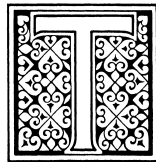


The Truth of the Body, from *War and Peace* to *Anna Karenina*

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The title of this essay has an old-fashioned ring, intended to evoke the critical encomia long heaped on the author of *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* for his masterful portrayal of the human body. With this mildly ironic gesture, the present essay sets out to question a long-standing tradition of critical response to “Tolstoy the Artist,”¹ a tradition traceable to the first reviews of *War and Peace*, and one that, without fundamental revisions, continues to be viable in contemporary scholarship on Tolstoy. For more than a century, Tolstoy has been praised for his “gift of *insight into the body*” (Merezhkovskii 176; emphasis in the original), and even his critics have lauded the “physiological truth” of his portraits (Leont’ev 75). These hosannas, however, have yielded enigma sooner than illumination: a present-day student of “Tolstoy the Artist” still does not know the answer to the most important questions and gradually realizes that the tradition of praise, in fact, poses questions rather than providing answers. How is one to understand that “startling truth” of the Tolstoyan body (Merezhkovskii 188)? How are Tolstoy’s portraits “physiologically truthful”? Truthful to what? Are they truthful to reality (whatever that may mean)? Such a notion defies comprehension and will continue to do so until somebody develops a method that allows us to weigh on the same scales real-life appearances and verbal descriptions. Or are we to think that the fictional bodies in Tolstoy are truthful to their correlatives—the fictional constructs we call “characters”? And, in that case, what would be the standard of their truth? Are we to understand that Tolstoy saw some immanent link between the ethical and the physical, and that it is this suddenly revealed immanence that radiates with truth? The last seems to be Merezhkovskii’s assumption, and, as the priest initiating the cult of Tolstoy as the “seer of the flesh,” he serves as the point of departure for the ensuing discussion.

A Pair of White Hands

At one moment in his *Tolstoy as Man and Artist*, Merezhkovskii cites the following passage from *War and Peace*:

“Prince Andreï watched all Speranski’s movements; [until recently] he [had been] an insignificant seminarist, and now in his hands, those white plump hands, he held the fate of Russia, as Volkonski reflected.” “In no one had the Prince seen such delicate whiteness of the face, and still more the hands, which were rather large, but unusually plump, delicate and white. Such whiteness and delicacy of complexion he had only seen in soldiers who had been long in hospital.” A little later he again “look[ed] involuntarily at the white delicate hands of Speranski, as men look generally at the hands of people in power. The mirror-like glance and the delicate hand somehow irritated Prince Andreï.” (172-73)²

According to Merezhkovskii, Speranskii’s white hands “denote the upstart hero who exploits the masses” (172). Quite apart from the fact that, with this “denote,”³ Merezhkovskii completely misses the point about the relation of a fictional body to character, it is as a seer of seeing that he fails most dramatically. Nowhere does his text show awareness of the fact that the novel focuses on Speranskii’s hands specifically through Andrei Bolkonskii’s eyes. Clearly, it is one thing to have the body presented to us “directly,” without mediation by any particular gaze except that of the omniscient narrator, and quite another—to have it “seen for us” through one of the characters in the text. It is not that such optics necessarily “distort” the image they produce and make generalizations such as Merezhkovskii’s invalid in advance. In the episode discussed here, we have no reason to doubt that Speranskii’s hands are indeed white, large, plump, and delicate. It is also quite possible to imagine that, even without Bolkonskii as an intermediary, the narrator could have presented these hands with the same—one is tempted to call it “fetishistic”—fixation and repetitiveness (after all, the pages of *War and Peace* abound in examples of similar portraits, drawn independently of any character’s field of vision). But, then, it becomes even more urgent to seize the opportunity

that this convergence of gazes offers and question the character in order to find out more about his master, the “Great Seer.” For the simple fact that Speranskii’s hands are given to us in the perception of Andrei Bolkonskii provides an additional piece of information. Even though, or, better, just because, the eye of the narrator could have seen what the character sees and in the way the character sees it, we need to separate the two and question the latter. Such an interrogation should enable us to see the Seer, to throw light upon the eye. For it is with this eye that we watch the spectacle unfolded by the text and, as a consequence, it is the eye itself that we fail to see. By failing to separate the two gazes, Merezhkovskii and, after him, all Tolstoy scholars who have written on the subject miss an opportunity and realize the Biblical saying, “They have eyes that they might not see.”

