

THE UNCONSCIOUS GOOD LIFE IN ANNA KARENINA AND WOMEN IN LOVE

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In 1932 David Garnett, friend of D.H. Lawrence, whose mother had translated Anna Karenina and whose father had written Tolstoi: His Life and Writings, likened Lawrence and Tolstoi as follows:

both in their gifts, and in the limitation they seem wantonly to have put to their intelligences and their art, there is a curious resemblance between Tolstoy and Lawrence. In their vitality, their astonishing understanding of women, their attitude toward science and toward the greatest works of art and toward other artists, in their desire to change the world spiritually by founding small communities, in their hatred of their disciples, in their desire to change the world and to withdraw from it, in all these and many other ways there is a curious parallelism between them.¹ And if Tolstoi was a great artist spoiled by ideas, by religious impulses, so was Lawrence, only spoiled much more. (Qtd. in Garnett: 100-01)

Garnett's positive and negative reactions to Tolstoi resemble those of Lawrence himself. At first the positive predominated: in 1907 Lawrence told Jessie Chambers that "'Anna Karénina' was 'the greatest novel in the world.'" In 1909 – in a cheerfully polemic response to J.M. Robertson's and Jennings's opinion that Crime and Punishment was "the finest book written" – he called that novel "a tract, a treatise, a pamphlet compared with Tolstoi's Anna Karénina or War and Peace" (Lawrence Letters [LL] 1: 126-27). After 1913, Lawrence shared Garnett's apprehension of Tolstoi as "a great artist spoiled by ideas" which interpreted his "religious impulses". In 1928 Lawrence claimed in his introduction to Verga's Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Stories that "It was only as a moralist and a personal being that Tolstoi was perverse. As a true artist, he worshipped, as Verga did, every manifestation of pure, spontaneous, passionate life" (18-19).² In "The Novel" (1925) he considered Tolstoi's offence of embracing an "absolute" (his "very nauseating Christian-brotherhood idea of himself") to be aggravated by its violation of Tolstoi's non-intellectual nature: "Tolstoi, being a great creative artist, was true to his characters. But being a man with a philosophy, he wasn't true to his own character" (Study of Thomas Hardy [STH]

184, 186). In Study of Thomas Hardy he had classified Tolstoi's character as belonging to "the father": the physical, sensual, feminine, inert, non-intellectual, unified, soul, and "the Law"; of "marvellous sensual understanding, and very little clarity of mind" (92, 126). One of the products of his unclear mind, according to Lawrence, was his very repudiation of the intellect. In 1928 Lawrence absolved Verga of what he called "the Tolstoyan fallacy, of repudiating the educated world and exalting the peasant" (Cavalleria 18-19). The coal-miner's son educated into the self-consciousness of England's intelligentsia was inverted by the aristocrat who attempted to learn from his peasants. Tolstoi was also influenced by the Russian populism which had no equivalent in English culture, and which manifested itself during the period of Anna Karenina's composition in the "To The People" movement (narodnichestvo). In Lawrence's lecture "Art and the Individual" of 1908 – his earliest extant response to Tolstoi, and his first public statement on aesthetics – he implicitly rejected the argument of What is Art? that simple people and children are the best judges of art: "You are not a born judge of Beauty – you must learn, by studying the best examples, and by searching your own soul carefully" (STH 142). Both Tolstoi and Lawrence came to believe in a spiritual aristocracy, but in Tolstoi's case it embraced the majority, rather than the minority, of mankind.

Nonetheless, Tolstoi's anti-intellectualism had some kinship with Lawrence's own – as Lawrence himself was aware. Certain anti-rationalists were exempt from both authors' distrust of intellectuals. German romantics such as Herder and Schelling not only influenced Lawrence and Tolstoi directly, but via such British figures as Carlyle, and such anti-liberal, mediaevalist Slavophiles as Pogodin, Samarin, and Tiutchev, respectively. The late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century German organicists to whom Lawrence was attracted were themselves influenced by politicized Russian developments of German romanticism. Lawrence's reception of Nietzsche came partly through Shestov, whose Apotheosis of Groundlessness Lawrence helped Kotelianskii to translate at the same time as he was making his final revisions to the typescript of Women in Love. The Apotheosis was written six years after Shestov's The Good in the Teaching of Tolstoi and Nietzsche, which considered the affinities and differences of the two thinkers.³ Tolstoi and Lawrence favoured technical education for the masses, and education into a higher level of consciousness only for elites (however defined). In the introductory material for his *ABC* primer of 1872, Tolstoi endorsed Wilhelm Riehl's advocacy of the teaching of basic literacy

and practical skills to rural people, and his rejection of universities. Two years after finishing Women in Love, Lawrence wrote that most people should never learn to read and write, and in 1925 took the Tolstoyan position that learning for most people should not be imposed beyond the “3 Rs” (Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious [PUFU] 118, 106; Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine [RDP] 96).

Lawrence’s desire to “hate our immediate predecessors, to get free from their authority” was somewhat intensified in Tolstoi’s case by the latter’s position as a beneficiary of the Bloomsbury-centred Russian craze (LL 1: 509). More particularly and positively, by criticizing Tolstoi Lawrence was able to analyse and criticize a contradiction of which he was aware in his own work – that involved in the conscious and explicit advocacy of low consciousness.⁴ This article explores this contradiction by comparing the representations of and attitudes towards consciousness in Anna Karenina and Women in Love, with occasional reference to War and Peace and The Rainbow. It does not attempt to compare the novels in the light of contemporary or subsequent philosophical, psychological, or biological debates as to the nature of consciousness and unconsciousness; rather, it will try the extent of the mutual intelligibility of the two novels’ ontological and normative treatments of these concepts, using the novels’ own terms. The contradiction involved in the advocacy of low consciousness is one which has received relatively little attention from critics of both Anna Karenina and Women in Love, and which so far as I am aware has not been analyzed in the two novels together.⁵ They constitute a revealing couple for several reasons; Anna Karenina was the work by Tolstoi to which Lawrence reacted most strongly, and on which he commented the most.⁶ He was rereading Anna Karenina at the time of beginning The Sisters: during his elopement he and Frieda thought of their situation in relation to the novel, and in June 1912 he wrote to Jessie Chambers: “I only know I love Frieda...I can think of nothing but of Anna Karenina” (LL 1: 412). That November he wrote jovially to Edward Garnett: “F. had carefully studied Anna Karenin, in a sort of “How to be happy though livanted” [sic] spirit.”⁷ Anna Karenina and “Women in Love occupy related positions in their authors’ oeuvres, being written soon after a family-epic-historical novel with a soberly-optimistic ending (War and Peace and The Rainbow). The later novels are shorter, cover only one or two years of the near-present, possess fewer central characters and plots, and are more critical of and less hopeful for the more conscious, less traditionary, societies which they describe. Each marked the end of a phase in its

author's career: it was Tolstoi's last novel for twenty years, and Lawrence's last completed novel set in England for ten years. Soon after finishing Anna Karenina, Tolstoi began to formulate the un-Orthodox communitarian anarchism which Lawrence professed to despise, but which was not wholly unlike the solutions for which he himself was struggling for consciousness.

Anna Karenina stands at a crux in Tolstoi's oeuvre: the self-conscious scientific rationalism of War and Peace is still apparent, but the anti-intellectualism of late Tolstoi is already visible. The faith in the Russian peasantry of both War and Peace and the later Tolstoi is somewhat in abeyance, and the rectilinear ethical consistency of late Tolstoi (apparent in, for example, The Kreutzer Sonata's demand for universal chastity) has not yet emerged. Lawrence did not consider Tolstoi in terms of periods: early (before War and Peace), middle (it and Anna Karenina) and late (the tracts, and what Lawrence called "his simple art – his tales") (STH 227). He made no criticism of War and Peace or Resurrection which he did not also apply to Anna Karenina (although the reverse is not the case). He read What is Art?, and certain of Tolstoi's tales, at the same time as or soon after the two long novels, and it is likely that the qualities which he found in the later works intensified his perception of the same in the earlier works.

