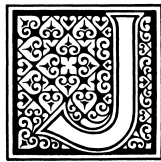


## Cinematic Adaptations of *Anna Karenina*

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In the prologue, Tolstoy himself is fleeing from a pack of wolves. He throws himself into a vast pit and clutches at a tree root to arrest his fall. There he dangles, midway between the hungry wolves crouching above and an angry bear waiting below. At the top, we might infer, are the filmmakers waiting to adapt his *books*, at the bottom are the filmmakers waiting to dramatize his *life*. . . . Either way, he's in trouble.

John Tibbetts' comments on the 1997 film adaptation of *Anna Karenina* (42).



udging from the number of adaptations and the consistency with which filmmakers returned to the novel for over a century, *Anna Karenina* may be considered a favorite in cinematography. Paradoxically, a certain fatal sign is inscribed in Lumière's train, which became a symbol in motion for cinema, as well as for Tolstoy's novel. The first Pathé version appeared in 1911,<sup>1</sup> and the most recent one, made by Bernard Rose, in 1997.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, numerous other versions were produced: two films starring Greta Garbo,<sup>3</sup> the silent *Love* (1927), and Clarence Brown's *Anna Karenina* (1935); two versions starring British actresses, the 1947 version with Vivien Leigh and the television production of 1985 with Jacqueline Bisset; five Russian adaptations, including two silent films (one by Vladimir Gardin, starring Vera Kholodnaia in 1914), the filmed performance of the Malyi Theatre, with Alla Tarasova as Anna in 1953, Aleksander Zarkhi's *Anna Karenina* (1967), with Tat'iana Samoilova, and the creatively interesting hybrid of 1974: the film-ballet with Maïia Plisetskaia.<sup>4</sup> My essay defines various methods of transferring and adapting *Anna Karenina* to the screen by comparing the films of 1935, 1947, 1967, and 1997 in terms of how closely the various plots correspond to one another and to the original text of the novel.<sup>5</sup>

Although well-known literary texts have attracted filmmakers from the very first days of cinema, the relationship between the two arts always was and still remains ambiguous. On the one hand, literature provides

the obvious initial source in cinematic literary adaptations. On the other, in its use of literature cinema inevitably tries to overcome its precursor, and sometimes achieves uniqueness as an independent art: *postoiannyi sputnik* (constant companion) and *mesha-iushchii chuzhak* (disabling stranger [Zorkaia 106]). The visual text can hardly exhaust the verbal text because the two aspire to different ways of looking at and presenting the same objects, hence creating non-coinciding images. In the case of literary adaptations, this issue leads to two possible extremes for the filming of a written text: to follow the original text's approach to the raw material or to suggest a new interpretation based on the limits of cinema.<sup>7</sup> This divergence may explain Iurii Tynianov's thought, "Пока не будет пересмотрен вопрос об отношениях кино к литературе, самый лучший тип сценария будет промежуток между *испорченным романом* и *неоделанной драмой*" (324; here and throughout, emphasis mine, IM).<sup>8</sup>

To some extent, any novel is damaged (*isporchen*) by being filmed, but not every cinematic adaptation is a damaged film. The visual rendition of the verbal text raises not only the problem of the relationship between cinema and literature, but also the question of viewers' expectations for the film based on the novel. For instance, an audience familiar with the original plot reads the film differently than does an ignorant audience, partly because the former brings with it preconceived images based on the verbal text.<sup>9</sup> The cinematic version is the secondary one; therefore it initially is at a disadvantage as it competes with the novel's supremacy.<sup>10</sup>

In her essay "The Cinema" (1926), Virginia Woolf supports her assertion that unique cinematic devices remain independent of other visual and verbal arts. She refers to the silent version of *Anna Karenina* as an example of a handicapped visual copy of the literary text (268-72).<sup>11</sup> Woolf bases her opinion on the fact that filmmakers unimaginatively register with the camera only the external attributes of the characters and the story. In the film Anna is simply replaced by black velvet, pearls,<sup>12</sup> and teeth. Woolf envisions early cinema as a predator in its relationship to literature.<sup>13</sup>

The cinema fell upon its prey with immense rapacity, and to the moment largely subsists upon the body of its unfortunate victim. But the results are disastrous to both. The alliance is unnatural. Eye and brain are torn asunder ruthlessly as they try vainly to work in cou-

ples. The eye says “Here is Anna Karenina.” A voluptuous lady in black velvet wearing pearls comes before us. But the brain says, “That is no more Anna Karenina than it is Queen Victoria.” For the brain knows Anna almost entirely by the inside of her mind—her charm, her passion, her despair. (269-70)

From Woolf’s point of view, Anna’s and Vronskii’s flesh can be animated through adequately visual images (for instance, a black line on white as equivalent to anger, shadows to signal a state of fear, etc.); free camera movements can smooth the abrupt switches from Anna to Levin, which jar in the original text.<sup>14</sup> Woolf distinctly separates (and excludes) verbal devices from visual ones, in the conviction that cinema should avoid everything that is accessible to words alone. Her opinion may be explained by two different factors. First of all, in the mid-twenties, when the essay was written, sound was beyond cinematic reality; therefore words could not be articulated on screen. Secondly, Woolf did not believe in the power of words simply transplanted into film. She was correct in her prediction that the appearance of sound would not bridge the gap. Rather, it has become even larger because now the film’s narration involves much more than words.

At the same time, however, cinema did not succeed in separating itself from literature, as it managed to do in the case of theater. Neia Zorkaia in her article “Russkaia shkola ekranizatsii” (“The Russian School of Adaptation”) writes: “Мифом оказалось ‘чистое кино’. Частным случаем—кино ‘антилитературное’, бессюжетное. Законом—сращенность литературы и экранного искусства, слова и изображения” (107).<sup>15</sup> She suggests three basic types of literary adaptations: *lubok*, illustration (*illiustratsiia*), and interpretation (*interpretatsiia*). Zorkaia emphasizes that all three ways of filming literature co-exist in cinema at different stages of its development. Although she mainly focuses on film practice in Russia at the beginning of the last century, her classification is helpful for our analysis.

*Kinolubok*, first of all, actively erases the author’s individuality. It levels out different sources, transforming them into the same story (jealousy, love, and murder), and concentrates on it. In general, it is a cinema that does not rely on cinematic devices. Whereas this kind of adaptation is aggressive toward the original text, the second one, illustration, is obedient.