Now, if we take a look at Prince Andrei as he watches Speranskii, what do we see? First of all, of course, we see that for Prince Andrei Speranskii’s plump white hand does not denote anything. If it were similar to the military uniform, which denotes the soldier, or to the painted face, which denotes the clown, one would have trouble understanding the compulsion that keeps bringing Andrei’s gaze back to Speranskii’s hand. Yet if Tolstoy’s text makes anything clear at this point, it is the unreadability of this hand, its absolute opacity to the observer’s eye. It is that which resists signification and is impenetrable to any knowledge. That is why this hand remains and returns after, and, one might say, “in addition to,” everything that Prince Andrei knows about Speranskii. It is precisely the fact that nothing of what Bolkonskii knows about Speranskii can “explain” this white hand that turns it into a spectral *fatum* for him. For if, with its every appearance, the hand says no more than what is already known, something to the effect that “Yes, I am here, because all upstarts have white hands” (let us, for a moment, suppose that this is indeed so, at least in Tolstoy’s fictional world), what will be the impulse that forces Andrei to recall this simple “truth” of Speranskii’s body over and over again in his perception? The truth is different: Speranskii’s hands represent what in Speranskii is more than Speranskii (to borrow Slavoj Žižek’s expression), the Speranskii surplus, so to speak.

The last sentence omits a necessary specification, namely, that it is for Bolkonskii that the white hands of Speranskii represent Speranskii’s surplus. Let this seeming logical gap remain an open door through which I shall return later, to suggest that we can use the character’s way of seeing the body as an effective link to the general mode

of representing the physical in Tolstoy's texts. But now, let us move on to *Anna Karenina*, where we find a similar situation: a pair of white hands, a government official, and a nervous observer.

Another Pair of Hands

Stiva Oblonskii has just led his friend, Konstantin Levin, into his office, supposedly a safe and friendly haven, where Levin will find protection from the phobogenic effects of public space. At this point, just when it seems that Levin has been saved (“Степан Аркадьич . . . выпусти[л] руку Левина, как бы этим показывая, что тут опасности кончились”⁴ [22]), he is again trapped, this time by the “gaze” of a hand:

Левин молчал, поглядывая на незнакомые ему лица двух товарищей Облонского и в особенности на руку элегантного Гриневича, с такими белыми тонкими пальцами, с такими длинными желтыми, загигавшимися в конце ногтями и такими огромными блестящими запонками на рубашке, что эти руки, видимо, поглощали все его внимание и не давали ему свободы мысли

—Имею честь знать вашего брата, Сергея Иваныча,—сказал Гриневич, подавая свою руку с длинными ногтями

—Эге-ге! Да ты, вижу, опять в новой фазе, в консервативной,—сказал Степан Аркадьич.—Но, впрочем, после об этом.

—Да, после. Но мне нужно было тебя видеть,—сказал Левин, с ненавистью вглядываясь в руку Гриневича.⁵ (22-23)

It is here, with this passage, that one can finally agree with admiring readers of the Tolstoyan body. The words of all those who assert that the physical detail is “bound up with deep-seated spiritual characteristics of the *dramatis personae*” (Merezhkovskii 167) or that it “reveals the moral essence of the hero” (Ardens 280-81), “captures an essential

attribute of the character” (Sankovitch 57), and “distills” the character (Christian 148); all these words now begin to “make sense.” It is here, and not in the passage from *War and Peace* (and all of the above quoted authors use primarily *War and Peace* to illustrate their theses), that the white hand may be said to “denote” something. Unlike Speranskii’s hand, that of Grinevich is perfectly transparent, readable, and, several pages later, Levin himself provides us with the reading:

—А ты не любишь устрицы?—сказал Степан Аркадьич, выпивая свой бокал,—или ты озабочен? А? . . .

—Я? Да, я озабочен; но, кроме того, меня это все стесняет,—сказал он.—Ты не можешь представить себе, как для меня, деревенского жителя, все это дико, как ногти этого господина, которого я видел у тебя. . .