Michael Bell considers that:

[one] way of expressing the difference between The Rainbow and Women in Love is as a shift from the Tolstoyan to the Dostoevskian. For, like Dostoevsky, Women in Love uses a group of extraordinary, articulate, slightly perverse, yet representatively modern characters to conduct an in-depth psychological investigation of their own authenticity. It privileges the "struggle into conscious being" rather than the Tolstoyan commitment to the traditionary and the unconscious. ("L and Modernism" 190)

The rivalry and contemporaneity of Tolstoi and Dostoevskii (the serialization of Notes from Underground, Crime and Punishment, and The Idiot overlapped in Russkii Vestnik with that of War and Peace) encouraged the binarism apparent in much contemporary and subsequent criticism of them. In Tolstoi i Dostoevskii (1900, partly translated into English in 1902) Merezhkovskii described them respectively as seers of the flesh and of the soul (qtd. in Emerson 68). Woolf called them seers of Life and of the soul (231). For Bakhtin, Tolstoi was the "writer-monologist" antithesis of the arch-polyphonist Dostoevskii (103). Lawrence described Tolstoi as of

“marvellous sensual understanding, and very little clarity of mind”, but criticized Dostoevskii as hyper-conscious, with “a will fixed and gripped like a trap” (STH 126; LL, 2, 311). Some of the broad trends of the reception history of Tolstoi and Dostoevskii, including Lawrence’s own analyses, support Bell’s distinction of their works. However, the following points should immediately be added. The phrase “struggle into conscious being” appears in the following context in the Foreword of Women in Love:

This novel pretends only to be a record of the writer’s own desire, aspirations, struggles: in a word, a record of the profoundest experiences in the self. Nothing that comes from the deep, passional soul is bad, or can be bad. [...] Man struggles with his unborn needs and fulfilment. [...] Any man of real individuality tries to know and to understand what is happening, even in himself, as he goes along. This struggle for verbal consciousness should not be left out in art. It is a very great part of life. It is not superimposition of a theory. It is the passionate struggle into conscious being (WL 485-86).

Lawrence states only that the struggle for verbal consciousness should not be left out of art. This leaves room for a commitment to the unconscious, coexisting peacefully or otherwise with a struggle into conscious being. Secondly, Bell’s (like Lawrence’s) characterizations of Tolstoi apply best to the works of late Tolstoi. The adjectives tolstovskii and Tolstoyan have, since Tolstoi’s own time, often been derived from his late works, just as tolstovtsy and Tolstoyans have followed the teachings of the late Tolstoi. Thirdly, in certain respects Tolstoi demonstrated a weaker commitment to the traditionary and the unconscious than did Dostoevskii. Such was Lenin’s and subsequent Soviet analysis of the two authors, for which reason Tolstoi had the more secure place in the Soviet literary canon (Lukács 126, 184). Steiner contrasted Tolstoi’s rationalism, near-atheism, humanism, and inability to depict mental chaos, to Dostoevskii’s anti-rationalism, faith, pessimism, and ability to describe mental chaos (Steiner 250). In War and Peace and Anna Karenina, in particular, Tolstoi makes an equivocal commitment to the traditionary, and enacts and describes struggles into certain kinds of consciousness.

In his 1875 review of Anna Karenina Sovoliev complained of a “transmigration of souls” from War and Peace to the later novel (qtd. in Knowles 245). His perception is just, and Andrei’s and Pierre’s rebirths in Levin suggest that

their lives (like those of Tolstoi's earlier heroes such as Nekhliudov and Olenin) were deemed to have failed in the quest for usovershenstvovanie (complete creation, or perfection) which they had performed on their creator's behalf. Lawrence uses his protagonists on a similar quest, and certain of Anna Karenina's dushi (souls) transmigrate, in certain of their aspects, to The Rainbow and Women in Love. In following this transmigration, this article will consider the characters' ideas and traits in relative isolation from their contexts in the novels. Extracting characters from their contexts is a different kind of exercise in the case of each author, and its performance reveals differences between Tolstoi's and Lawrence's modes of characterization, which will be noted. It is performed however in the belief that both authors create characters whose ideas survive the process of abstraction in a form which is indicative of their thought as well as their artistry.

Levin and Tom Brangwen are near contemporaries in fictional time, and farmers.⁸ They take physical delight in the surroundings of their farms; the therapeutic effect of Levin's visit to the "warm, steamy" cowshed resembles that of Tom Brangwen's visit to the cowshed with Anna (AK Garnett 112). After a youth of unsatisfactory promiscuity, they are uncomfortable with sex, and search for a pure woman on the basis of an idealized vision of their mothers.⁹ Having obtained the women they desire, Levin and Tom then find themselves in the middle of a dark wood (R 120).¹⁰ Of course, Levin is far more conscious and articulate than Tom: the latter's speech at Will and Anna's wedding to the effect that "Marriage is what we're made for" is a clownish articulation of the point that Levin makes to Oblonsky in the Anglia restaurant (R 128). However, whereas Tom desires a foreign aristocrat because of and for the sake of his struggle into greater consciousness, Levin contemplates "the renunciation of [...] his utterly useless education" and becoming "a member of a peasant community"; eventually he marries a woman of lower consciousness than himself (AK G 332). In this respect they invert one another.

Will Brangwen, more consistently than Levin, seeks non-rational solutions to his spiritual problems. When Levin sees the sky as a "solid blue dome", he thinks: "in spite of my knowing about infinite space, I am incontestably right when I see a solid blue dome, and more right than when I strain my eyes to see beyond it" (948). Will tries to believe in the transformation of water into wine at Cana: "It was true for him. [...] Very well, it was not true, the water had not turned into wine. [...] But for all that he would live in his soul as if the water had turned into wine [...] His mind he let

sleep” (R 159-60). Will’s somewhat greater success in this project endorses Levin in his distrust of the type of education and society which distinguish him from Will. Unlike Levin, however, Will favours the via negativa: “In church, he wanted a dark, nameless emotion, the emotion of all the great mysteries of passion [...] his real being lay in his dark emotional experience of the Infinite, of the Absolute” (147). The difference between the powerful, individual experience to which he aspires, and the shared ethics which Levin eventually embraces, is indicative of the differences of their authors.

Levin’s faith fares less well in its transmigration to Crich. Both men struggle to justify to themselves their wealth, resist the ruthless modernization of their working practices, feel their men to be their spiritual superiors, and cling to the Christian faith which they believe the latter to possess. Levin’s final religious experience occurs under the cosmic light of the Milky Way, whereas Crich’s faith in his old age is likened to “beautiful candles of belief, that would not do to light the world any more, they would still burn sweetly and sufficiently in the inner room of his soul” (WL 229). Levin, more than Crich, is endorsed in rejecting the atheism which is represented as dominating their respective classes and times.

The sceptic in Levin fares no better in migration to Crich’s son. Levin and Gerald are physically powerful landowners and masters of men who try to reform their estates, have a family history of premature deaths (a protracted example of which they witness at first hand), exhaust the pleasures of casual sexual relations, sense the meaninglessness of their own lives, and fear their own impetus towards annihilation. Unlike his own father, and unlike Levin, Gerald “did not inherit an established order and a living idea. The whole unifying idea of mankind seemed to be dying with his father [...] Gerald was as if left on board of a ship that was going asunder beneath his feet” (WL 221). (Levin’s son Mitya, who is Gerald’s contemporary, would, had he lived, have experienced this sensation in an extreme form during the period in which Women in Love was written.) Gerald represents what Levin becomes when denied the possibility of faith – with the addition of Vronsky’s level of lust, taste for strong women, and military background, and with Oblonsky’s scepticism of his best friend’s excesses: a victim of his own high consciousness. Several metaphors migrate between them. After attaining happiness in marriage, Levin has a horror of life’s finitude: “In infinite time, in infinite matter, in infinite space, is formed a bubble-organism, and that bubble lasts a while and bursts, and that

bubble is Me” (AK G 936). After succeeding in the mines, Gerald looks at his eyes in a mirror and “was not sure that they were not blue false bubbles that would burst in a moment [...] and be a purely meaningless babble lapping round a darkness” (WL 232). A different metaphor migrates from Tolstoi’s A Confession (although, since the latter was not translated into English until by Aylmer Maude in 1921, this migration occurred without Lawrence’s awareness – unless Kotelianskii or another friend had told him of the passage). Tolstoi describes a dream in which he is lying, as he thinks, in bed, but then realizes that he is suspended by ropes. He tries to adjust the ropes for comfort, but as he does so he begins to slip out of them, and sees that he is suspended over a bottomless abyss. His terror is only relieved when he looks into the immensity of sky above, and realizes that he is firmly held (Confession 96-99). After his father’s death, Gerald “was like a man hung in chains over the edge of an abyss” – but, unlike Levin, he does not look upwards (WL 337). Lawrence, as much as Tolstoi, wished to rescue people from such abysses, but for Lawrence the abyss itself disappeared, as people created their own meanings.