*Illustratsiia* follows the literary text and also fills it with cinematic analogues. Unlike *lubok*, it strives to recreate *byt*. As an example of this type, Zorkaia names Gardin's *Anna Karenina*. She praises the external resemblance of actress Maria Germanova to Tolstoy's Anna as an important sign of respect for the author, which is characteristic for this kind of adaptation (116).

*Interpretatsiia* crucially differs from both *lubochnaia* adaptation and dependent *illustratsiia*. It consists of the cinematic embodiment of a literary work, an interpretation of the author's style, and a conception of the original to be achieved through cinematic means. This is a creative interpretation oriented toward the original source, of which the first example is Vsevolod Meyerhold's *Picture of Dorian Gray* (1915), a work that anticipated *auteur* cinema.

Geoffrey Wagner includes one more type, absent in Zorkaia's classification,<sup>16</sup> that of *analogy*.<sup>17</sup> The three possible categories of literary adaptation he distinguishes are based on the degree to which a director revises the original source (219-31). *Transposition* renders the novel to the screen with a minimum of interference. *Commentary* purposely or inadvertently re-emphasizes the original. The last category, *analogy*, intentionally violates the original for the sake of creating another work of art through cinema. Its aggressive aspirations may be compared to *kinolubok*, though the latter has a leveling effect, while analogy can achieve artistic heights.<sup>18</sup>

Brian McFarlane redefines some issues regarding film adaptations and suggests a new approach, which dwells on the centrality of narrative instead of on fidelity to the written text (1-37). He makes a distinction between *narrative*, i.e., that which may be transferred, and *enunciation*, which requires adaptation.<sup>19</sup> The critic uses Roland Barthes's opposition of *distributional* and *integrational* narrative functions.<sup>20</sup> The distributional functions divide further into *cardinal functions*, 'hinge-points' of narrative, and *catalyzers*, which root the *cardinal functions* in a particular reality. Together they constitute the formal content of narrative, independent of language, and hence transferable to film. Faithful adaptations seek to preserve the cardinal functions of the source. The integrational functions consist of *indices proper* and *informants*. The latter (such data as the names, ages, professions of the characters, etc.) may be transferred, whereas the former (concepts of character and atmosphere) remain more open to adaptation than to a direct translation into another medium.

Thus, McFarlane investigates the actual transposition proc-

ess—which for him consists of transferring and adapting—rather than the result of it. In this respect his approach rationalizes and to some degree explains the classifications described above. For instance, *kinolubok* (transposition) adapts everything from the original, even *cardinal functions* and *informants*;<sup>21</sup> *illiustratsiia* transfers whatever is possible and sets the elements resistant to it aside, e.g. inner transformations of the characters;<sup>22</sup> *interpretatsiia* (commentary, and partial analogy) transfers the most, and modestly adapts those elements that call for it; *analogy* adapts the original and transfers the least.

Among the *Anna Karenina* films in circulation I recognize examples of *kinolubok* (1935), illustration (1947), interpretation-commentary (1967, 1985), and interpretation-analogy (1975, 1997) adaptations.<sup>23</sup> Commentary adaptation goes further than illustration in interpreting the conception of the novel, but never violates it, as *kinolubok* and analogy do.

In this essay I trace the ways in which the story and plot<sup>24</sup> of the novel *Anna Karenina* reappear in the films of the same title. In theory, the film, to some extent, can duplicate the same story of the original. Its stable elements, such as the sequence of events, do not resist transfer. However, “литературная фабула входит в кино не всеми особенностями, а некоторыми” (Тупианов 324),<sup>25</sup> not only because of objective differences between the two media, but also because of subjective ones. As I show by comparing several *Anna Karenina* films, the strategies of selecting and arranging events differ from writer to screenwriter, and from one film to another.

Reasons for directors' choices may vary. Why would an episode be transferred or adapted in some versions and eliminated in others? Take Anna's labor and the birth of her second child, for example. The omission of this scene from the 1935 version of *Anna Karenina* is due to censorship.<sup>26</sup> David Selznick, the producer, realized that elimination of the episode negated an important aspect of the plot. “This decision was so heart-rending,” he alleged, “that we were sorely tempted to abandon the whole project” (Swenson 331). The versions of 1947 and 1997 include only part of the episode, when Anna asks for Karenin's forgiveness.<sup>27</sup> In his film of 1967, Aleksander Zarkhi follows the source as closely as possible. This fidelity, along with the excellent acting and camera work, makes the scene one of the turning points in the film plot.<sup>28</sup> The 1985 version totally reverses the original meaning of the scene. Anna resentfully declares to Karenin that she loves Vronskii and will not die despite Karenin's wishing her

death. The film demonstrates a total misunderstanding of Anna's motivation at that moment and also of Tolstoy's intentions regarding the meaning of the event in the novel.

In terms of the novel's development, this episode is extremely important for several reasons. It marks the last attempt by all involved to escape the triangle: Anna through death, Karenin through forgiveness, Vronskii through suicide. This is the only time in the novel that Anna, Karenin, and Vronskii are so strongly united, both physically (in isolated space) and morally (by the newborn baby, Vronskii and Anna's daughter, who is almost immediately accepted by Karenin as his child). All three of them are distanced from the world's vanities in the face of birth-death.

In the novel Anna's split between the two Alekseis, her embodied halves, who, not by accident, share the same name, becomes palpable. She longs for reconciliation between Karenin and Vronskii, whereby she may regain her inner unity and erase her sin. She confesses to her husband: "Но во мне есть другая, я ее боюсь—она полюбила того. . ." (412).<sup>29</sup> The whole scene is reminiscent of an act of exorcism<sup>30</sup> without a priest. "Ждали конца каждую минуту" (413),<sup>31</sup> but no one calls a priest to the dying Anna, while those around the dying Nikolai Levin *prichastili i soborovali* (496).<sup>32</sup> I interpret this as a meaningful sign of the author's moral judgment: Anna does not deserve absolution ("Мне отпущение, и аз воздам").<sup>33</sup> The epigraph thus becomes more personal here than Boris Eikhenbaum suggests in his book on Tolstoy (160-73).