—Да, я видел, что ногти бедного Гриневича тебя очень заинтересовали,—смеясь, сказал Степан Аркадьич.

—Не могу,—отвечал Левин.—Ты постарайся, войди в меня, стань на точку зрения деревенского жителя. Мы в деревне стараемся привести свои руки в такое положение, чтоб удобно было ими работать; для этого обстригаем ногти, засучиваем рукава. А тут люди отпускают ногти, насколько они могут держаться, и прицепляют в виде запонок блюдечки, чтоб уж ничего нельзя было делать руками.⁶ (39)

I by no means suggest that the body in *Anna Karenina* provides some kind of iconic translation of its owner’s characteristic attributes. In the case of Grinevich, one thing that is conspicuously missing is the character of Grinevich himself. We have very little information about him. Who knows?—maybe Grinevich loves manual work and, during the summer, throws away his saucer-like cuff links, cuts his finger nails, and works all day in the garden. The “moral essence” that Grinevich’s hands reveal, the character they “distill,” belongs not to the one who is looked at, but to the one who is looking. Grinevich makes his episodic appearance on the pages of *Anna Karenina* in order to shed light upon the character of Levin. To put it sim-

ply, he is there to be seen by Levin, so that we can better see Levin. In *Anna Karenina* the body mediates a representation of consciousness, a consciousness that is not contained within this same fictional body, but is always the consciousness of someone else, somewhere else.

What is this juxtaposition of passages from the two novels aiming at? If the present essay attempts to “make a point” about a substantial difference between the modes of seeing the body in *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, this point cannot possibly hinge on a contrast between two randomly selected scenes. One will be justified in observing that Andrei Bolkonskii is not Konstantin Levin, and Spersanskii, of course, is not Grinevich; that Tolstoy pursued different goals in constructing the two episodes and that, therefore, they cannot be easily compared and used to make generalizations about the texts to which they belong. On the other hand, it would be absurd to search for two identical characters—one from *War and Peace* and one from *Anna Karenina*—in the role of observers, paired with two identical figures to be observed, and placed in identical situations. Rather than pursuing this cause, the following discussion will analyze, for each of the two novels, typical instances of seeing, paradigmatic visual encounters within the diegetic world that reveal to us what, for the particular text, is the underlying mechanism for representing the body. Thus, the argument will proceed from the specific to the general, from the character and his/her perception—to the author and his representations.

For both novels the focus of interest will be one particular type of physical portrayal—what I call the “synecdochic body.” In this mode of its existence, the fictional body is represented by one of its parts, which becomes a spectral leitmotif in the field of vision of a character and/or the narrator. The discussion thus excludes the more conventional physical descriptions in Tolstoy, which, by virtue of their conventionality, reveal much less of what is a uniquely Tolstoyan way of “seeing the flesh.”

One Chin with a Dimple and One Lip with a Mustache

During the battle at Ostrovna, Nikolai Rostov pursues and captures a French dragoon officer. The moment Rostov sees the Frenchman’s face is also the moment when the physical detail

“irrupts” and captures Rostov:

Он, испуганно щурясь, как будто ожидая всякую секунду нового удара, сморщившись, с выражением ужаса, взглянул на Ростова. Лицо его, бледное и забрызганное грязью, белокурое, молодое, *с дырочкой на подбородке* и светлыми голубыми глазами, было самое простое, комнатное лицо.⁷ (2: 68; emphasis added)

As he rides back from the battle, Rostov is beset by a feeling of depression, “something vague and confused, which he could not at all account for” (581).⁸ This feeling persists even after Rostov is praised by General Ostermann for his bravery and promised an award:

[Н]о все то же неприятное, неясное чувство нравственно тошнило ему. “Да что бишь меня мучает?—спросил он себя, отъезжая от генерала.—Ильин? Нет, он цел. Осрамился я чем-нибудь? Нет, все не то!—Что-то другое мучило его, как раскаяние.—Да, да, этот французский офицер с дырочкой. И я хорошо помню, как рука моя остановилась, когда я поднял ее”.