In Levin’s migration to Birkin (with which the rest of this article is concerned) Levin becomes more vocal and confident, although no more consistent. When Kitty comes to Levin on the star-lit terrace at the end of Anna Karenina he decides against communicating his epiphany to her: “It is a secret for me alone, of vital importance for me, and not to be put into words”; when Ursula comes across Birkin stoning the moon on the mill pond, he does not hesitate to give her “an idea of what he wanted”, and in words (AK G 968; WL 252). Birkin in his turn, however, is less voluble and confident than the truculent, ardent preacher which Tolstoi became after completing Anna Karenina, whose thirty-year career included statements under such titles as A Confession, What I Believe, What Then Must We Do?, What Is Art?, Credo, What Is Religion?, What’s to be Done, and I Cannot Be Silent. Between Levin and Birkin there exists a literal (“-in” ending) and metaphorical weak rhyme; their similarities and differences are indicative of those of their novels more generally. None of Lawrence’s thoughts on Levin survive: Jessie Chambers recorded that she, her brother and father “felt most sympathy [...] with Levin and Kitty, and followed their experiments in farming with deep interest [...] Lawrence, however, was more interested in the problem of Anna” (114). This silence on Levin requires careful interpretation. Levin and Birkin resemble their authors more nearly than any other character, are men of independent means in their early thirties, withdraw from the

society to which they feel alien and superior, are contemptuous of organized politics, have no parents, believe a relationship between a man and woman to be one of the most important goals in life, and are imperfectly satisfied with such a relationship once they achieve it.¹¹ They are relatively ineffectual; like Levin, and unlike Vronsky, “Birkin understands what is at stake internally but is largely ineffective in the outer world while Gerald has an outer effectiveness divorced from inner meaning” (Bell, Language and Being 105). Both partly alleviate their spiritual malaise by struggling into consciousness of the idea that human flourishing involves certain kinds of restriction on the power and remit of consciousness.¹²

Their narratives treat them with a similar degree of distance. Other characters sometimes make them appear ridiculous; Mills finds that “Levin showed Lawrence how to treat Birkin humorously” (57). Bell’s claim that “it is not so much that Birkin is ironized as that he is used to explore, sometimes through rhetorical extremes, possibilities of feeling and attitude to which the novel is not necessarily committed even as it supports the emotional quest” could be applied also to Levin (“L and Modernism” 190). Tolstoi wrote of the scene of Levin’s confession to a priest: “I changed this part of the story four times, and it still seemed to me that one could tell on whose side I was. But I’ve noticed that any work or story produces an impression only when it’s impossible to tell with whom the author sympathizes. And so it was necessary to write everything in such a way that this wouldn’t be noticeable” (qtd. in Alexandrov 135). Sometimes it is noticeable, however, and Levin (in notable contrast to Birkin) ends his novel without an interlocutor, far less a disputant.

On the other hand, Birkin, not Levin, is supported by the narrative rhetoric when they argue for opposite positions concerning the value of education – an issue on which both novels broadly agree.¹³ When Levin disputes the value of educating peasants on the grounds that educated peasants make inferior workers, he feels “morally pinned against a wall” by Koznishev (293). Hermione argues against mass education, on the grounds that children who are “roused to consciousness” are “crippled in their souls”, and is roundly attacked by Birkin. Koznishev’s challenge that if education is “a good thing for you, it’s a good thing for every one” is echoed in Birkin’s question: “Would you rather, for yourself, know or not know, that the little red flowers are there [...]?” (40). Whereas Tolstoi taught at the Iasnaia Poliana primary school which he had recently re-founded throughout his composition of Anna Karenina, Lawrence had permanently finished school teaching in the year before

starting The Sisters. Hermione, more than Levin, is used to criticise a tendency in the character's author, and the critique is correspondingly more vigorous.

Both novels, although supportive of a similar kind of education for children, are more hostile towards academia. The fact that Anna Karenina is both more dependent on and repeatedly critical of academia than is Women in Love, is correlated to Levin's and Tolstoi's repeated hope and disappointment in the studies of others and themselves. Levin's work on a book on agriculture "in which the chief element in husbandry was to have been the labourer" is taken seriously by the narrative, but the project is quietly dropped by the novel's end, with no suggestion that it will ever be completed or useful (384). Birkin, unlike Levin, demonstrates no ambition to write (although in the draft of April 1916 he publishes brilliant "essays on Education") (WL 491). The reception of Sergey Ivanovitch's "Sketch of a Survey of the Principles and Forms of Government in Europe and Russia", which is in both senses of the adjective an academic failure, is described in some detail, whereas the professional life of Women in Love's only academic, the "elderly sociologist" Sir Joshua Malleon, is hardly mentioned (AK G 913; WL 84). Anna Karenina, but not Women in Love, holds the fabric of academic discourse up to ridicule. The quotations from Sergey Ivanovitch's debate with Harkov are not in themselves undignified, but the debate suffers from focalization by Levin, to whom it seems that "every time they were close upon what seemed to him the chief point, they promptly beat a hasty retreat, and plunged again into a sea of subtle distinctions, reservations, quotations, allusions, and appeals to authorities" (AK G 31). After Harkov churlishly rebuffs his attempt at a contribution: "Levin listened no more, and simply waited for the professor to go" (AK G 32). The ensuing chapter ending obligingly ushers the professor from the room.

The amiable academic idealist Koznishev, and the amateur intellectual Karenin, do not, however, support Levin's epiphanic association of the intellect with godlessness and error. Rather, their academic consciousness is connected to spiritual and sexual limitation, as is the case also in certain of Lawrence's – and George Eliot's – characters. Tolstoi read many of Eliot's works in the same year in which they appeared in England, and claimed that she was a "Great" influence on him in the years which included the composition of War and Peace and Anna Karenina (Haight 279; TL 2: 486). Casaubon's soul may be discerned as having migrated to Karenin (whose name is related to karenon, the Greek for "head", and karé, the French and Russian for a square or a square-formation).¹⁴ It becomes more amiable in its

migration to Koznishev, whose proposal to Varenka is as consciously formulated as that of Casaubon to Dorothea, and who is also unequal to its delivery in person. He and Varenka are too highly conscious to be worked upon by the communal unconscious association of mushrooms with sexuality, but discuss mushrooms dispassionately, and therefore remain unmarried. Levin criticizes Koznishev in a phrase (translated closely by Garnett) which juxtaposes sentiment characteristic of Lawrence, with sentiment and diction characteristic of George Eliot: he feels that Koznishev lacks “vital force, of what is called heart, of that impulse which drives a man to choose some one out of the innumerable paths of life, and to care only for that one” (AK G 287). Koznishev’s own soul migrates onwards to the (relatively benign) Clifford Chatterley of the first two Lady Chatterley drafts. In Women in Love, however, Breadalby’s “half-intellectual” conversation is more malevolent both than its closest equivalents in Anna Karenina, and than Levin’s conception of such conversations. It is implicated by analogy in the First World War: “The talk [at Breadalby] went on like a rattle of small artillery”, and in the Satanic: they are “all witches, helping the pot to bubble” (84, 90). Whereas Levin is merely frustrated and humiliated by Koznishev and Harkov, Ursula is “cruelly” exhausted by the “powerful, consuming, destructive mentality that emanated from” the Breadalby company (90). This difference reflects the fact that Women in Love condemns English society more strongly than Anna Karenina condemns Russian society, and on the basis of a different spiritual ontology (to be discussed below).

Anna Karenina’s relatively unconscious characters also conform less closely to Levin’s final thoughts than do their counterparts in Women in Love to Birkin’s ideas. After despairing of philosophy, Levin reflects that: “ninety-nine hundredths of the Russian people, all the working people for whose life he felt the deepest respect, believed” (934). At this point a good, unconscious peasant appears – the silvery-haired beekeeper who responds to Levin’s question about Slavophilism: “What should we think? Alexander Nikolaevitch our Emperor has thought for us; he thinks for us indeed in all things” (956). However, for most of the novel Levin has struggled to manage peasants who are composed of Platons, Kirillovs, and Fyodors (the good, the bad, and the indifferent) in roughly equal measure. Levin himself has accused Koznishev of the “Tolstoyan fallacy” of “exalting the peasant”, because “he often talked to the peasants [...] and from every such conversation he would deduce general conclusions in favour of the peasantry and in confirmation of his knowing them”

(285). The model of saintliness, Platon, is merely described to Levin by another peasant as “a righteous man” who does not extort rent, in contrast to the Platon of War and Peace, who is dramatically represented as “the personification of everything Russian, kindly, and round” (AK G 942; WP 3: 189). The earlier novel’s conflation of the concepts of traditional Christianity and the Russian peasantry (khristianstvo and krestianstvo respectively) occurs as an unconscious verbal slip on the part of Platon, whereas in Anna Karenina the same conflation takes place in Levin’s conscious observation and hope (WP 3: 190).¹⁵

Bell makes a similar distinction between The Rainbow and Women in Love in Language and Being, noting that the former’s rainbow exists independently of Ursula, whereas the latter’s “stars” appear in Birkin’s speech (99). These novels demonstrate respectively more and less faith in a collective unconscious than do War and Peace and Anna Karenina. The Rainbow’s prelude, which has no equivalent in either novel by Tolstoi, accords nearly two centuries of a family free indirect speech: “heaven and earth was teeming around them, and how should this cease?” (9). Birkin – unlike Pierre, Levin, Will, and Crich – implicitly accords spiritual superiority to (a subset of) the educated elite. In Women in Love the divorce between the benign traditional and the benign unconscious, of which Anna Karenina contains some evidence, is completed: the traditional has disappeared, and the majority of unconscious characters – Mr and Mrs Brangwen, Laura, Tibs, Diana, Marshall, Mrs Salmon, the Beldover miners, the level crossing labourers, Halliday, and the Pussum – are “of no account”.¹⁶ Mrs Kirk, the Criches’ former nanny, is no more a traditional figure than is Nelly in Wuthering Heights. Levin’s parents are absent but signifying; Ursula’s parents are present, but signifying nothing. The low consciousness of the miners is implicated in their degraded acceptance of Gerald as “the God of the machine” (223). In Anna Karenina, too, the mechanical is correlated with a pernicious form of unconsciousness: the oblivious concentration of the deracinated peasant who beats the iron of the railway contrasts with the flexible physical concentration of the scything peasants. The trains which bisect the Muscovite station worker, break Anna, and terrify Gerald’s mare, are unconscious of these effects; the last of these is itself “like a disgusting dream that has no end” (WL 111).