Karenin reaches such a high spiritual plane in his forgiveness that it completely changes the relationships and roles in the triangle. His spiritual nobility destroys Vronskii, who no longer knows how to behave and, as a result of the situation, attempts to commit suicide. "Он чувствовал себя пристыженным, униженным, виноватым и лишенным возможности смыть свое унижение. Он чувствовал себя *выбитым из той колеи, по которой он так гордо и легко шел до сих пор*" (414).<sup>34</sup>

The significance of Anna's labor may be deduced from the fact that Tolstoy includes Kitty's labor in the parallel line of Levin's story. As Sydney Schultze demonstrates in her book, *The Structure of Anna Karenina*, the major contrasts in the novel emerge in the Anna and Levin plot lines, which develop as a series of juxtapositions.

Another reason for a certain selectivity in the adaptations of classic literature is the myth that surrounds it. Filmmakers and actors

rest under the pressure of former “masterpieces,” especially those considered classics, unless they consciously have overcome that pressure by the outset of the project. What is the myth of the novel *Anna Karenina*? The answer may be found in an article by William Magretta on Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s film *Effi Briest*: “It has often been compared with *Madame Bovary* and *Anna Karenina*, chiefly because of its basic subject matter: the story of a young woman who *violates the rigid social code of her class and era* through an adulterous affair” (249). The few words from the TV blurb announcing Julien Duvivier’s *Anna Karenina* add several features to this image of Anna: “Vivien Leigh is fine as the hapless, adulterous Anna; and her *quandary as an outcast wife and mother* builds steadily to that doom” (Thompson 6). A critic reviewing the version with Jacqueline Bisset finds it wrong that “the betrayed husband ends up being more sympathetic than the suffering heroine.” He wishes for a different Anna, not the one in the film, because her image does not correlate with the myth or with his reading of the novel.

What’s left is Anna, uncontrollably in love, and then plagued by doubt and regret, drifting into drugs and paranoia. With her Vronsky something of a cipher, Miss Bisset’s Anna becomes tiresome. Contemplating suicide, she asks herself, “Is there anyone I haven’t hurt?” Even the most sympathetic viewer will have trouble coming up with a comforting answer. (O’Connor 18)

A film version of a literary text may be influenced not only by the literary source or its mythical image, but also by previous adaptations, which filmmakers sometimes know better than the original literary text. In such a case, they often try to displace and hide the cinematic source of their own imaginative effort, unless the film in question is an openly acknowledged remake.<sup>35</sup> In the cinematic history of *Anna Karenina*, Greta Garbo’s film of 1935 was the most influential, mostly because of the “mesmerizing Garbo” (Menashe 64) herself. Anne Edwards writes that from the start Vivien Leigh worried about being compared to Garbo’s Anna in the film made twelve years earlier (157-58). By now critics compare any version of *Anna Karenina* to that one, and I am not going to break this pattern, though purely for reasons of temporal succession. It is the first sound adaptation of Tol-

stoy's novel.

The story of its production shows how the film, unlike its literary source, necessitates the interaction of various forces that were sometimes hostile to one another. The first director of Garbo's film, George Cukor, left the project because he "couldn't face all the suffering, agony and rat-killing" of the original story (Swenson 331). Fredric March considered the project a mistake, and was anxious to make a modern picture instead of a costume drama. The producer himself, tired of the endless Production Code office instructions regarding the script, insisted on doing another film.<sup>36</sup> However, since Garbo was unwilling to alter her schedule in any way, work on the film *Anna Karenina*, with the newly assigned director, Clarence Brown, started.

One of the first things that needs to be acknowledged is that the film's primary goal was to shoot the stars, not the novel. This approach inevitably affected the structure of the film. In many respects this adaptation corresponds to *kinolubok*. As in most films, the novel is reduced to the Anna-Vronskii, or more accurately, Garbo-March, line.<sup>37</sup> Karenin plays only a subsidiary role, very much reduced for the purpose of making his wife's love story romantically doomed. Phrases and words such as "I love you," "no escape," "doomed to unimaginable despair or unimaginable bliss," "Heaven on Earth," "darling," "guilty," "will be punished," "forgiven," etc., simply frame yet one more Hollywood adulterous love story of the 1930s. According to the rules of that genre, the story of Kitty and Levin happily transforms into "the unbearable lightness of being." Even the Stiva-Dolly relationship looks more complex and true to the book.<sup>38</sup> The Anna-Vronskii line also has to be changed and presented with no ugly fights; no misunderstandings without an obvious reason (such as Vronskii's desire to join the war); no opium; no disoriented last day. Accordingly, Vronskii leaves without a kind farewell, Anna cannot bring herself to approach the train car because his mother and Countess Sorokina are there, stays at the station till night, and, finally, rather surprisingly, throws herself under the train. Why does she do so?<sup>39</sup> That is not an appropriate question for *lubok*, for the main concern of this literary adaptation is *what*, not *why* or *how* (Zorkaia 109).

The unquestioned "Russianness"<sup>40</sup> of the film also fits *lubok* standards for exotica. The opening scene, masterfully composed, depicts a huge bowl of caviar on ice, officers greedily eating and drinking, while the portrait of the Russian Emperor, plus Russian flags, behind the table signal "Russia." Then a slow tracking-out shot opens a

panoramic view of an incredibly long, gorgeously set table; the officers standing along it sing a Russian folk song (“Vo kuznitse”). The next scene, which continues the display of the officers’ entertainment, now shows them enjoying the company of gypsy singers. The film continues to supply the viewers with such treats as a Russian steam-bath, a *mazurka* at the ball, a sleigh instead of carriage, a Russian cure for a hangover, a beautifully shot wedding in an Orthodox church, accompanied by an Old Church Slavonic chant, lines from a Pushkin poem, etc.