Ростов увидал отвозимых пленных и поскакал за ними, чтобы посмотреть на своего француза с дырочкой на подбородке. . . .

Ростов не думал об этом своем блестящем подвиге, который, к удивлению его, приобрел ему Георгиевский крест и даже сделал ему репутацию храбреца,—и никак не мог понять чего-то. “Так и они еще больше нашего боятся!—думал он.—Так только-то и есть всего то, что называется героизмом? И разве я это делал для отечества? И в чем он виноват с своею дырочкой и голубыми глазами? А как он испугался! Он думал, что я убью его. За что ж мне убивать его? У меня рука дрогнула. А мне дали Георгиевский крест. Ничего, ничего не понимаю!”⁹ (2: 68-69)

One can say, along with Viktor Shklovskii, that the dimple is

a mark meant to single out the French officer, to individualize him, and evoke pity for him on the part of the reader (*Mater'ial i stil'* 93). Such a reading, while basically sound, seems insufficient. Having quoted the same passage in the novel, Shklovskii concludes with these words: “Как видите, весь смысл этого куска в том, что Толстой напал не просто на француза, а на француза с дырочкой на подбородке” (93).¹⁰ Shklovskii’s remarkable slip of the tongue—the substitution of Tolstoy’s name for that of his hero—is symptomatic of a problem discussed above: we are given an account of how Tolstoy’s device works on the reader, but we are not told how the dimple works on Rostov.

How does Rostov’s eye choose the dimple as a point of fixation? It does not: it is simply “hooked” by it. It is not that the dimple, more than any other part of the Frenchman’s body, symbolizes for Rostov his innocence, nor does it necessarily make for a “homey” face (*komnatnoe litso*; Stalin, as we know, also had a dimple, which did not prevent him from sending millions to the camps). It is chosen only because it is an uneven spot, something that sticks out or, rather, “sticks in”: it is—to play on the double meaning of the word—an intrusion. Like the branch that hooks one’s dress, the dimple just “happens to be there,” obstructing the way of the look. Nothing necessitates its presence, it is absolutely fortuitous, accidental, in short—a nuisance.

Once it is there, however, the dimple becomes for Rostov contingently tied to the traumatic content of the scene, to the sense of guilt he experiences toward the French officer. And Rostov snatches at it: being hooked on it, he clings to it, because there is something in his encounter with the Frenchman that has to be symbolized but resists symbolization; there is a drop of nonsense that keeps spilling over the brim of comprehension—this something that will always evade Rostov’s grasp, this obstinate nonsense, can only be symbolized by nonsense, the gap can only be represented by a gap (*dyrochka*). That is why Rostov clings to the dimple: it appears every time a void of silence threatens to open in his monologues. The void is filled, but the meaning still remains absent: “И в чем он виноват с своею дырочкой. . . ?” It is the *dyrochka* that causes this sentence to implode so spectacularly into absurdity. Rostov is not asking what is the actual guilt of this particular Frenchman; this would have still left some possibility for an answer (Rostov could have discovered that the dragoon was, in fact, a merciless killer, a rapist, etc.); but he wants to know

how can *he, with his dimple*, be guilty. There is a double meaning to this question, a split that the English translation cannot reproduce. “*S svoeiu dyrochko?*” is at odds with the intentional content of what precedes it, because it reverberates with personal attitude. This use of the reflexive possessive in Russian—not to be confused with such constructions as “On, s svoei mamoi, poshel v tsirk”—is meant to convey that the particular attribute of the person (the thing possessed, in this case—the *dyrochka*) is all too familiar to the speaker. “All too” is important here. It is this “all too” connotation that, in spite of even the most reverent of intonations, in spite of every positive attitude the speaker may want to express, preserves something spoken with spite, an involuntary twitch, a jerk. As much as he wants to praise the particular attribute of his referent, the speaker cannot but betray the fact that this attribute occupies his attention, that it has him “hooked,” so to speak. Hence, the feeling of contradiction imparted by Rostov’s words. What he is, in fact, asking—and it is hardly a question at all—is, “How can he be guilty, with his dimple that does not let go of me?” This is the chasm of nonsense around which Rostov continues to circle in an attempt to verbalize it, make sense of it. At times, indeed, it seems to him that the dimple can bridge the chasm, that it can serve as a guarantee of meaning. Then he tells himself that a man with a dimple cannot but be a good fellow; that his goodness is “written on his face” and is obvious to everybody, just as it is obvious that Nikolai Rostov read his face, and the thought of killing this good fellow never crossed his mind (“Он думал, что я убью его. За что мне убивать его?”).