Both Levin and Birkin refresh their souls by temporarily entering a different, recreative state of unconsciousness, which bears analogical similarities to that more persistent, unconscious mode of living which is one of their desiderata. The

experience has the temporary effect of relieving their agitation (caused in Levin's case by his defeat in the argument concerning education with Koznishev, and in Birkin's by his defeat in his proposal to Ursula): Levin scythes hay; Birkin wrestles Gerald. Although the activity initially increases their self-consciousness (Levin's before his peasants, Birkin's and Gerald's before each other) they successfully overcome this reaction. Afterwards Levin is initially incapable of recalling the argument of the previous day, and calls mowing a remedy for "every sort of foolishness. I want to enrich medicine with a new word: Arbeitskur" (309). Birkin says: "One ought to wrestle and strive and be physically close. It makes one sane" (272). In both cases the attainment of unconsciousness, and practice of a complex skill, are connected. Levin mows at his best in "moments of unconsciousness", and only finds the technique difficult when he has to stop the motion "which had become unconscious, and to think" (303). Birkin and Gerald wrestle better as they lose their self-consciousness and learn "a kind of mutual physical understanding"; the same applies to the dancing in the style of the Ballets Russes at Breadalby, and Gudrun's Eurhythmics at the "Water-Party" (270). Slightly more consciousness is attributed to Levin than to Birkin. The narration of the mowing is continuously conscious of Levin's delight in losing consciousness: the free indirect speech of "These [moments of unconsciousness] were the most blissful moments" implicitly attributes to Levin a sense of when these were happening (303). The narration of the wrestling moves away from internal focalization as the men's consciousnesses reduce, until mindlessness and external focalization are reached simultaneously. Once they are wrestling "swiftly, rapturously, intent and mindless at last", the narration gives only the visual perspective of Birkin's head when it appears, his eyes "wide and dreadful and sightless" (270). Anna Karenina as a whole avoids any representation of mindlessness; Women in Love contains several.

However, Garnett's translation exaggerates the consciousness of the narration, giving "he was at once conscious of all the difficulty of his task" for "izpytyval vsiu tiazhest'" (AK 8: 268; "experienced the full difficulty", or, according to Pevear and Volokhonsky, "felt how hard", AK G 301; AK PV 251).¹⁷ Altogether, formal terms associated with consciousness appear with far greater frequency in the later than in the earlier novel, but this is masked by Garnett's tendency to translate by "to be conscious of" not only soznavat' (its equivalent) but also chuvstvovat' (to feel), zametit' (to notice) and ispytat' (to experience). Anna at the ball has "deliberate

grace” according to Garnett, whereas Pevear and Volokhonsky, more accurately, render “otchetlivuiu gratsiiu” as “precise grace”; at this stage in the novel, Anna’s attractiveness to Vronsky and others is precisely not “deliberate” (AK G 97; AK 8: 89; AK PV: 81). The same applies to the private unconscious. Mihailov, approaching Anna, “was unconscious how, as he approached them, he seized on this impression [...] and put it away somewhere”; the Russian is “ne zametil”, for which the Maudes give “he was unconscious that”, and Pevear and Volokhonsky, most accurately, give “did not notice how” (AK G 562; AK 9: 41; AK MM 554; AK PV 470). Where soznanie (consciousness) and its correlatives are on occasion chosen by Tolstoi, they introduce a scientific tone. Oblonsky is “conscious that [‘soznaval’] he loved the boy less”, shortly after he has interpreted his foolish smile to Dolly in physiological terms (AK G 12; AK 8: 13). In Garnett’s and the Maudes’ translations, then, conscious and its correlatives appear with greater frequency than do the equivalents in Tolstoi’s novel. Garnett was an intermediary figure, born thirty-three years after Tolstoi, twenty-four years before Lawrence, and friends with the latter. She published her translation at a time when theories of consciousness were both being more rapidly developed, and were more widely known, than in Russia at the time of Anna Karenina. That was four decades after conscious came to mean a state of awareness and intention, three decades after unconscious mind acquired its range of modern meanings, a decade after the publication of William James’s The Principles of Psychology, the year after the publication of Freud’s Die Traumdeutung, and two years before a noun was first appended to conscious to form a compound adjective (class-conscious).¹⁸ In this respect Garnett – otherwise more faithful to the letter and spirit of Tolstoi’s text than either the Maudes or Edmonds – translates the novel into the intellectual atmosphere of her own time, which was that in which the teenage Lawrence started reading. The Maudes too were intermediaries: Aylmer knew Tolstoi and was a prominent English Tolstoyan; his and Louise’s translation and Women in Love are exactly contemporary (although there is no evidence that Lawrence read it). Linguistically, Women in Love is by far the more conscious novel.

Both Levin’s scything and Birkin’s wrestling are pursued for a reason foreign to those for which they were devised. Jiu-jitsu, a method of self-defence, is transformed into a means for Birkin and Gerald to achieve intimacy. Scything is part of a process which makes Levin rich, in which he engages in order to suspend the consciousness which pertains to his wealth and education. Levin’s claim that mowing

would be a good “Arbeitskur [...] for all sorts of nervous invalids” involves an unsettling linguistic and ethical translation of what is in fact the peasants’ inevitable trud (labour) into the language of the Kurorte at which such women as Madame Stahl hold court (AK G 309). The social gulf spanned by Levin’s coinage is that which lies between his temporary unconsciousness and the peasants’ chronically unconscious modes of being. In Lawrence’s terms, Levin dons “that beastly peasant blouse the old man wore” (PUFU 200).¹⁹

Levin’s experience is also a metaphoric preparation for his epiphany. Whilst he walks with difficulty up a ravine holding his scythe, “Levin [...] often thought he must fall [...] But he climbed up and did what he had to do. He felt as though some external force were moving him” (AK G 307). The Russian does not use the accusative case, “moved him”, but the instrumental case, “dvigala im” (moved by means of him): a fulfilment of, rather than passivity to, divine intention, which is congruent with Levin’s epiphanic vision (AK 8: 272). His most unconscious, “blissful moments” are his “samye blazhennye minuty”: the word “blazhennye” means both blissful and blessed (AK G 303; AK 8: 269).

Levin’s epiphany takes place over one day in the mowing season of 1876.²⁰ Occupying the second half of the novel’s eighth Part, this is the narrative’s slowest day (including analeptic narration of Levin’s struggles with “the questions of life and death” after Nikolay’s decline). The peasant Fyodor’s statement to Levin that Platon “lives for his soul. He does not forget God” initiates a spiritual process which – punctuated by such activities as receiving his guests, retrieving Kitty and Misha after a storm, and visiting them in the nursery – culminates in the star-lit moment of joy with which the novel ends (942). Several points are to be noted about the content and circumstances of this experience. Levin reaches the understanding that the application of mind (um), reason (razum), and intellect (intellect) to ethical and spiritual questions entails falsity at several levels. Ethical behaviour is counter-rational (“Reason discovered the struggle for existence, and the law that requires us to oppress all who hinder the satisfaction of our desires”); reason prevents one’s acceptance of spiritual truth (“The cheating knavishness of intellect” had brought him to a state of “studiously ignoring” those “spiritual truths that he had sucked in with his mother’s milk”); and reason is incapable of treating questions of spiritual importance (“He was in the position of a man seeking food in toy-shops and tool-shops” (946, 945, 933).²¹ There is a slight tension between Levin’s sense that reason is evil, and his sense of it

as a childish irrelevance. The first is congruent with the strains of Orthodox and conservative thought which had associated um with evil from the Enlightenment onwards, and is also congruent with reason's role in the novel's unsuccessful and successful suicide attempts: Vronsky's is the culmination of circular reasoning, and Anna's interpretation of a sentence overheard from the lady sitting opposite her in the train to Obiralovka – "That's what reason is given man for, to escape from what worries him" – implicates razum as a factor in her suicide (AK, G, 907). The sense of reason as a childish irrelevance is demonstrated in Levin's analogy between intellectual thought, and Grisha and Tania's playful destruction of the food with which they had been provided by their mother (AK G 946). In both cases, a state of deluded self-sufficiency involves an individual in error, or ignorance of truth.

