

the texture of daily life, as Louise Smoluchowski creates it, resembles nothing so much as a good Dostoevsky novel. Rather than the passionate details and belief in individual integrity that mark Anna Karenina and War and Peace, this biography gives us one scandal scene after another. Not only husband, but also wife threaten to leave repeatedly and more than once make a dramatic departure. Every torturous conflict yields to a melodramatic and slightly unbelievable resolution. If, as readings of Romantic poets have taught us, the writer models his or her life as an extension of the writing, then what would it mean for Tolstoy's literary achievement that he created a world to live in so much at odds with his fiction?

NOTES

1. See Gary Saul Morson, "Tolstoy's Absolute Language," Critical Inquiry, Vol. 7, No. 4 (Summer, 1981), pp. 667-687; Krystyna Pomorska, "Tolstoj's 'Triplets': An Approach to Biography and Creativity," Semiosis: Semiotics and the History of Culture, In Honorem Georgii Lotman, ed. Morris Halle et al., Michigan Slavic Contributions, No. 10 (1984), pp. 176-180.
2. Boris Eikhenbaum, Molodoi Tolstoi (Munich, 1968).

Stephanie Sandler, Amherst College

Anthony Thorlby. Leo Tolstoy. Anna Karenina. Landmarks of World Literature. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987. 114 pp.

Anthony Thorlby's slim volume on Anna Karenina joins the new Cambridge University Press series "Landmarks of World Literature." Although each book in this series discusses a single great literary work, no further principle of selection seems to guide the general editor. Why, for instance, include Mann's Buddenbrooks rather than The Magic Mountain, or Woolf's The Waves rather than To The Lighthouse? Does Constant's Adolphe belong in the same category as The Iliad and The Divine Comedy? The series boasts some well-known critics: Wolfgang Iser treats Tristram Shandy, Ian Watt writes on Nostramo, and Michael Wood does 100 Years of Solitude. The haphazard nature of the editor's choices skirts the revived controversy over what exactly constitutes the canon of world literary masterpieces, even though the series title would seem to call for such a statement. With the exception of Woolf and Murasaki Shikibu, however, the series treats works by Western Caucasian males, thus

remaining consistent with the orthodoxy that Allan Bloom and William Bennett presently advocate on this side of the Atlantic.

Professor Thorlby, of course, bears no blame for the above. He in fact succeeds admirably at what he has undertaken, which is to provide those who read Anna Karenina in English translation with a perceptive and detailed discussion of that work without resorting to critical jargon. The monograph should appeal to a large audience, including general readers, professors outside the field who must teach Anna Karenina in survey courses, and Slavists who specialize in areas outside nineteenth-century Russian literature, but who find themselves in front of undergraduates waiting to be guided through yet another translated Russian masterpiece. Tolstoy specialists will find the book elementary, but worth reading nonetheless. Thorlby uses a kind of Tolstoyan ostranenie in explaining complicated literary concepts without recourse to the interpretive clichés that have accumulated around them. Consider, for example, his handling of Levin's epiphanies:

Tolstoy has few rivals in the difficult art of depicting experiences of spiritual revelation. He shows these occurring generally under the pressure of unusual bodily circumstances; they seem almost to be a vision of something in the external world, yet they are manifestly an excitement of the heart and mind. (68)

He offers clear discussions of many difficult areas of the novel without oversimplifying. His discussion of the generic differences between tragedy and the novel, along with his lucid explanation of the breadth of Tolstoy's moral vision--"a morality which insists less on what is good and bad than on what is necessary and cannot be otherwise"(27)--offers hope to those of us who must explain the epigraph and Anna's tragedy to young products of the sexual revolution. Thorlby provides effective illustrations of Tolstoy's use of accumulated physical details to convey overwhelming psychological and spiritual events. Because his own admiration for the work shows through at all times, Thorlby presents the novel in a way that a talented teacher might use to stimulate an enthusiastic first reading in his students.

Thorlby's book has its shortcomings. His treatment of Levin's marriage and life with Kitty often merely paraphrases the novel (which itself may be a bit too obvious, since happy families live better but provide duller narrative material). He virtually ignores Tolstoy's relationship to the Russian literary world of the 1870s, treating Anna Karenina as if it appeared in isolation. The final chapter, "The Critical Context," occupies a mere seven pages, two of which are devoted to Lukacs, a few paragraphs to the work's contemporary reception, followed by a brief, fragmented glance at the twentieth-century response. The "Guide to Further Reading"

relies too heavily on British editions and scholarship, and offers little to the scholar who might wish to pursue a more sophisticated interest in the novel. The question of Anna Karenina's critical heritage raises an inevitable comparison of Thorlby's book with the Norton Critical Edition of the novel. The Norton Edition offers excellent footnotes to the text and 174 pages of excerpted criticism, including selections from Tolstoy's diaries, Mirsky's critical biography, and extensive excerpts from the Russian, Soviet, British, and American criticism of the work that has appeared in the century since its publication. Thorlby alludes to some of the critical traditions and controversies in his text, but only to illuminate points in his own exposition of the novel. To be fair, however, Thorlby did not set out to provide such an extensive critical apparatus as that of the Norton Edition. His book, in fact, provides an excellent supplement to the latter, in that it attempts to create the sophisticated reader that the Norton Edition already assumes. Both can be used together to teach the novel effectively. I would recommend Thorlby's monograph to students and teachers who deal with the work in translation, especially in broad survey or culture courses, as well as to the casual reader who wants a deeper appreciation of the novel. For those who wish a more scholarly approach, I would recommend reading Sydney Schultze's The Structure of Anna Karenina (1982), or waiting for Saul Morson's forthcoming study of the novel.

Thomas Barran, Brooklyn College

Il'ia Tolstoi. Svet iasnoi poliany. Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1986. 286 pp.

Svet iasnoi poliany, part of the Otechestvo series published by Molodaia gvardiia, the publishing organ of Komsomol, does not pretend to be a standard scholarly work. According to the preface by Soviet film director Sergei Bondarchuk (War and Peace), Ilia Tolstoy wrote the book primarily with young readers in mind — advanced high school and university students, I should say, judging from the vocabulary and tone. But the book should be of interest to a wide number of Tolstoy readers, despite some weaknesses in the text.

Like Progress Publishers' excellent Lev Tolstoi i iasnaia poliana, Ilia Tolstoy's book relies heavily on photographs of the famous estate and on Tolstoy and his circle. The pictures are, in fact, the best feature of the book. Many of them show scenes familiar to students of Tolstoy's life, but there are also a number of rarely or never before published photographs and drawings of the estate, the Tolstoy family, and various archival materials. Moreover, many