Reading the psyche of literary characters is not a rewarding job and is, definitely, not the purpose of this analysis. The psychological process by which the synecdochic body of the Frenchman produces “truth” for Rostov interests me here only as a symptom—indeed, a dramatic enactment of the way in which the truth of the body in *War and Peace* is “made” for us as readers. This mechanism may be described aphoristically as follows: A piece of nonsense becomes a nuisance, and, thus, elicits truth. If we forget for a moment the character Nikolai Rostov, and see him only as a reader, we will also see that he does what every reader does: he writes. The nagging reappearance of the Frenchman’s dimple in the window of Nikolai’s consciousness is a sign for him that here, within this recess in the chin, lies the meaning so inaccessible to him. And he throws himself headlong, in an attempt to fill the recess with meaning: out of the

meaningless piece of flesh there emerges the character and his truth—the good fellow dressed as a French dragoon—and this character is Rostov’s creation. Our position as readers of the body in *War and Peace* does not differ much from that of Rostov. Tolstoy’s synecdochic figures are for us the veil of Parrhasios;¹¹ it is our job to paint the picture behind it.

The assertion that the readers of Tolstoy are called upon to create his characters in an empty spot veiled by a synecdochic body is, of course, a deliberate exaggeration. The “spot” is rarely empty (i.e. we are given a character portrayal independent of his/her physical description) and the “veil” is rarely just a veil (i.e. the physical detail rarely functions just as a “cover” meant to suggest that there *is* something covered). But in the rare instances when the exaggeration actually approaches the truth, we are given an unusually clear, “laboratory” sample of Tolstoy’s method. On the pages of *War and Peace* one occasionally encounters these episodic appearances—not more than shadows flashing across the landscape of the novel—lacking any characterization whatsoever, but giving, nevertheless, an impression of a distinct individual presence. Tolstoy’s procedure of extracting truth from these fleeting figures is admirably described by Shklovskii:

Для возбуждения доверия читателя, ему [Толстому] нужно сообщить лишнее, это какая-то бытовая прописка на фальшивом паспорте. Кроме того, сообщение черты вызывает у читателя впечатление созданного портрета, и ему кажется, что он видит действующее лицо. Отсюда эти купцы, появляющиеся на две строчки во время разгрома Москвы, но появляются с авторским упоминанием прыщей около их носа.¹² (*Material i stil’* 102)

The registration (*propiska*) on a fake passport that Shklovskii talks about is exactly that “piece of nonsense” discussed earlier. It is its nonsensicality, the superfluousness of the *propiska*, that becomes an unexpected guarantee of truth. Under a suspicious eye (for example, that of a policeman), what makes the fake passport look convincingly real is not that it is a good imitation, but that it contains something unnecessary, an excess (*lishnee*). Shklovskii understands “excess” here in comparative terms, as mismatch, incongruity; the two things com-

pared are, of course, physical representation and representation of character (psychological portrayal); the physical detail is felt to be “in excess” because its particularity is matched by the almost complete absence of character.

Taking Shklovskii’s insight a step further, beyond the realm of marginal appearances, I would like to suggest that, even in those cases when a particular figure in *War and Peace* is sufficiently characterized, whether directly or “through action,” the mechanism of the non-sensical *propiska* continues to work, albeit in a more disguised fashion. This is by no means to say that the physical detail in the novel is meaningless. On the contrary: what is referred to here as the synecdochic body is felt to be—for every single character represented in such a way—the point of maximal concentration of meaning. The reader, indeed, feels that the character is—to quote again Christian’s expression—“distilled” in a hand, in a neck, etc. This is what allows N. Sankovitch to say that the upper lip of Lise Bolkonskaia is meant to express her “charming beauty,” but also her “garrulity and sociability,” and, in addition, her “childlike happiness and frivolity” (61). Here we have a case where all attributes of the character are literally sucked into a single piece of her body. Such an effect on the reader ultimately testifies that Tolstoy’s method has succeeded. The body has produced its truth. This truth, however, is by no means pre-given. It is a result of an artistic procedure whose starting point is a moment of radical semantic destabilization. Simply put, the physical detail has to, first, stop making sense in order to make sense. In Shklovskii’s terms, the detail is “defamiliarized” or “made strange.”

