

thus worthy of serving ideological or didactic ends in ironically deadening allegories of deadened conscience, rather than putting those ends into question. And, finally, Gary Saul Morson encourages us to read the most homely vehicle of verbal cliché, the quotable phrase, as offering flashes of connection and insight in the hands of Tolstoy, who deploys the quotable in unquotable ways to defamiliarizing effect.

The two essays that stand alone thematically, those of Orwin and Denner, likewise pay tribute to the unconventional Tolstoy. Orwin convincingly describes Tolstoy's genuine fascination with the figure of the *molodets* in his war fiction, a figure who finds himself most at home in the extraordinary—indeed, often amoral—circumstances of war. Denner considers the remarkable, perhaps perverse, malleability of Tolstoy's image in the revolutionary period, with Tolstoy's complicated adherence to social transformation without revolution lending itself awkwardly to the competing ideological agendas of various constituencies in the ugly political theater of this period.

Where do we stand, then, with Tolstoy? It should be obvious by now that Orwin's collection of essays provides a remarkably coherent answer to this question. We stand with Tolstoy in a new attitude of investigation that seeks out what is enigmatic, unfinished, and difficult. For not only has the Tolstoy of Soviet orthodoxy congealed into a deadening cliché, so has the caricature created by Sir Isaiah Berlin. For if the opposition between hedgehog and fox has had considerable heuristic traction in Tolstoy studies—and rightfully so—it has become exhausted, in need of reformulation and renewal. Orwin's collection makes a necessary, and liberating, step in this direction. Now we might be ready to perceive Tolstoy not as the wondrous artist of differentiation, the seer of plurality, but as a brilliant figuration of refusal, and, above all, of the refusal to submit to the conventional and normative in their myriad guises. This wily,

exciting, and dangerous Tolstoy frustrates the “ordinary course” of things, troubles our repose in the oblivion of the everyday: This Tolstoy is always untimely, revolutionary, ahead of us.

Jeff Love  
Clemson University



#### Ленквист, Барбара (Barbara Lennkvist

[Lönnqvist]). *Путешествие вглубь романа Лев Толстой: Анна Каренина*. Москва: Языки славянской культуры, 2010. 128 с. (Studia philologica). ISBN: 978-5955104362.

Intended for general readers, Barbara Lönnqvist's study practices what Tolstoy himself encouraged when approaching literature, namely, exploring a text as an “endless labyrinth of linkages” in order to grasp the essence of the art. Her meditations contained in this slim volume are absorbed in a close reading of *Anna Karenina* and are sparked by “a sense of wonderment.” Lönnqvist traces a personal, though sometimes meandering journey through the novel's semantic features.

The investigation of the rich textual tapestry offered in this study is, as readily admitted by the author, a creative process of collaboration where each reader is the novelist's “co-author.” In a series of perceptive, meticulous appraisals of motifs, images, instances of word play, and linguistic puns, Lönnqvist exposes the novel's major symbolic subtexts that distinguish Tolstoy's unique brand of realism. At times a lustrous interpretation of the classic novel, this book is written confidently, betraying no anxiety towards the colossal body of Tolstoyan scholarship. It offers a delicate nod toward Russian Formalists (who provided an impetus for her inquiry) and metafictive hermeneutics, presenting requisite, yet reticent remarks on Tolstoy's oeuvre.

Lönnqvist is adept at demonstrating connections between the novel's multiple subplots, while highlighting the controlling forces of both

prominent and obscured images and themes. In her recuperation of textual details, such as the “bear tracks”—images that symbolically envelope Levin and Kitty’s relationship, or the train theme that helps define Vronsky’s steely Englishness—she often draws on a combination of mythical and folkloric paradigms to discuss subtextual elements. At times, however, the hunt for uncovering linkages seems excessive, as some ideas recur repeatedly. No detail of this “kaleidoscopic picture” is left unexamined. The author’s work as a translator of Russian texts, as well as her notable scholarship on Russian poetry and prose, informs her mythopoetic reading of *Anna Karenina*.

Yet, even seemingly innocent word repetitions are seen as emblematic and are forced into service as evidence of mythic and symbolic intents of the text. As seen through the rigorous eyes of Lönnqvist, an oft-repeated common word is not allowed to exist outside the integrated patterns of this wholly symbolic fictional modality. After grappling with the smallest of images, like that of humble patches (заплатки), Lönnqvist elevates her terse conclusions, much in the Tolstoyan spirit, to the level of supernal truths, as in closing pronouncements such as the following: “Man cannot construct his life rationally, he can only ‘patch it up’ and take it as it is given to him” (71).

