a computer could do it best, or a sort of Ivan Ilich who follows rules perfectly because he is never distracted by anything human. But as Levin learns, there is no rule, and when he come to judge rightly, it is not because he has discovered a rule, but because he lives rightly moment to moment. He appreciates the richness of each case -- is in the root sense, a casuist. When Koznyshev asks Levin whether he would kill a Turk about to harm a child before his eyes, Levin answers that he doesn't know, that he would decide on the moment. Though weak philosophically -- no basis for how to make the decision is offered -- this is the right answer. No rule should decide, because the particularities are too unpredictable and important, and the consequences of a wrong decision too terrible. The right thing to do is to develop a good moral sense over a lifetime and then trust one's morally trained eyes over any abstract philosophy. There is no shortcut

to ethical judgment, or as Bakhtin later put it, no alibi for being.[10]

And how does one train one's moral sense, apart from teaching oneself to live rightly moment by moment? Here we come again to the significance of great prose, of novels. Much more than philosophers examples or even our necessarily partial knowledge of situations in real life, great novels give us a rich and "thick" description of particular cases in our moral universe. Contemplating them, slowly attending their tiny alterations and considering their moral quandaries, may enrich our moral sense. The best education in prosaic ethics is offered by the most prosaic of genres -- and best of all by Anna Karenina.

NOTES

1. The following is the text of a talk delivered at the 1987 annual meeting of the American Association for Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages. Footnotes have been added, and a few observations about Anna Karenina, which were omitted because of time limitations, have been restored. I have not attempted to remove the traces of its composition with oral delivery in mind.

2. I first used the term "prosaics" in my paper for the 1986 AATSEEL conference, "The Ethics of Reading." It also appears in my book Hidden in Plain View: Narrative and Creative Potentials in 'War and Peace' (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987) and is explained in greater detail in my article, "Prosaics: An Approach to the Humanities," forthcoming in The American Scholar (1988). Caryl Emerson and I develop its significance for Bakhtin in our joint study Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics (Stanford Univ. Press, forthcoming). Shortly after the publication of Hidden, the term "prosaics" was also used in a different sense by Jeffrey Kittay and Wlad Godzich in The Emergence of Prose: An Essay in Prosaics (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1987). Evidently Kittay and Godzich arrived at the neologism independently and essentially simultaneously. As Emerson and I use the term, it differs from Kittay and Godzich's "prosaics" in two ways: (1) in our sense, prosaics is not only an approach to prose, but also a view of the world focussing on the prosaic and messy events of daily life; and our discussion of prose centers on the novel, theirs on the "emergence of prose." Despite these differences, we have no difficulty in responding with enthusiasm to their basic argument.

3. Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, ed. and trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1961), p. 17. Freud goes on to say that loss of the memory-trace is possible only in the case of brain damage.

4. Gregory Bateson, "Metalogue: Why Do Things Get in a Muddle?." Steps to an Ecology of Mind (New York: Random [Ballantine], 1972). The metalogue appears on pages 3-8. See also "Metalogue: Why Do Things Have Outlines?," pp. 27-32.

5. Natasha Sankovitch is developing the concept of a "novel of length."

6. On the centrality of Dolly in the novel, see Marina Ledkovsky, "Dolly Oblonskaia as a Structural Device in Anna Karenina," Canadian-American Slavic Studies, vol. 12, no. 4 (Winter 1978 --special issue on Tolstoy edited by Richard Gustafson), pp. 543-548.

7. See the second chapter of The Diary of a Writer for February, 1877.

8. The meaning of human relations that Anna discovers is a form of Darwinism: "what Yashvin says, the struggle for existence and hatred is the one thing that holds men together" (part 7, chapter 30). This is one of many references to Darwinism and evolution in the book.

9. Amy Mandelker has also arrived at this identification of the novel Anna reads.

10. See the recently published essay from Bakhtin's early period, "K filosofii postupka," Filosofiia i sotsiologiia nauki i tekhniki (Nauka, 1986), pp. 80-160.