In one of its possible interpretations, defamiliarization may be understood as marking the moment when the thing given in representation and effaced through representation is restored to its “thingness.”¹³ Through the very signifying operation, the thing is able to become an-other to itself, in a sense, more than itself. This otherness, “strangeness,” is what will prolong for us the moment of perception, as we are asking ourselves, “What is it? What is going on?” (And, even while we ask, we already will be giving answers, filling from ourselves the void of the strange, thus making it less strange, familiarizing it once again, so that the phoenix of form can relive all of its seasons and find, at their end, a new death and the promise of a new life.)

Slavoj Žižek, using the insights of Jacques Lacan, has detected a strikingly similar moment in the field of ideology (evidencing once again the connection between the Russian Formalists and their struc-

turalist and post-structuralist successors). This is the effect of what Žižek calls a “pure signifier” or “rigid designator”: “The ‘rigid designator’ aims . . . at that impossible-real kernel, at what is ‘in an object more than the object’, at this surplus produced by the signifying operation” (97). If by being defamiliarized the object acquires a thing-like quality, by becoming a pure signifier the object takes on the status of *the thing*. Taking as an example one of the “mass-media symbols” of America, Coca-Cola, Žižek explains the mechanism of the pure signifier as follows: People perceive Coca-Cola as an emanation (or, better, distillation) of the character of America, because the object “Coca-Cola” has been taken out of the order of things to become “the real thing.” Through advertisement, the signifier Coke is semantically displaced, so that it no longer refers merely to a particular type of drink, which, as Žižek reminds us, “could suddenly turn into an excrement, into undrinkable mud” (96). By detaching itself from every empirically attestable referent (the drink, the company, etc.), that is, by becoming nonsensical, Coke attains the status of a pure signifier: it is no longer this or that thing, but simply “it” (“Coke, this is it!”), “the real thing, the unattainable X, the object-cause of desire” (Žižek 96). It is only at this point that Coke is saturated with meaning, which, moreover, appears to have always been there.

The representation of the synecdochic body in *War and Peace* uses a mechanism very similar to the one described above. The synecdochic body itself is that rigid designator (the designated thing being, of course, the fictional character) whose “life” unfolds between semantic erasure and semantic hyper-saturation.

When we are first introduced to Princess Bolkonskaia, at Anna Sherer’s soirée, we learn that she has a short upper lip with a tiny black moustache. It is not that Tolstoy’s choice of this detail is absolutely random; nor is it that it elicits in us no associations prior to our acquaintance with the character of Lise. Let us assume that for Tolstoy and for the majority of his readers a short upper lip has quite stable semantics, that it is unmistakably associated with childishness, innocence, or whatever else one might imagine. But then Lise appears on no more than thirty pages in the novel, and, in these thirty pages, her lip is mentioned twelve times. Even after she dies, her lip continues to appear: first, on the face of the marble angel decorating the monument on her grave; then on the face of Lise’s son, Nikolai. The obstinacy of this recurrence cannot but unsettle whatever semantic stability the object has enjoyed. Such repetition creates the irritating

surplus X, the excess (*lishnee*); we are not simply given this detail of Lise's appearance: we are made to know it "too well" ("*Lise so svoei gub-keoi!*" one might exclaim).

