

Title: Illustrating and Adapting Tolstoy's Novel: Oblonsky and the Drama of *Anna Karenina*
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Little has been written to characterize the encounter between *Anna Karenina* and its myriad illustrations and adaptations. These visual and filmic realizations are acknowledgements of Tolstoy's intensely visual writing: enthralled by the experience of reading *Anna Karenina*, illustrators and filmmakers strive to make Tolstoy's word flesh (Elliott 164). Inseparable from the visual impulse in Tolstoy's writing are his metaphysics, morality and ethics—what Richard Gustafson calls Tolstoy's emblematic realism (Gustafson 202-12). Incarnating the novel is necessarily an interpretive activity. The purpose of this study is to determine to what extent these visual texts reflect Tolstoy's emblematic realism and whether or not they occupy the same representational and semantic territory as the verbal original (W.J.T. Mitchell 47). This study limits its analysis to the novel's beginning and the ways in which Russian illustrators and filmmakers have portrayed it over the course of the twentieth century. Crucial here is the importance of Stiva Oblonsky and his introduction as the hedonistic and corporeal character so many readers enjoy. Of equal importance is how the novel introduces the conflict of personal happiness and morality—what Orwin calls the drama of *Anna Karenina* (Orwin 171). Some illustrations and adaptations find means of expressing this drama and thereby reflect the novel's emblematic realism. Other cases zero in on the figure of Oblonsky in terms that perpetuate the notion of mimesis as a beautiful lie, a realism entirely at odds with Tolstoy's (Gustafson 203).

Bibliography

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