Another characteristic feature of early *kinolubok*—the primitive way of gluing shots to one another—becomes more complicated in the film, but still recalls the graphic principle of early cinema: one plot block simply added to another. The *Anna Karenina* of 1935 looks like a digest in the way it mimics the key episodes of the story.<sup>41</sup> Every scene is completed as an independent episode, and may be easily separated from the others. For the sake of brevity I quickly summarize the main blocks of the plot, leaving aside its overture (the first three scenes with “a Russian flavor” mentioned above): Train station in Moscow; Anna and Stiva on their way home; Anna talks to Dolly; Anna discusses Vronskii with Kitty; ball; Anna reads in the car; Anna meets Vronskii in Bologoe; train station in St.Petersburg; Anna and Serezha; croquet; Karenin warns Anna; Vronskii’s mother talks with him about Anna; Vronskii and Iashvin talk about Anna; Vronskii visits Anna in the Karenins’ country house; races; Anna’s confession to Karenin; Anna and Vronskii in his house; Kitty’s wedding; Italy; Karenin calms Serezha; Vronskii in the regiment; Anna and Vronskii in a hotel room; opera; Anna visits Serezha on his birthday; Vronskii reads the letter from Iashvin in Anna’s presence; Anna visits Dolly, Stiva, Kitty, and Levin; train station; Vronskii and Iashvin talk about Anna.

An analysis of the twenty-eight blocks that comprise the plot demonstrates how strongly the film focuses on the Anna line. The only scene devoted totally to Kitty and Levin—their wedding—seems to be included only for the sake of its “Russianness.” Although Anna does not appear physically in the last five scene-blocks, they nonetheless relate to her, for she is either mentioned or talked about. As is typical of *kinolubok*, nothing takes the viewers’ mind off her story, and all “distracting” moments are reduced or eliminated; even Anna’s social ostracism as the main reason for her suicide evokes doubts. Regardless of its flaws, this adaptation was well received by both critics

and the public. Faithfulness to Tolstoy's novel was not an issue at the time.

In contrast, the British 1947 version emphasizes its connection with the literary text from the very first shot. A page from the novel projected on the screen opens the film ("All happy families resemble one another, every unhappy family is unhappy after its own fashion. . . ."), and another page ends it ("And the light by which she had been reading the book of life . . . went out forever"). This verbal framing of the book accords with the basic method of adaptation used in this production: transferring as much as possible from the original text (*cardinal functions, catalyzers, and informants*).<sup>42</sup> Occasionally, however, the film strives for a genuinely cinematic adaptation of Tolstoy's text. For instance, its circular textual composition not only takes the audience back to the beginning of the novel, but, with the last cut, also to its epigraph.<sup>43</sup> At film's end we see Anna walking along the platform in Klin in the rain, then in front of an immobile train, just as another train moves in the opposite direction; when it is gone, the train behind Anna starts moving. It advances toward the audience and Anna, whose disordered mind recreates the snowstorm of long ago. We then see Anna under the train, which proceeds to leave the frame. Tolstoy's written text appears on the screen as the camera moves from above, approaching Anna's lonely body on the railroad tracks in the darkness: *Мне отмищение, и аз воздам*. Although it is one of the best cinematic interpretations of Anna's last moments, as a whole, the film of 1947 is an example of illustration rather than interpretation.

In the first script Jean Anouilh and Julien Duvivier transposed the story to France, but producer Aleksander Korda, with the help of Guy Morgan, returned the story to its original Russian setting (Edwards 158). The film nonetheless has more European flavor than any other adaptation of *Anna Karenina*. In comparison to the previous version, this film does not strive for much Russianness. The wonderful European-style costumes by Cecil Beaton add visual charm to the British film, which, surprisingly, did not receive much response from critics.

The film, like the novel, is structured around two stories: those of Anna and Vronskii, and of Kitty and Levin. They not only develop parallel to each other, but also beautifully intersect in the wedding scene. While Kitty and Levin are getting married in church, Anna is packing to leave for Italy with Vronskii. This climactic moment defines the couples' destinies: Levin becomes a husband and po-

tential father, and Anna definitively separates herself from her son by openly becoming Vronskii's mistress. To show Anna's final breakup with the family, the filmmakers betray their otherwise strict fidelity to the text by sending Karenin and Serezha to Kitty's wedding, while the still sick Anna remains at home.<sup>44</sup>

The film depicts Moscow and St. Petersburg aristocratic circles, Karenin's professional meetings, Levin's life in the country, etc. The audience learns more about the Shcherbatskii family and Kitty from this film than from any other.<sup>45</sup> Society becomes a live force here, not only applying pressure on Anna, but exposing the rigid rules of its "game." Karenin teaches Anna how to behave in public; Betsy refers to the example of Liza Merkalova, who masterfully coordinates husband and lover; Serpukhovskoi explains to Vronskii the importance of marriage to a successful professional life; etc. The main characters are no longer, as in the Garbo film, isolated from one another and the rest of the world. They become a part of the social community: in most of the scenes they appear either in a crowd, or juxtaposed to a group. The film, however, mostly represents characters' external lives. Levin's spiritual search is not an issue in the film, although his life is carefully traced. The Stiva-Dolly line loses its encompassing function. Vronskii looks more like a moving and talking prop than Tolstoy's character. The film is most successful at tracking Karenin and his relationship with Anna. He, at least, acquires independence as a character.

A prominent statesman and caring husband, he, unfortunately, is capable only of a love for Anna that she finds insufficient after experiencing passion with Vronskii. One of the most penetrating scenes in the film shows Karenin grabbing her love letters and pushing her away. The moment he sees her on the floor, Karenin becomes afraid of how violent the situation has made him, and he offers Anna his hand, but she refuses. Later, when she starts blaming him for never having loved her properly, he helplessly and sincerely answers that he does not understand her. The visual key to the psychology of this scene is Karenin's extended hand, a gesture that signals his usual politeness, his regret, and still live desire to reconcile with Anna. The detail becomes as capacious as the cigar that Anna removes from Stiva's mouth before he enters Dolly's room. Karenin's violence in this episode, which he does not manifest in Tolstoy's novel, reveals Karenin's feelings visually through gesture (whereas Tolstoy achieves a similar effect verbally). Karenin's lack of control casts him in a more

sympathetic light than we see in the novel.