Contemporary scholars of *War and Peace* have lost the healthy ability to get irritated by Tolstoy's repetition of detail—an ability that the first generation of his readers displayed openly.¹⁴ "And how torturous are these deliberate, stubborn repetitions of one and the same trait: the little mustaches on the upper lip of Princess Bolkon-skaia. . . ." writes the exasperated Turgenev in a letter of 1868 to Annenkov (Turgenev 65). Indeed, "what's the point" of repeating a dozen times something that the reader already knows? The point, as must be clear by now, is that we should be made to ask "What's the point?" Tolstoy's method takes us always beyond "the point," so that the physical detail, in the overall image of the character, ceases to be just a point and becomes the *punctum*.¹⁵ The experience of the *punctum* has no hermeneutic component whatsoever. The hermeneutic is the realm of the *studium* (see footnote 15). The only reaction to the *punctum* is that forward leap with which we seize upon the detail, thus making it a guarantee of the total sense of the image: "This is it! This is the thing!" At this moment the detail "opens," to become a point of extreme suction: in no time it becomes saturated with all the meanings we can possibly attach to the image. Now the upper lip of the "little Princess" expresses not only her childishness, but also her garrulity, her sociability and vulnerability, the charm of beauty, as well as the ugliness of suffering.

For the effect of the *punctum* to be realized, however, one more condition must be met. It is not enough for the text to erode the extra-textual associations that readers bring to their reading. In order for the semantic destabilization to be effective, it is also imperative that the text not create an inner context, a network of semantic correspondences within itself that can "fix" the signifier of the body. This loosening of the body's contextuality is achieved in *War and Peace*, but is absent from the agenda of *Anna Karenina*.

Whenever a given physical detail in *War and Peace* is attributed to more than one character, it presides, in each case, over a completely different set of characteristics. Thus the upper lip of Lise may seem to be "loaded" with a certain set of meanings, but the connection between them and the physical detail is abolished when we are told that Dolokhov has a similar lip (1: 46). When we encounter, first, Speranski's plump white hand, and, later, Napoleon's "small white

hand” (repeated five times on the four pages describing the meeting at Tilsit [1: 522-25]), we can, indeed, sense some common denominator (white hands as denoting “men who wield power” [Merezhkovskii 171]). But then we see that Anis’ia Fedorovna, the mistress of the “Uncle” at whose house the younger members of the Rostov household spend a pleasant evening after the wolf hunt, has the very same “plump white hands” (1: 640). Finally, we happen to know that in the *Russkii vestnik* version of the novel, Prince Andrei also sports a pair of white hands that “have become so white that there is even a hint that Andrei is a compulsive hand washer [in the final version, the emphasis on hygiene will be shifted to Napoleon]; when he joins Piere at his home after the soirée, he is coming from the lavatory and has ‘evidently, now once again washed his small white hands’” (Feuer 113).

If there is an instance in which *War and Peace* deviates from the mode of seeing the body described above and, thus, approaches the optics of *Anna Karenina*, that instance is Platon Karataev:

Платон Каратаев остался навсегда в душе Пьера самым сильным и дорогим воспоминанием всего русского, доброго и круглого. Когда на другой день, на рассвете, Пьер увидел своего соседа, первое впечатление чего-то круглого подтвердилось вполне: вся фигура Платона, в его подпоясанной веревкою французской шинели, в фуражке и лаптях, была круглая, голова была совершенно круглая, спина, грудь, плечи, даже руки, которые он носил, как бы всегда собираясь обнять что-то, были круглые; приятная улыбка и большие карие нежные глаза были круглые.¹⁶ (2: 457)

The first thing to notice about this physical description, as distinguished from those mentioned earlier, is that Platon Karataev’s is not a synecdochic body. It is as though the force that shapes it cannot but leave the same imprint on every one of its parts. Each of them duplicates all the others and the body as a whole. Here we do not have a repetition of the body in time, as reappearance: the body multiplies itself within itself, going deeper, as it were, exhausting its physicality, until it reaches its point of origin, both inside and beyond itself—the

idea. Platon Karataev is exactly what Pierre sees him as: an embodiment. What shapes his body also precedes his body. Here we no longer have the retroactive “quilting” of the character by the *punctum* of the body. On the contrary, the body is quilted by something immaterial, abstract, something that cannot be round, but is rotundity itself, and thus occupies a transitional space between the spectral and the ideological. But, most importantly, the body is quilted in advance: much before the seer arrives to see it, much before the train reaches the station.