Birkin's criticisms of reason and the intellect differ from Levin's in lacking the epistemological dimension of truth and error. This is congruent with Bell's interpretation in Language and Being of Lawrence's writing in terms of a Heideggerian shift from epistemology to ontology (7). Women in Love's more damning representation of academics reflects the fact that its axiology rests entirely on spiritual ontology, whereas Anna Karenina's rests partly on epistemology. Birkin would not dispute with Levin that reason cannot be a spiritual explorer or guide, but whereas for Levin the trespass of reason consists in its application to questions beyond its remit, for Birkin it consists in its domination of an individual's soul. As Lawrence writes in Fantasia of the Unconscious, "the business of the mind is the [...] interpreter between individual and object. Not the controller of the spontaneous centres. The soul must control these" (PUFU 154). Objective spiritual truth is excluded from Levin's intellectual world; spontaneity is excluded from Birkin's. For Birkin, rather, spiritual truth is created by individuals, and is therefore a truth to which epistemology is inapplicable. Although both he and Levin accept that divinity is differently revealed to different peoples, Levin's "knowledge of what is right and what is wrong" is unchangeably "the service of truth instead of one's desires", whereas Birkin's "eternal creative mystery" requires that men "creatively [...] change and develop" (AK G 946, 948; WL 478). Watching Birkin dance at Breadalby, the Contessa apprehends that "he is a chameleon, a creature of change", and Hermione feels that he has "power to escape, to exist, other than she did, because he was not consistent" (92). In his 1924 essay "On Being Religious", Lawrence attributes change to God Himself, who shifts his positions relative to different peoples (the reverse of

the Orthodox doctrine of changelessness) (RDP 189-92). In Women in Love, however, change is not required of men in order that they find God, but in order that they create truth. Silent action, alongside and according to the same form as many others, in conformity to a father-figure (as in his scything), is required of Levin; individual activity, in responsive connection with another person (as in Birkin's wrestling) is required of the characters of Women in Love – a novel in which nurturing family structures are absent at all levels.

The fact of human mortality empties life of its meaning for Levin when he is an atheist; to Birkin, life and death are merely contrary attributes of all that exists, over which individual souls have control. Birkin tells Gerald from his sick-bed in "Man to Man" that the "intrinsic death" of the individual is not the end, but is followed by "aeons of progressive devolution" (204). Birkin's question to Gerald: "What do you live for?" does not mean, as it would for Levin, "Why do you live?" (for example, because God exists) – but "What do you think is the aim and object of your life, Gerald?", "Wherein does life centre, for you?" (56-58). Just as Anna Karenina makes an analytic distinction between a blazhennyi (blessed) spiritual state, and the truth which may be apprehended in this state, so it makes a distinction between this state, and the good living in which it results. The second distinction is the equivalent of that between Levin's unconsciousness whilst mowing, and his resultant skill in mowing. Levin finds that the "infallible judge" which operates in his soul "When he did not think, but simply lived", guides him through his daily ethical dilemmas with easeful skill (AK G 939). Similarly, in War and Peace Kutuzov achieves military victories by means of intuition, as opposed to Prussian military theory. In Women in Love, by contrast, a creative spiritual state is analytically inseparable from the actions which are performed in it, and is its own reward.

Levin's and the novel's final clauses are: "my whole life apart from anything that can happen to me, every minute of it is no more meaningless, as it was before, but it has the positive meaning of goodness, which I have the power to put into it" (AK G 969). The Russian for "meaning of goodness", "smysl dobra", makes clear that Levin will put the meaning of goodness, not goodness directly, into his life (AK 9: 404).²² Alexandrov's interpretation is that "He will be able, not to act morally, but to interpret in moral terms the events which seemed meaningless before. Faith is semiotic recoding and not existential praxis" (249). This interpretation undermines the first-order contents of his epiphany, which is that his life had already had meaning,

independently of his own “power” at any given moment. The conceptual strain in Levin’s formulation is apparent also in the negative term nesomnennyi (“doubtless”) instead of Garnett’s term “positive”, and in the triple negative of “ne tol’ko ne bessmyslenna” (“not only not meaningless”). Levin does not “have power”, but is “vlasten” – a term which is even more grandiose and unusual than “empowered” (AK 9: 404).²³ The exclamation mark with which the novel ends (given only by Pevear and Volokhonsky) adds both emphasis and uncertainty, in comparison with Garnett’s full-stop. Despite these strains and contra Alexandrov, however, the novel’s last sentence points to the importance of “praxis” as involved in Levin’s “semiotic recoding” (Alexandrov 249). Levin chooses the more earthy and material term for goodness, dobro, rather than the spiritual blago. In the novel’s last sentence epistemology does not wholly dominate spiritual ontology, but the two exist in uneasy interdependence.

Levin and Birkin also differ in their attitudes towards consciousness of truth. Levin prefers that the understanding of metaphysical truth be unconscious, since consciousness is dangerously connected to reason. This involves him in certain contradictions, which are summarized in Bell’s phrase “Tolstoyan commitment to the traditionary and the unconscious” (the “traditionary” being uncoupled from the unconscious when it is conceptualized, and a commitment towards it emerging only when it is under threat) (“L and Modernism” 190).²⁴ According to its own content Levin’s “epiphany” is in fact not a revelation at all. He believes that since “if he had not known what he was living for”, he would have been a “brutal creature”, he has “discovered nothing”: “I have only found out what I knew” (945, 944). In fact, he had been close to suicide. In order permanently to escape it, it was necessary that he become conscious both of what he “knew”, and of the fact that he knew it. Bell notes that “Tolstoy’s Levin found he had at last been living rightly only when he had been too absorbed in external activity to be conscious of the question” (Language and Being 103). Yet, had Levin not been conscious of the question at the time when Fyodor mentions Platon on “one of Levin’s most painful days”, he would not have “found” that he had been living rightly; his ensuing ecstasy is the inverse of his pain, not the equivalent of Kitty’s unconscious happiness (AK G 939). Fyodor’s words provoke “undefined but significant ideas” which Levin finds it necessary to define: “Yes, I must make it clear to myself and understand” (“Da, nado opomnit’ sia i obdumat”, literally “Yes, it is necessary to come to my senses, and think it over”) (AK G 942, 944; AK 9: 382). The ideas “blinding him with their light” need to be shaded

and to be viewed rationally (942). His intellect can only fully escape from the insoluble problems of its own creation through an understanding of its own limitations. Levin thinks through such problems as the existence of many faiths, many Christian churches, and Orthodox dogma, until he finds this limit. He deduces meaning from the fact that he understood “those senseless words of Fyodor’s” clearly (943). Wasiolek’s description of Andrei Bolkonsky in War and Peace: “it is as if the very force of his intellect is the deflection that keeps him from entering the radiant center” is the content, but does not wholly reflect the form, of Levin’s understanding (Wasiolek 71).

However, his arrival at the Arnoldian-Hebraic position of valuing the unreflecting impetus and energy to act well does not occur only via a Hellenic impulse or process.²⁵ Non-lingual, semi-conscious spiritual alteration is also part of Levin’s experience: he “joyfully tested [“oshchupyval”; felt for] this new thing, not yet knowing what it was” (AK G 942; AK 9: 381). He receives a quasi-electric shock, “suddenly transforming and combining into a single whole the whole swarm of disjointed, impotent, separate thoughts that incessantly occupied his mind” (942). At one point “Levin ceased thinking, and only, as it were, listened to mysterious voices that seemed talking joyfully and earnestly within him” (“mezhdub soboi”; amongst themselves” – a phrase which gives them greater independence from Levin than Garnett’s translation) (AK G 948; AK 9: 386). To borrow Lawrence’s metaphor in Fantasia of the Unconscious, Levin cannot define soul, just as a bike cannot define its rider (PUFU 96). Levin had pretended that there was no one in the saddle of his own bike, or of the universe – whereas now, in acknowledgement of these riders, he feels that he has learnt how to ride his bike. His own use of analogy confesses the failure of his consciousness to apprehend truth directly (traditional life is “as necessary as dining when one was hungry”, and the squirting of milk resembles the practice of philosophy) (AK G 937). His conscious formulations are not only described as fallible – “thought could not keep pace with feeling” – but are shown to be such: he suggests both that truth is passed on by the Church and parenting, and that it is innate (“I was told that in my childhood, and I believed it gladly, for they told me what was already in my soul”) (965, 946). He extols child-like unconsciousness of truth, but condemns the child-like play which results from this unconsciousness. He makes a leap of faith to the belief that “the whole world understands nothing fully but this” (943). These contradictions and this leap of faith serve a similar function to Levin’s unconscious

physical experiences during this episode (such as taking “his hat off his hot head”), of making his experience more concrete and less propositional (944). Levin’s arrival at a conscious, fallible interpretation of an experience which is indeterminately emotional and intellectual, is minutely described. As Kermode notes, the transfiguration is “humanly done” (176).