While seeking to free the novel from “torpid clichés,” Lönnqvist unfortunately reiterates some of the typical symbolic aspects of Tolstoy’s book without critically reassessing them. For example, when she compares Anna with Frou-Frou, she extends the “dead-horse” metaphor further by adding another, rather simplistic layer of analysis, associating Vronsky with Anna’s cob (her everyday horse for riding):

Anna rides an English “cob” that strongly resembles Vronsky. Tolstoy leads us to believe that, in Anna’s own perception, her cob is associated with Vronsky, and, in any case, both

of them, the steed and the lover, coincide for her in a single context.

In the novel itself, however, the gender of the horse is not clear: “That’s a fine horse, isn’t it? That’s my cob. My favorite” (Не правда ли, хороша эта лошадь? Это мой коб. Моя любимая.) The problem here is that the word “cob” describes only a type of horse, and not its sex, as the varied Russian gender-referents make clear. While there is a clearly identified black stallion (вороной жеребец) in this scene, it is not the one that Anna rides. Anna’s phrase, “my favorite [horse],” is, in the final analysis, entirely ambiguous; it could be a mare that she is discussing, rather than a stallion or a gelding (59).

All too often, Lönnqvist frequently utilizes long patented, if somewhat tired symbolic analysis that has been disputed or even dismissed by scholars such as Gary Saul Morson. Glorifying Dolly’s “patched” lifestyle, she repeatedly calls attention to the filthiness (both moral as well as physical) that surrounds Anna. As was once entrenched in the scholarship, Anna here is again shown as soiled—her life ravaged by numerous dirty hands. Collections of associations, such as Vronsky being linked to the paper knife, to the train, and to the stallion, and Lönnqvist’s invocations of archetypes unnecessarily resurrect pseudo-psychanalytic theory, which hangs heavily over some of the semiotic interpretations. One also wonders about the “discovered linkages” that surround Anna’s traveling satchel, which Lönnqvist advances beyond a Jacobsonian metonymic device into a symbol that subsumes the “bag” (мешок), travel bag (дорожная сумка), and the vital “little red bag” (красный мешочек), and that comes to represent Anna’s uterus or perhaps, more generally, her “inner space” (самое нутро Анны, ее внутреннее пространство) (44-45). At such times, Lönnqvist’s study feels ponderous.

In her commitment to uncovering the novel’s symbolic constellations, Lönnqvist seems less

interested in the robust tradition of exploring Tolstoy's prosaic realism. Her painstaking study of Tolstoy's poetics, even as it attempts to organize the world of the novel according to symbolic patterns and archetypes, could benefit from considering the text as a way of immersing the reader into the accidental "messy particularities of life," showing us the contingent, minute developments in human psychology from which big decisions arise.

Even though this volume delivers a tour-de-force examination, moving from one angle of analysis to another, one wonders whether there is an underlying motivation for the multitudinous readings. Lönnqvist touches upon a Pushkin-Tolstoy intertextual connection in the first chapter, brings up the multi-lingual textures of Tolstoy's prose, and even addresses Tolstoy's political views as reflected in the novel. Throughout it all, she continues to practice her art of tracing parallels and patterns, which she has done to great effect in previous research. As she emphasizes Tolstoy's use of folkloric and linguistic motifs to highlight the mythopoetic potential of his prose, she seems to challenge the value of this novel as being an exemplary realist masterpiece. Yet, we are left to guess as to why she chooses to take this rather unstructured tack; and likewise we are left to wonder about her overall argument.

While a conversation with some Russian-language critics is frequently sensed, the evidence of a critical dialogue with more general scholarship feels missing. One of more problematic features of

this study is that it gestures towards Formalist method, frequently citing the canon, but never quite delivers on the promise of a sustained engagement with Formalist hermeneutics. "Cultural memory of the language" is also brought up, but only briefly as a phrase, and not expounded upon adequately, thus disappointing the reader with a scant overview of relevant criticism, even that which could be germane to this study. As mentioned at the outset, however, this study is meant to cater to the general reader over the academic, and criticism of this volume, which packs a punch in its 128 pages, should be tempered by this fact.

Though the reader will not be served with an abundance of new interpretations of the classic novel, they will be given small golden nuggets of analysis, collected in the course of sifting through the textual riches of Tolstoy's prose. One of the book's undeniable strengths is in its conviction and finesse. It also shines when drawing the reader deep into the language of the novel, highlighting, with the perspicacity of an expert linguist, the importance of paying close attention to the smallest nuance, infecting the reader with a sense of wonder and deep appreciation for a close (re-)reading of Tolstoy's sweeping novel. Like *Anna Karenina* itself, we are left in Lönnqvist's book with overlapping and engagingly intertwined storylines, a labyrinthine look at this classic.

Kristina Toland  
Bowdoin College