—Нет!—закричал он своим пискливым голосом, который поднялся теперь еще нотой выше обыкновенного, и, схватив своими большими пальцами ее за руку так сильно, что красные следы остались на ней от браслета, который он прижал, насильно посадил ее на место.—Подлость? Если вы хотите употребить это слово, то подлость это то, чтобы бросить мужа, сына для любовника и есть хлеб мужа! (364)<sup>46</sup>

—Да, вы только себя помните, но страдания человека, который был вашим мужем, вам не интересны. Вам все равно, что вся жизнь его рушилась, что он пеле. . . пеле. . . пелестрадал. (365)<sup>47</sup>

With this film, cinema begins to reconceptualize Karenin and his function in the plot. A comparison of the arrangement of the same scene in the versions of 1935 and 1947 clearly illustrates this revision. Anna visits Sergei on his birthday, and on her way out of the house meets her husband. In both films, the staircase acts as a sign of separation and ostracism between Anna and Karenin. But while in Brown's adaptation *Karenin*, from upstairs, shouts at the departing Anna, in Duvivier's film he waits for her downstairs as she descends the staircase.<sup>48</sup> This scene shows how Karenin's various placements in the plot physically place him in different positions and locations.

The 1947 film also establishes an interesting connection between Anna and Stiva, one not explicitly articulated in the novel. The day after the ball, Stiva comes home to take Anna to the train station; after praising her dancing of the previous night, he asks her whether she remembers "their old days."<sup>49</sup> This reference to a flirtatious past, though not reprised later in the film, coincides with Gary Morson's claim: "The key to understanding Anna is that she is Stiva's sister, Anna Oblonskaia. It is a truism that Tolstoy had the special ability to create families that were not mere collections of individuals but a sort of small cultural unit of their own" (7).

Thus, Duvivier's film of 1947 may be considered an illustration-adaptation, which carefully follows the literary source, finding cinematic equivalents for some textual elements. At the same time, the

lack of a structural and conceptual dominant in the film prevents it from becoming an independent artistic work. As Anne Edwards notes about this version, “The film was beautifully mounted and magnificently produced, even within the limitations that black and white film imposed, but unfortunately it seemed never to come *alive*” (160).<sup>50</sup>

A Russian version of *Anna Karenina*, with highly successful casting, appeared in 1967. Tat’iana Samoilova superbly plays the main role, and in stressing Anna’s “spiritual rather than physical charms and disappointments, Samoilova again<sup>51</sup> demonstrates enormous range without compare” (Vinson 555). The music by Rodion Shchedrin<sup>52</sup> is a key component in the film, and, along with a mobile camera, helps to dramatize the plot. Like the 1947 version, the film begins with the first page of the novel,<sup>53</sup> and, more than any other filmic version of the novel, relies on Tolstoy’s text.

In this version, the Stiva-Dolly line becomes as significant as the Anna-Karenin-Vronskii story. Stiva actually functions as a key link in the film. From the very beginning, the narration goes through him: he wakes up, gets the telegram from Anna, walks through the house, filled with his unsupervised children, to Dolly’s room, speaks with her, at the train station meets Levin, then Vronskii, and, finally, Anna. Anna’s conversation with Dolly about Stiva is nicely juxtaposed with Dolly and Karenin’s talk about Anna.

Stiva very often leads us to Levin, who, once again, receives less attention than in the novel. Still, the audience learns about his attachment to country life, his work there, and some of his thoughts. Levin, unlike the other characters, is shown mostly in open spaces, his closer connection to nature, an important characteristic for Tolstoy, underscored through *mise en scène*. An ugly fight with Kitty after Levin’s visit to Anna adds complexity to the simple opposition of happy-unhappy marriage, beyond which other screen versions of *Anna Karenina* do not venture.

For the first time in *Anna Karenina* films, Betsy Tverskaia becomes an influential figure in the development of the plot. She outgrows her capacity as an individual character, functioning, rather, as a model of aristocratic behavior.<sup>54</sup> Betsy consistently pushes Anna towards Vronskii, like a cat playing dangerous games with mice before eating them. For the first time in cinema Lidia Ivanovna appears as a spiritual friend of Karenin’s who contributes substantially to his decision to isolate Anna from her son. Whereas the British film version depicts society as a faceless social power, the Russian film cinemat-

cally individualizes society.

Karenin is a cog in this powerful machine, and the film consistently analogizes him with mechanisms. He is a small machine himself. More than any other, the Russian version “reads” Karenin as an extremely boring, monotonous, and even dangerous figure—an automaton, deprived of human feelings. His cinematic image consistently relies on auditory means. Viewers hear Karenin’s rhythmic steps throughout the film, their horrifying effect comparable to the fateful steps of the Commandore approaching Donna Anna and her lover. His mechanical, clock-like speech is devoid of meaning, a deficiency most obvious during the race scene, when his voice drones on and on until it transforms into pure noise. Sounds Karenin produces acquire threatening omnipotence because they leave his body and “spatially” occupy the whole screen, overwhelming all other images.<sup>55</sup> In the critical discourse of Michel Chion, Karenin’s initially visualized voice reincarnates into *acousmètre*, an unidentified and non-localized “monster” (24).

The film’s point of view on Karenin completely coincides with Anna’s. The character is built based on her assumptions, suggesting that he is the main cause of her unhappiness. Throughout the film long shots distance him from both Anna and the viewers. The Russian version offers the most severe portrait of Karenin, who appears as a punishing machine even with Serezha during the boy’s lesson.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, all characters shown in the film are linked to one another directly and indirectly, and collectively they form the powerful force that throws Anna under the train. This idea structures the plot of the 1967 film, which uses visual metaphors so consistently that they become the organizing principle of this adaptation. The repetition of symbols embraces the whole film and predetermines the development of the events and Anna’s doom.

For example, Zarkhi frames the film in metaphoric candlelight, unambiguously connected to the light that goes out when “the book of Anna’s life” closes. The audience sees candlelight reflected in the mirror when Vronskii visits Stiva in order to meet Anna again, glowing at the opera when Vronskii openly declares his love for her, in Anna’s bedroom when she recalls Vronskii and herself making love, and in Anna’s hands when she approaches Vronskii’s bed to kiss him before leaving forever. The film continually emphasizes the inevitability of Anna’s doom from the moment of the accident at the train station in Moscow.

The races scene, unlike in other versions, plays the central role in the plot of the film. Zarkhi equates Anna's life with Frou-Frou's race through alternating close-ups of Anna and the horse. The last low-angle shot of the blue sky and Vronskii above the horse, threatening it with a whip, cements the equation. Both Anna and Frou-Frou are mastered by Vronskii, both of them are watched with excitement, broken by the end of the race because of a wrong move by Vronskii, and finally killed (though not directly) by him. Even Karenin's voice-over, lecturing on the stupidity and unhealthiness of such entertainment, works for the benefit of this identification.