Like Levin, Birkin makes conscious and verbal his admiration for unconscious living: “spontaneously to run or move, like a fish in the water”; “the mystic conjunction, the ultimate unison between [...] man and woman”; “a further sensual experience” (WL 292, 152, 252). However, he does not share Levin’s meta-ethical prohibition on the soul’s consciousness of truth. Indeed Lawrence, his “Foreword” to the novel, flatly contradicts it, praising the “passionate struggle into conscious being”, and “verbal consciousness” of what is happening in oneself, even as one “goes along” (WL 486). Admittedly, this last claim is part of a post-hoc justification of the novel to the American public. Birkin is more tentative in making the same claims, and more aware of the difficulties of their fulfilment. When Ursula accuses Birkin of self-contradiction:

He turned in confusion. There was always confusion in speech. Yet it must be spoken. Whichever way one moved, if one were to move forwards, one must break a way through. And to know, to give utterance, was to break a way through the walls of the prison, as the infant in labour strives through the walls of the womb. (186)

The novel’s Foreword advocates, and Birkin practices, a kind of self-contained Hellenism, in which the soul creates its own truths, and benefits from the struggle to express them in metaphysical terms.²⁶ Birkin avoids the contradiction of timing into which Levin falls. Levin’s moment of greatest joy is at least partly conscious and self-conscious, and no suggestion is given that his consciousness, once pacified by an (imperfect) understanding of its own limits, will retreat to allow him that chronic state of unconscious knowledge in which he consciously rejoices. Birkin’s moments of consciousness are *not* his greatest spiritual moments. The latter take place amongst the vegetation on the hillside, whilst wrestling with Gerald, or whilst communing with Ursula in “Excuse”. His moments of high consciousness, on the contrary, tend to be moments of anguished awareness of himself, or of humanity, or of conflict with Ursula or Hermione.

Nonetheless, there remain contradictions in Birkin's positions. I have argued that the contradiction in Levin's thought was softened by the physical and psychological contextualization of his epiphany, and by the very flaws in its conscious formulation. In this respect *Women in Love* is divided. On the one hand, Birkin's character is presented as psychologically layered; one of these layers is conscious of the paradoxes involved in his formulations of the desirability of unconsciousness (and, even more so, in his attempts to convince others of it). Birkin asks himself: "Perhaps he had been wrong to go to her [Ursula] with an idea of what he wanted. Was it really only an idea, or was it the interpretation of a profound yearning? – If the latter, how was it he was always talking about sensual fulfilment. The two did not agree very well" (252). The "always" is not literally true, but acknowledges the high proportion of the novel which Birkin spends in speech (as also the high proportion of Lawrence's life which he spent in writing). Birkin's problem of timing is less one of simultaneity than of proportion – although occasionally his conscious formulation of good living is interrupted by his practice of it. After talking to Ursula about a new kind of love on the road to Beldover, and then kissing her, Birkin thinks: "'I was becoming quite dead-alive, nothing but a word-bag,' he said in triumph, scorning his other self. Yet somewhere far off and small, the other hovered" (188). At times, the first of these conscious selves is terrified by the contradiction, whence the fury of Birkin's attack on Hermione's praise of spontaneity in "Class-room" ("You'd be verily deliberately spontaneous – that's you") (42). The closest that Levin comes to this awareness is his thought that: "To me individually, to my heart has been revealed a knowledge beyond all doubt, and unattainable by reason, and here I am obstinately trying to express that knowledge in reason and words" (967). Yet he continues to do precisely this, to his own satisfaction, in quoted thought (as opposed to the free indirect thought and reported thought which the novel also uses for him).

Thus far Birkin has been described as psychologically similar to, but more highly conscious than, Levin. There exists another aspect of his character in which the contradiction is differently relieved. In this aspect, his unconscious spiritual experience, and his statements about such experience, are two sides of the same coin. Both arrive with the same suddenness. When his argumentation gives way to his sexual activity – as when, at the end of "Mino", he kisses Ursula and says "I'm bored by the rest", or when, during his argument with Ursula after Diana's death, "He changed, laughed softly, and turned and took her in his arms" – the change in his

mode is less profound than that between Levin when he is interested in a debate, and when he abandons that debate in order to get engaged to Kitty (WL 154, 187). Levin abandons the argument; Birkin pursues it in another form. In a letter of June 1914 Lawrence defended the artistry of The Wedding Ring to Edward Garnett, distinguishing it from that “In Turguenev, and in Tolstoi, and in Dostoievski”. He claimed to have a “different attitude to my characters”, and to be relatively uninterested in the “old-fashioned human element – which causes one to conceive a character in a certain moral scheme and make him consistent”. He might as appropriately have said “inconsistent”, insofar as inconsistency is generated and explained by what Bell calls “layers of sensibility within the one psyche” (LL 2: 182-83; Language and Being 108).

One result of the relative flatness of the characterization in Women in Love is the fact that Birkin’s changes of position on good living are less obviously motivated than are Levin’s. Levin shifts from desire for the love of a pure woman (based on his mother’s memory), to resolve to live a simple life (after rejection by Kitty), to resolve to marry a peasant (after watching one toss hay), to desire to marry Kitty (after seeing her in a carriage), to working for a co-op system (after visiting Sviyazhsky), to thinking of death (after seeing Nikolay’s), and birth (during Misha’s), and death again (once settled in the country), to his epiphanic vision (after a conversation with Fyodor). Birkin’s changes of position, however, are only sometimes provided with an external motivation – and even then the connection is not made clear.²⁷ He changes from extolling sensuality “and nothing else”, to love between a man and woman as “the be-all and the end-all”, to rejecting love and people (after Hermione’s attack), to demanding stellar equilibrium between “man and woman”, to kissing Ursula and agreeing that love is enough, to rejecting love (after being rejected by Ursula), to thinking of sex as polarization, to desire for Blutbrüderschaft (after a failure to connect with Ursula), to wanting “a further sensual experience”, or else “snow-abstract annihilation”, or the creative way of “proud individual singleness”, or marriage, to wanting “To be free, in a free place, with a few other people!” (after the ecstasy of “Excuse”), to wanting connection with a man (after Gerald’s death) (43, 57, 152, 206, 252, 254, 316).

One other feature of the more layered characterization of Anna Karenina is the greater independent existence of the physical body in that novel. On his

way to see Anna, Vronsky “crossed one leg over the other knee, and taking it in his hand, felt the springy muscle of the calf [...] he had never felt so fond of himself, of his own body, as at that moment” (376). In Women in Love such simple physical experience is displaced: it is Birkin rather than Gerald himself who notices Gerald’s “white-skinned, full, muscular legs, handsome and decided” (96). When Levin visits Kitty towards the end of her labour, “Kitty’s face he did not know. In the place where it had been was something that was fearful in its strained distortion and in the sounds that came from it” (850). In Women in Love this face reappears on an idealization – the fetish, interpreted by Birkin as expressing “really ultimate physical consciousness, mindless, utterly sensual” (79).

In Fantasia of the Unconscious Lawrence argues, contra Freud, that a minority of dreams are “soul-dreams” resulting from an obstruction in the soul, but that most are “mechanical”, “automatic”, “physiologically-determined”; these consequently receive no further discussion (179). In Women in Love the barrier between waking life and soul-dreams – being merely physiological – is abolished. The term dream is applied in similes to waking states of low consciousness and heightened spiritual activity which, in the absence of sleep dreams, appropriate the term. In the inn yard at Southwell Ursula is in “no actual world, it was the dream-world of one’s childhood”, whereas Birkin’s actual falling asleep in “Man to Man” marks the limit of narration and the end of a chapter (400, 210). In Anna Karenina, by contrast, dreams are prominent. The Russian language’s distinction between imaginative desire (mechtat'; to dream, or to aspire to, which Garnett often translates as daydreaming) and consciousness during sleep (snit'sia or videt' vo sne; dreaming or seeing in sleep) gives to the latter Russian terms a physiological aspect absent from the ambiguous English to dream. Anna and Vronsky’s synchronized dreams about a French-speaking peasant, like Anna’s deliria, carry the spiritual weight of soul-dreams, but the very fact that the characters’ lowered consciousness during sleep is inflected by such significance indicates the magnitude of their spiritual disturbance. On the other hand, dreamed omens are also a literary trope. The fact that Levin never dreams not only distinguishes Anna’s spiritual disturbance from Levin’s, but correlates with the fact that Levin’s story is less patterned by

generic conventions. Levin's and Birkin's failure to dream is one among other features which they share, but it is true of each for different reasons.

One exception to my generalization concerning the greater physicality in Anna Karenina is lust, which has a stronger reality in Women in Love. Certainly, Oblonsky personifies what Lawrence, in his Foreword to Women in Love, distinguishes as "Eros of the jaunty 'amours'" (485). However, lust – as distinguished from the affections and from other physical appetites such as that for food – is hardly represented in Anna Karenina, which in this respect differs not only from Women in Love, but also from War and Peace. To compare the novels' scenes of dancing: Pierre is overwhelmed by the proximity of Hélène's breasts and shoulders, Vronsky dances with Anna with "nothing but humble submission and dread" in his eyes, Levin never dances with Kitty, and Birkin dances the "schuhplattern" with Ursula with "remorseless suggestivity" (AK G 98; WL 411, 412). Lawrence's approving reference in 1925 to Vronsky and Anna's "sincere passion" indicates that he categorized theirs as "Eros of the sacred mysteries" (he might have concurred with Matthew Arnold in distinguishing the novel advantageously from French novels for avoiding "lubricity") (STH 180; WL 485; Arnold Essays 275).²⁸ Anna Karenina's reticence in the representation of sexuality in fact extends to a tendency not to represent connection between men and women at any level of consciousness; the relationships of Levin, Karenin, Vronsky, and Oblonsky with their partners are overwhelmingly presented through their deficiencies. The connection of Ursula and Birkin in "Excuse" differs from any relationship in Anna Karenina not only by virtue of its sex, but its success.

Both novels are monist, in the sense of denying a distinction between mental and physical substances, but their monisms are biased in opposite directions: Tolstoi's towards the physical, Lawrence's towards the spiritual.²⁹ This is apparent in the novels' treatments of electricity. When Vronsky sees Anna before his horse race, "at once a sort of electric shock ran all over him [...] and something set his lips twitching" (377). Before trying to kill Birkin, "Terrible shocks ran over her [Hermione's] body, like shocks of electricity, as if many volts of electricity suddenly struck her down" (105). As in Vronsky's case, the simile enforces only a weak distinction from literal application, but Hermione's electricity is constituted by a movement of her soul, rather than the reverse being the case. Ursula's perception on "Sunday Evening" that "the body is only one of the manifestations of the spirit" conforms to the physiological spiritology detailed immediately after Women in Love in

Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious and Fantasia of the Unconscious (WL 192). These works do not deny existence to physiologically-governed mental phenomena, but they do deny them interest. On leaving the hillside after his ecstasy, Birkin has a “week or two” of illness, during which time he may succumb, like Anna in her puerperal fever, to delirium; this, however, is not shown (108). When he then visits Ursula looking “phosphorescent”, and responds to her question “Don’t you feel well?” with “I hadn’t thought about it”, Ursula opines: “you ought to suffer, a man who takes as little notice of his body as that” (196). The narrative itself takes relatively little notice, and in the same way, as Birkin. Lawrence disliked physiologically-determined states, and much of his writing is engaged in the struggle to transcend them. In this context, the contrast between the hale, elderly Tolstoi, and the young, consumptive Lawrence, is pertinent. In “The Novel” Lawrence asserted that Tolstoi “could hardly meet three lusty, roisterous young guardsmen in the street, without crying with envy” – yet Lawrence more than Tolstoi shuns such men as his central characters (STH 187).³⁰ Compared with Anna Karenina, the relative absence of non-spiritual, physical life in Women in Love allows for greater equivalence between those words of the narrator which describe unconscious spiritual experience, and those of Birkin which praise such experience.

The central characters of Women in Love are capable of existing in debate, rather than debate being one among other of the activities in which they engage. In Women in Love conversations which are not, on the novel’s terms, substantively interesting, are either brief or summarized (“There had been some discussion, on the whole quite intellectual and artificial, about a new state, a new world of man.”) (102). The body is mentioned only insofar as it participates in the debate: “A dark flash went over his face, a silent fury” (39). In Anna Karenina sections of narration between characters’ speeches frequently distract attention from the arguments, and defamiliarize the debate as a constituent of the success of a social event (“With Pestsov intellectual conversation never flagged for an instant”) governed by motives unconnected with the debate (Oblonsky is “thinking of Masha Tchibisova” in supporting female education, whereas Dolly is “probably suspecting what sort of girl Stepan Arkadyevitch was thinking of” in opposing it) and accompanied by actions unconnected with it (Turovtsin ends an argument on female education when he “in his mirth dropped his asparagus with the thick end in the sauce”) (465, 468, 466, 467).³¹ In this respect The Rainbow is, as Bell argues, more “Tolstoyan” than Women in

Love. Tom Brangwen's wedding speech about angels disintegrates into a discussion of objects such as "angels" to be found up children's noses (*R* 130). The crochet-hook used for their extraction is the equivalent of Turovtsin's asparagus.

The rhetoric of Women in Love, unlike that of Anna Karenina, rarely favours a character who loses an argument. When Birkin appears foolish in the positions he holds, it is not because of his ineptitude at argument. Measured against the heroes of War and Peace, Levin's intellect lies between Andrei Bolkonsky's analytic scepticism and occasionally relieved detachment, and Pierre Bezukhov's more passive intellect and serial enthusiasms – but he is weaker in debate than either. At the end of his argument with Koznishev about education, he "felt himself vanquished on all sides, but he felt at the same time that what he wanted to say was unintelligible to his brother [...] Sergey Ivanovitch wound up the last line" (297). Levin's dissatisfaction with his half-brother's discursive victory is endorsed by the fact that the line which Koznishev draws is empty, as it has been throughout his fishing. Koznishev cheerfully professes not to mind whether he catches anything – but the fact that Levin, when he next hunts, shoots a large number of birds, permits the analogical attribution to his feelings of a substantiveness absent from Koznishev's argument in favour of education. Ursula slightly resembles Levin during her argument with Gudrun and Loerke about the latter's sculpture, in which she "wavered, baffled" as Gudrun and Loerke treat her "de haut en bas" for "rushing in where angels would fear to tread" in her criticisms (430-31). However, although her interpretation is based on a different paradigm from that of her interlocutors, it is no less coherent than theirs, and she is able to identify and challenge the difference of paradigms; unlike Levin, she is accorded no support in spite of weakness of argument.

Women in Love's greater confidence in articulacy, and less layered characterization, have several effects on the reader. The abrupt transitions between Birkin's positions, and the fact that these positions are repeated assaults on the same question of the spiritual-sexual good life (whereas Levin veers between metaphysical, emotional, and agricultural concerns) make the contradictions between them more striking. These contradictions are acknowledged by the narrative in Ursula's complaint that Birkin "always contradicts himself" (294). However, the fact that Birkin's changes of position sometimes lack apparent motivation removes from them the levity of dependence on extrinsic contingencies such as Kitty's passing by in a carriage. To Ursula Birkin is a bully and a hypocrite, whereas the non-realistic aspect

of Birkin's character encourages the reader to respond to him as to a proposition. When Birkin asks himself "Was it really only an idea, or was it the interpretation of a profound yearning?" he may propitiate a reader's concern on precisely this question – or he may disturb her sense of the irrelevance of the distinction (252).

The mutually contradictory presence of two modes of alleviating the contradiction involved in the advocacy of blood-consciousness suggests the novel's anxiety on this point. Birkin's aspect as a sequence of propositions and spiritual moments deprives the more layered aspect of his character of a mode of unconsciousness which allows Levin more nearly to fulfil his own desiderata in his epiphany. Levin is shown to interpret his "profound yearning", and to struggle from spiritual unconscious experience into conscious being. The reader must take on trust that the psychologically layered aspect of Birkin does so. Despite Lawrence's claim to Garnett, he could not, or did not wish to, leave "the old-fashioned human element" entirely behind, and it is visible as the opaque element in Birkin's otherwise translucent body (LL 2: 182). Levin, by contrast, is opaque with physical and psychological "mess" (in David Trotter's sense of the term), in which contradictions are both preserved and obscured. Lawrence argues in Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious and Fantasia of the Unconscious that the mental consciousness is the shadow of primary experience, and that the process of sublimation from the dynamic into the mental consciousness is a necessary one (17, 111). Birkin but not Levin agrees with this; Levin but not Birkin demonstrates it to be true.

In conclusion, both men suffer from partial consciousness. They are unable to live the unconscious life of a Kitty, which Levin more than Birkin admires. To alleviate their spiritual malaise they must struggle into greater consciousness of spiritual truth as expressed in metaphysical terms. Bell's comment on Lawrence applies to both characters: "Lawrence phenomenalizes consciousness itself as an apparently inescapable structure [...] the entrenched structure that all of us find if we seek radically to change ourselves" (Language and Being 106). Levin's and Birkin's particular formulations lack the full support of the novel's rhetoric and evidence – especially in Levin's case. They also contain a contradiction, which is only partially resolved by Murry's resolution (as applicable to Levin as to Birkin): "We have to learn, through consciousness, how and where to be unconscious – learn it, and pass this on" (Murry 178). For Levin, this contradiction is exacerbated by the finality attributed to the epiphany, is complicated by the epiphany's epistemological aspect,

and is moderated by its very intellectual tensions, and physical and emotional contextualization. For Birkin, the contradiction is exacerbated by the ontological aspect of his thought, and by his attempt to convince others of its truth. It is moderated by the fact that he is less distrustful of reason than Levin, and considers the verbal formulation of created truth to be desirable; as a result, “the emotional tack” and “algebraical tack” of which Lawrence laments the separation in “The Future of the Novel”, “come together again, in the novel” (STH 154, 145). The “old-fashioned” aspect of his character is more highly conscious than Levin of the residual contradiction in his thought, whereas that aspect of his character which is as well expressed in propositions as in non-verbal, spiritual activity, is not engaged in contradiction (LL 2: 182). Levin has a greater commitment to unconsciousness than Birkin, and Birkin has a greater commitment to conscious being. Each does better at attaining that to which he aspires more. These differences form one context in which the “curious resemblance” of Tolstoi and Lawrence, the accusations leveled at both for being “spoiled by ideas”, and Lawrence’s similar accusations of Tolstoi, should be understood, and should be qualified (qtd. in Garnett: 100-01).