Some of the unique visual metaphors in Zarkhi's film resulted from an accurate and attentive reading of the literary source. During her first talk with Kitty at Dolly's house, Anna says:

“Помню и знаю этот голубой туман, вроде того, что на горах в Швейцарии. Этот туман, который покрывает все в блаженное то время, когда вот-вот кончится детство, и из этого огромного круга, счастливого, веселого, делается путь все уже и уже и весело и жутко входить в эту *анфиладу*, хотя она и светлая и прекрасная. . . .” (76)<sup>57</sup>

Anna pictures an enfilade as the end of childhood and the beginning of adult life, which at that moment she still associates with happiness. The film interprets this metaphor as entrapment for grown-ups in their unhappy lives, and uses it throughout the film. Circular walking through the enfilade of open or opening doors becomes repetitive for such characters as Stiva (during the first scene in his house), Karenin (as he waits for Anna late at home), and Anna (in Karenin's house). Interestingly enough, Serezha enters this metaphoricized spatial world after Anna leaves the Karenin home on the morning of his birthday: his childhood is over, and he runs after his mother through the enfilade, where possibilities shrink and happiness disappears.<sup>58</sup>

Zarkhi's film is distinguished by its accurate and respectful reading of the novel. It interprets the conception of the original source via cinematic devices without violating it. As a literary adaptation, the Russian version of *Anna Karenina* belongs to interpretation-commentary.

By contrast, the most recent adaptation, that of 1997, by Ber-

nard Rose, makes an effort to restructure the concept of the novel and hence sooner belongs to interpretation-analogy. For the first time in the history of *Anna Karenina* adaptations, Levin's philosophical quests occupy a privileged position in the plot. He transforms into the narrator (the audience hears his voice-over reading from Tolstoy's diary in the film's opening scene) and even into Tolstoy himself by the end of film. The narration ends in Iasnaia Poliana, and Levin-Tolstoy signs the last page of the novel, projected onto the screen, as "Lev Tolstoy." Thus, the structure of the film is a series of concentric circles (embracing the lives of the individual characters), the largest being Tolstoy's. His story encompasses and merges with that of Levin, who tells Anna's story, which is the innermost of the three circles. This type of construction eliminates the initial parallelism of the Anna and Levin lines in the novel. But keeping the visual text within the limits of the literary text was not the director's concern: breaking them down was his goal. Rose's original attempt to include the *Anna Karenina* story within Tolstoy's own life story, however, produces a double effect. On the one hand, it broadens the content of the film, but, on the other, it narrows Anna's story. Its universal value dissolves by being tied to the life of a concrete individual, Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy, and Anna's story becomes an embedded narrative instead of the narrative itself.

Since this "encompassing" structure of the film exists simultaneously with the structure of the novel, the film becomes a rather eclectic mixture of all previous adaptations and new episodes from the novel.<sup>59</sup> Rose's confusing device may be explained by the filmmakers' intention to overcome the "anxiety of influence" of all previous versions by going beyond them. What results is the inclusion of several new, interesting episodes (Levin's argument with Princess Nordston and Vronskii about spirits, Nikolai Levin's story preceding his death, Kitty's labor, the happy life of the Levin-Shcherbatskii family in the countryside, Anna's last vision of herself jumping into water as a little girl, etc.) and the omission of some scenes commonly repeated in the older versions (Stiva waking up and remembering his fight with Dolly, Anna and Kitty's talk about the ball on the day of Anna's arrival to Moscow, etc.). By eliminating these scenes, Rose closes off story lines present both in the novel and in other screen versions, above all the Stiva-Dolly and the Kitty-Anna lines.

At the same time, the film rather arbitrarily expands upon some moments in the novel. For instance, the film strongly empha-

sizes Anna's use of opium, which, according to the novel, influences her state of mind, but which none of the films, except the British version of 1985, includes. Unfortunately, the effects of opium on Anna's behavior are exaggerated by Rose's screenwriter to such a degree that they justify including an ugly scene of Anna feeding a doll as a substitute for her dead daughter (sic). A reductive interpretation of the novel also motivates Rose's decision to show Vronskii shooting the horse himself. As noted above, Zarkhi's film features Tolstoy's parallel between Anna's and Frou-Frou's deaths, but ensures that, though Vronskii leads both to their doom, it is not he who kills them. The 1997 film destroys the subtlety of this distinction. A similarly heavy hand is applied to Vronskii's unsuccessful suicide attempt. The film laudably takes time to depict Vronskii's inner confusion after he leaves Karenin's house following the "deathbed scene" with Anna. Yet, his suicide attempt is cast in the unexpected and trivial form of playing. Here, as elsewhere, Rose also exploits Russian stereotypes, as did Brown: the post-race binge with gypsies and drunken officers, who by morning lie unconscious on the floor, is a tribute to the version of 1935. From this version, the film of 1997 also borrows the episodes of Anna's first appearance cast in a romantic mist (train steam) and servants' whispering about Anna's kindness during her unexpected visit to Sergei.<sup>60</sup> Rose relies not only on Brown, but also on Zarkhi, specifically for the image of Anna and Vronskii talking through the mirror in the last scenes, which nearly cause dizziness through excess.

However unintentionally, the last version of *Anna Karenina* continues the trend of exploiting its precursors. Western cinematic adaptations not only engage Tolstoy's novel, but also remake the films of *Anna Karenina*. By contrast, the Russian film is completely independent of earlier (Western) versions.<sup>61</sup> Various visual symbols, absent in the literary source, travel from one film to another. One of them is Stiva's cigar, taken from him by Anna, as he is about to enter Dolly's room.<sup>62</sup> Even the British film of 1947, with its conscious attempt at creative adaptation, uses this detail, introduced in the Garbo version. Filmmakers also repeatedly have used a staircase as a metaphor for isolation in the scene of Anna's departure from Karenin's house.<sup>63</sup> To a certain extent, visual texts interact with one another, independently of the literary source. Robert Stam suggests considering earlier filmic adaptations as a cumulative "hypotext" for a later one, "hypertext," which transforms previous ones, "*with no clear point of origin* [in the literary work]" (66). In the case of *Anna Karenina* films, despite their dialo-

gism, the last adaptation clearly illuminates its inseparability from the literary source.