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Endnotes

¹ “Other ways” of “curious parallelism” include their experience of teaching and strong views on pedagogy, turbulent marriages, attribution of society’s degeneracy in part to industrialization and in part to the presence or absence of certain kinds of sex, and their approval of humanity’s existence only in proportion to its worth.

² True artistry, here, is freighted with Lawrence’s spiritual normativity: this is not the “talent” “necessary for the transmission of feeling” of which he spoke in 1908, and which he found to be absent from “Tolstoi and his simple art”. Study of Thomas Hardy 227.

³ Since this was not translated into English until 1969, Lawrence could not have read it, but he may well have heard accounts of it from “Kot”.

⁴ Low and high consciousness are here understood to indicate opposite ends of a spectrum of mental or spiritual faculties which include, in approximate order of ascending susceptibility to control by the will: sentience, passive recollection, emotions, imagination, active recollection, reason, and metaconsciousness or apperception. At times of relative unconsciousness an individual may be more open to influence by those objects of consciousness of which she is not normally highly conscious: the contents of the unconscious mind or podsoznanie (under-consciousness) – both of which terms post-date Anna Karenina in Russian and English. Low consciousness may therefore be privative (lacking conscious control) or positive (involving the contents of the unconscious).

⁵ Of Lawrence’s works, Anna Karenina has often been compared to Lady Chatterley’s Lover and The Rainbow, for example by Zytaruk (95-103). The most notable discussion in English of Anna Karenina in relation to Women in Love is by Raymond Williams, in “Tolstoy, Lawrence and Tragedy” and Modern Tragedy. Howard Mills also refers to Anna Karenina in his essay on Women in Love. However, these critics do not deal specifically with the novels’ treatments of consciousness.

⁶ Lawrence’s responses to Tolstoi are summarized in Preston and in Brown (56-64).

⁷ The translation which Lawrence was reading was Constance Garnett’s 1901 Anna Karenin, although he had earlier read Nathan Haskell Dole’s 1886 Anna Karénina (see Brown 10-12). Unless otherwise indicated, this article quotes from and uses the character names of Garnett’s, more accurate translation (in an edition which restores

the “a” ending to Russian female names) (AK G). Garnett, whom Lawrence first met in 1913, probably dissuaded him from rereading Dole’s translation, which she claimed to find “so exceptionally bad that it gives hardly any idea of the original” (qtd. in R. Garnett 191). This article also makes comparative reference to the translations of the Maudes (1918) (AK MM), Edmonds (1956) (AK E) and Pevear and Volokhonsky (2000) (AK PV). For a comparison of English translations of Anna Karenina see Brown 10-17 and Birdwood-Hedger.

⁸ Tom is born in 1838, Levin in 1841.

⁹ Tom’s first sex could have been modeled on Tolstoi’s at the age of sixteen with a prostitute, about which Lawrence might have read in biographical material on Tolstoi.

¹⁰ The Dantean metaphor is used by Tolstoi in his Confession of 1882, which describes experiences very similar to Levin’s (35).

¹¹ During the action of Anna Karenina Levin is thirty-two to thirty-four years of age; Birkin’s age is not given, but Gerald is thirty-one at the end of the narrative’s year. Levin is orphaned; Birkin’s parents are not mentioned.

¹² The phrases “flourishing” and “good life” have been chosen to suggest eudaimonia – a concept with which both authors would have been familiar. Lawrence read John Burnet’s Early Greek Philosophers in 1915; Tolstoi began reading Greek philosophers in the original in 1870. The objects of Levin’s and Birkin’s aspirations resemble eudaimonia by being objective, rather than subjective, states of happiness. For Levin, but not Birkin, good living is connected to both self-love and virtue. However, for neither Levin nor Birkin can reason constitute or give knowledge of this state, which fulfils the purposes of a creative principle or God.

¹³ Sergei Karenin’s perspective on education would make him an ideal candidate for university education according to the criteria of Lawrence’s “Education of the People”: “the claims of his own soul were more binding on him than those claims his father and his teacher made upon him [...] His teachers complained that he would not learn, while his soul was brimming over with thirst for knowledge. And he learned from Kapitonitch, from his nurse, from Nadinka, from Vassily Lukitch, but not from his teachers.” RDP 98; AK G 627-28.

¹⁴ The possible influence of Casaubon on the presentation of Karenin is explored by Fleetwood.

¹⁵ The term krestianin (“peasant”) developed from the term Khristianin (Christian) some time after the conversion of Vladimir to Christianity in 998 A.D.

¹⁶ “Of no account” is a phrase frequently used by Lawrence to denote spiritual triviality. He applied it, for example, to his acquaintance David “Maxim” Litvinov (although Women in Love’s Libidnikov, who partly resembles him, is an ambiguous character). LL 2: 629.

¹⁷ The 1952 Russian text of the novel quoted (volumes eight and nine of a fourteen volume edition) differs slightly from the edition which Garnett translated, which itself differs from that which was serialized.

¹⁸ Appositely to Women in Love, the first recorded use of “dress-conscious” was in 1918.

¹⁹ Lawrence himself, however, had helped the Chambers and Hocking with mowing, and in “Education of the People” allowed that “the swoon of manual labour” permits an “unconsciousness” which is useful as a temporary exercise. RDP 154.

²⁰ The words epifaniia and epiphany occur in neither Tolstoi nor Garnett’s texts, but Levin twice describes something as having been “revealed” to him (otkryto; opened). AK G 948, 967; AK 9 385, 403.

²¹ The fact that Tolstoi made many changes to this passage over successive drafts suggests the importance which he attached to it. He moved the phrase “cheating knavishness of intellect” from part way through Part 8, Chapter 12 (where Garnett places it, working from a version which Tolstoi later emended) to prominence at the chapter’s ending. AK G 944; AK 9 384.

²² The Maudes and Edmonds permit the same ambiguity as Garnett. Pevear and Volokhonsky resolve the ambiguity in the opposite direction to my own interpretation, emphasizing goodness rather than meaning in: “my whole life [...] has the unquestionable meaning of the good which it is in my power to put into it!” AK PV 817.

²³ No English translation which I have consulted gives “empowered”; all match Garnett’s rendering.

²⁴ The contradictions are also related to Lawrence’s criticism that Freud’s unconscious is the product of consciousness. PUFU 12.

²⁵ Tolstoi admired Arnold, whom he may have met whilst researching school teaching methods in England in 1862. He wrote in 1885: “Half of M. Arnold’s thoughts are my

own. I rejoice to read him” TL 2: 382. There is no evidence that he ever read Culture and Anarchy, but by 1884 he had read Literature and Dogma (1873). This argues less for Hellenism than for Hebraism of a non-dogmatic and ethical kind, congruent with the Christianity which Tolstoi was to develop after finishing Anna Karenina. Both Literature and Dogma and Levin trust the transmission of ethical emotion by a tradition, rather than the philosophical induction of ethics, although the former argues for the reformation of Christianity by the intellect – the opposite of Levin’s position. Literature and Dogma 163-75. Arnold admired both Anna Karenina and Tolstoi’s late writings on religion, between which he overlooked the contradictions. He described Tolstoi’s non-dogmatic theology as “Sound and saving doctrine”. Essays 286.

²⁶ Lawrence, like Tolstoi, admired Arnold, and shared many of his views of Tolstoi and Russia. Essays 255; Schultze 94.

²⁷ The same applies to the other major characters of Women in Love. Leavis argues that “the blow dealt by Hermione issues with a sufficiently clear inevitability [...] out of a preceding exoteric drama in which the powers of a great novelist manifest themselves in ways that offer nothing to baffle [...] the reader who comes to Lawrence from George Eliot and Tolstoy”. Both as a description of Hermione, and as a general description of character in Women in Love, this is an exaggeration. Leavis 184.

²⁸ Anna Karenina’s unwillingness to represent lust marks the beginning of Tolstoi’s increasing hostility towards sexuality. However, at the peak of this hostility, he did not censor its representation; on the contrary, Pozdnyshev in The Kreutzer Sonata is raw with sexual acuity: “Take that ‘Kreutzer Sonata’, for example [...] can one really allow it to be played in a drawing-room full of women in low-cut dresses?” (97).

²⁹ Women in Love’s conception of the individual therefore more nearly resembles that of the Orthodox Church than does Anna Karenina’s, since Orthodoxy stresses the union of body and soul in the Hebraic idea of the “heart”. Ware 74.

³⁰ Relatively unconscious, young, male protagonists in Tolstoi’s fiction include the senior of the “Two Hussars” (1856), Zhilin in “Prisoner of the Caucasus” (1872), Vronsky, and Resurrection’s Nekhlyudov (1895-99).

³¹ Lukács notes that some of Tolstoi’s dialogues are deliberately boring, until one character “throws a spanner in the works” (182).

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