The long history of cinematic transformations of *Anna Karenina* gives examples of such adapting methods as *kinolubok*, illustration, interpretation-commentary, and interpretation-analogy. Analysis of different versions reveals a certain progressive linearity in the process of transferring Tolstoy's novel to the screen. While each film brings cinema closer to the literary source, it also increasingly relies on the first extant cinematic reading of it. Each adaptation adds new episodes and new visual images to the generic visual text of the novel, which absorbs them, without, however, necessarily reproducing them in subsequent films. The "hypotext" stays closed only until a new "hypertext" appears and reopens its predecessors. However, the 1997 film shows how susceptible the literary source and the visual text of previous adaptations still are to further exploration. Although the 1997 film is an awkward attempt to restructure the visual text of *Anna Karenina*, it succeeds in undermining the inner stability of the text inherited from all previous films (its "hypotext"). It challenged the established range of episodes employed by earlier versions. One can only hope that future cinematic adaptations of *Anna Karenina* will try to rectify the imbalance this restructuring has created in the visual corpus by giving equal weight to Anna's and Levin's stories, as does Tolstoy's novel.

### Notes

1. This film, which began the history of the numerous cinematic adaptations of Tolstoy's works in world cinema, has not survived.
2. *Domashniaia sinemateka* ("Home Cinema Library") mentions sixteen cinematic adaptations of Tolstoy's novel by 1967 (21). I was unable to trace all of these versions.
3. She received the Best Actress Award of the New York Film Critics for playing Anna in the film of 1935.
4. Plisetskaia was both the choreographer and the main dancer in this production. In Zarkhi's film she appears as Betsy Tverskaia.
5. In her dissertation, Beata Jurkowska-Krupa compares setting, plot, characters, point of view, and use of literary tropes in the 1935 film and the TV version of 1985. She analyzes how the structures of film and television influence the choice of rhetorical devices used in the stories they tell. I disagree with some of her conclusions: for example, the statement that television adaptations follow the narrative devices of the literary texts more closely than do film adaptations. In the case of *Anna Karenina* versions, she

- is misled by her focus on the 1935 film, for a comparison with the Russian version of 1967 could have given opposite results.
6. John Orr uses the peculiar term *picture-book* as a substitute for literary adaptation.
  7. Consequently, the two prisms through which we usually judge the products of this particular film genre. In what respect do we recognize the visual substitute as successful? Literary adaptations appear on the edge of the two different planes. They are always surrogates doomed from the very moment of conception to inadequacy in one form or another.
  8. “Until the question of the relation between literature and cinema is reconsidered, even the best kind of script will still be somewhere between a damaged novel and an unfinished play.”
  9. At the same time, the ratings of the different *Anna Karenina* films, which combine opinions of both critics and audience, show that viewers, professional or non-professional, do not privilege the film’s faithfulness to the literary source. Brian McFarlane writes, “There are many kinds of relations which may exist between film and literature, and fidelity is only one—and rarely the most exciting” (11).
  10. Film critics openly argue this prejudice. Thus Imelda Whelehan, for example, declares that the aim of her book is to offer an extension of the debate on literary adaptations, “but one which further destabilizes the tendency to believe that the original text is of primary importance” (3).
  11. Presumably, she had in mind one of the silent Russian films—Pathé’s (1911) or Gardin’s (1914).
  12. The detail of Anna’s wearing pearls will be repeated only in the version of 1935.
  13. Swedish director Ingmar Bergman shares this view, but about the devouring power of literature. He completely separates literature and cinema: “Film has nothing to do with literature; the character and the substance of the two art forms are usually in conflict. . . . We should avoid making films out of books. The irrational dimension of a literary work, the germ of its existence, is often untranslatable into visual terms—and it, in turn, destroys the special, irrational dimensions of the film” (quoted in Wagner 29).
  14. Virginia Woolf herself avoids the awkward cinematic switches in the text. Very often in *Mrs. Dalloway* the author’s eye travels from one object to another like the moving camera that so fascinated the writer (Mikhalkovich 28).
  15. “‘Pure cinema’ turned out to be a myth. ‘Anti-literary’ cinema without plot is a particular case. The rule is a unity of literature and film art, word and picture.”
  16. Probably, because literary adaptation does not enter her scheme of things.
  17. Iurii Tynianov uses the same definition in a broader sense: “Кино может давать *аналогию* литературного стиля в своем плане” (324; “Cinema in its own sphere can create an analogue to literary style”).

18. For instance, Akira Kurosawa's adaptations.
19. By *enunciation*, the term substituted for *narration*, McFarlane means "the whole expressive apparatus that governs the presentation—and reception—of the narrative" (20).
20. Barthes' classification, in its turn, is partly based on Propp's notion of functions.
21. In the 1935 version Dolly has three children and Lidiia Ivanovna somehow coincides with Betsy Tverskaia and Princess Miagkaia, etc.
22. In most *Anna Karenina* films Levin's spiritual search disappears from the plot.
23. These terms exclude an evaluative factor.
24. The distinction between story and plot corresponds to the Russian Formalists' differentiation between *fabula* and *siuzhet* (see Tomashevskii 660).
25. Not all, but only some, peculiarities of a literary story enter a film.
26. For the same reason the illegitimate daughter is not included in the film story.
27. In both films the baby is born dead, though in the novel she lives and thrives.
28. Zorkaia describes Anna's labor scene in the silent Gardin version (1914) as an example of psychological elaboration.
29. "[B]ut there is another in me as well, and I am afraid of her. She fell in love with that other one. . . ." (411).
30. Aspects of this scene correspond to Catherine Clément's description of the hysteric's and the sorceress' performances. Anna here plays both roles. "These women . . . chose to suffer spectacularly *before an audience of men*. This attack is also a festival, a celebration of their guilt used as a weapon" (Cixous 44).
31. "The end was expected every moment" (412).
32. "... the patient received Communion and Extreme Unction" (497).
33. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay."
34. "He felt ashamed, humiliated, guilty, and deprived of the possibility of cleansing himself from his degradation. He felt himself knocked quite out of the rut along which he had hitherto trodden so proudly and so lightly" (413).
35. Mikhail Iampol'skii in his interesting analysis of D. W. Griffith's films suggests that a work of art is the negation of precursors rather than their continuation (according to Harold Bloom). There are always two sources: "Один, наиболее актуальный для текста-преемника вытесняется и становится объектом агрессии. Второй, менее актуальный для художника, так как связь с ним не носит глубинного характера, выдвигается в ранг текста-вытеснителя первого текста-предшественника. Связь с первым текстом маскируется декларацией связи со вторым, безопасным, текстом" (100; "One, the most pertinent for the successor's text, is displaced and becomes the object of aggression.

The second, less pertinent for the artist, since the connection with it lacks profundity, shifts the first text-precursor to the level of a text-displacer. The connection with the first text is disguised by the declaration of a connection to the second, safe, text”). This intriguing theory cannot be directly applied to our research because the initial source is openly declared. However, the idea of the complex tangle of various influences is helpful for an analysis of literary adaptations.

36. The studio’s main concern was that the picture could be accused of setting up a double moral standard. The administration even recommended avoiding the scenes displaying intimate contact between Anna and Vronskii. Selznick wrote in response, “I am distressed because your comments come too late to do anything but give us the alternative of making a completely vitiated and emasculated adaptation of Tolstoy’s famous classic” (Swenson 335). He realized that any substantive changes would lead to a loss of the story, but he had to agree to some compromise.
37. Gary Morson thinks that the novel consists of the three, equally important, lines: “Popular renditions of *Anna Karenina*, like the Garbo film or the BBC production, usually dramatize only the Anna plot, and we properly fault them for including only one story out of two. But I think that most critical readings which tell us that these are two foci are also leaving one out” (5). Although in the film of 1935 all three plots are transformed according to the laws of *lubok*-adaptation, the Stiva-Dolly line emerges more recognizably than does the Levin-Kitty line.
38. The screenwriters found an excellent economical way of portraying Stiva by having him endlessly flirt with all the women he encounters, while repeating what a wonderful woman his wife is.
39. Curiously, at the beginning of their collaboration on the film’s screenplay, Clemence Dane said to Salka Viertel, “I have very little understanding for Anna Karenina. What *does* she want?” (Swenson 330).
40. Common practice among foreign filmmakers in such projects was to hire a Russian consultant. Count Andrei Tolstoy, whose advice, perhaps, affects the “authenticity” of the film, worked in this production.
41. V. Mikhalkovich in his article suggests that cinema grew out of popular graphics and calls this period *epokha primitivov* (an epoch of primitives [28-46]).
42. Even in this accurate version, however, the name of Anna’s aunt, Varvara, is inexplicably changed to Natalie.
43. Cuts and juxtaposition of cuts play the role of cinematic linkage in this film, which Virginia Woolf suggested as a good method of avoiding Tolstoy’s abrupt switching from one line to another. There are many such cuts in the film, e.g. from Karenin in the car, going to Moscow, to Anna and Vronskii near the fireplace in his house.
44. The Shcherbatskiis live in Moscow, the Karenins in St. Petersburg.
45. Although the last version of 1997 also introduces this family to the view-

ers.

46. “‘No!’ he shouted in his squeaky voice, which now rose to a higher note than usual; and seizing her so tightly by the wrists with his large fingers that the bracelet he pressed left red marks, he forced her back into her seat. ‘Baseness? Since you wish to use that word—it is baseness to abandon a husband and a son for a lover and to go on eating the husband’s bread!’” (363).
47. “That’s all very well, but you think only of yourself! The sufferings of the man who was your husband do not interest you. What do you care that his whole life is wrecked and how much he has suf... suf... suffed!” (364). The Russian film (1967) casts Karenin’s wrong articulation as a sign of inner turmoil. For the first time Anna feels sorry for him because of his childish errors in pronunciation.
48. In the novel the scene ends differently: “Алексей Александрович шел ей навстречу. Увидав ее, он остановился и наклонил голову. . . . Она быстрым движением опустила вуаль и, прибавив шагу, почти выбежала из комнаты” (534). (“Karenin was advancing toward her. When he saw her, he stopped and bowed his head. . . . She swiftly let down her veil and with quickened steps almost ran out of the room” [534].)
49. In the novel this conversation takes place between Stiva and Levin.
50. The acting could be one of the reasons. Vivien Leigh was often depressed during the shooting, and “Korda was puzzled by her lack of spirit” (Edwards 160). Some of the actors are obviously miscast: Kieron Moore as Vronskii, Niall MacGinnis as Levin, etc.
51. Tat’iana Samoilova became famous in Russia and abroad for her excellent acting in *The Cranes Are Flying*, the winner of the Palme d’Or at Cannes in 1957.
52. He also wrote the music for the film-ballet of 1957.
53. In its old pre-reform spelling.
54. Not without the help of extraordinary costumes.
55. Brown’s film uses Karenin’s voice in a similar way in the scene of Anna’s departure from his house on Serezha’s birthday. Karenin’s angry words extend beyond his body (which is no longer visible), occupy the screen and embrace his wife’s body, as if throwing her out of the house.
56. By contrast to the 1935 film, which, generally, “reads” him negatively and with animosity, Karenin beautifully opens up as a caring father when in the night he calms down Serezha and talks to him.
57. “I remember and know that blue mist, like the mist on the Swiss mountains . . . that mist which envelops everything at that blissful time when childhood is just, just coming to an end, and its immense, blissful circle turns into an ever-narrowing path, and you enter the defile gladly yet with dread, though it seems bright and beautiful” (72).
58. The 1997 version also uses the enfilade, not as a metaphor, however, but

- only as a device for emphasizing motion (e.g., Kitty entering the ballroom, Anna hurriedly leaving the ball).
59. *Cineaste* judged the film “a noble effort, but a misfire” (Menashe 64).
60. Other films do not include these scenes.
61. The attempt to avoid all dependence on preceding films may also be interpreted as an influence.
62. In the Russian film Stiva puts away the cigar without his sister’s reminder.
63. The long table with symmetrical rows of empty chairs at which the Karenins eat after Anna refuses to receive Vronskii at her house turns into a metaphor of inner separation between husband and wife in the version of 1967.

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