Jutting Ears, Healthy Bodies

When the train finally reaches the St. Petersburg station and Anna sees Karenin waiting on the platform, she is struck by the hitherto unnoticed shape of his ears: “‘Ах, Боже мой! Отчего у него стали такие уши?’—подумала она, глядя на его холодную и представительную фигуру и особенно на поразившие ее теперь хрящи ушей, подпиравшие поля круглой шляпы” (106).¹⁷

Once again, we have the moment of spectral fixation, already familiar from *War and Peace*, the moment when the eye is arrested on one particular spot of the other’s body. Once again, as in the case of Rostov and the French officer, what captures the eye is an unexpected obstacle, an uneven spot. (And, indeed, what is a jutting ear good for, if not for hooking the look, for pricking the eye?) But only a poor student of fictional physiology will fail to see how different here is the process by which a part of the body becomes an obstacle.

In the case of the French dragoon, the obstacle is carved out of flesh. It is a trap dug in the chin. The culprit is Nature Herself, and Her misdeed is coeval with the body. Rostov’s eye “finds” the trap where it has always been, ever since the Frenchman was born. The visual accident between Anna and her husband, however, is somewhat different. If the dragoon’s dimple recedes into his chin, Karenin’s ears do not protrude from his head. This protrusion cannot be physically measured, for it is itself a measure: it indicates Karenin’s non-coincidence with something that is absent, something that never enters our field of vision, nor that of Anna. It is in relation to another, absent and abstract body that these ears stick out; the whole of Karenin that winter morning “sticks out” grotesquely in relation to another Karenin, whom Anna expects to see, but who simply does

not come to meet her: “[К]ак будто она ожидала увидеть его другим” (106).¹⁸ And it is not surprising that Vronskii, who, otherwise, is willing to find in Karenin every possible deformity,¹⁹ but who is not privy to Anna’s frame of mind, does not notice anything unusual about her husband’s ears.

The little surplus that makes Karenin’s ears stick out at the St. Petersburg station is immaterial and, therefore, imperceptible to the eye. If Anna, nevertheless, “sees” them this way, it is because she watches her husband not with her eyes but with her consciousness (or, rather, her subconscious). Here is where *Anna Karenina* differs radically from *War and Peace*: its fictional bodies are shaped from the material of consciousness in order to be seen with consciousness. One might say that it is consciousness that propels the insistent return of the dimple in Rostov’s memory; but it would be utterly absurd to say that it is Rostov’s consciousness that makes him see the dimple on the Frenchman’s face. Again, the important thing to grasp is that, in Rostov’s case, what is given in perception (the physical detail) retroactively “quilts” the meaning of the guilt-laden scene. In Anna’s case—where guilt is again a central motif—the guilt comes first and shapes the object of perception in advance. In this sense, one may say that five minutes before Anna’s arrival Karenin’s ears are not waiting at St. Petersburg’s station: they are still traveling on the train from Moscow.

One more distinction needs to be made between these two episodes, which, as suggested earlier, are paradigmatic. If the dimple continues to haunt Rostov’s memories, it is because it is intimately linked with the cause of his guilt. Karenin’s ears, on the other hand, are the product, rather than the cause, of Anna’s guilty feelings. For that reason, there is no compulsion attached to their image, no urgency that calls for their reappearance in consciousness. But they may be conveniently “reproduced” by Anna whenever her guilt is enacted:

“Все-таки он хороший человек, правдивый, добрый и замечательный в своей сфере,—говорила себе Анна, вернувшись к себе, как будто защищая его пред кем-то, кто обвинял его и говорил, что его нельзя любить.—Но что это уши у него так странно выдаются! Или он обстригся?”²⁰ (114)

We have here a clear instance of what psychoanalytic jargon

calls “projection.” In its standard form, however, projection has at both ends of its mechanism purely psychic phenomena: desire is projected into desire, guilt—into guilt, etc. But how can the psychic enter the field of the visual/physical? As noted earlier, there is a need for a transitional space, a place where the ideational and the spectral will be co-articulated *en route* to the final product—the representation of the body. In the case of Platon Karataev, this transitional *locus* is the notion of rotundity, which, in the very same sentence (see the passage cited on p. 43), is juxtaposed and associated with goodness and Russianness.

In Anna’s perception of Karenin, it is not difficult to find that juncture at which what she feels becomes what she finds. The “turning point” of the projection mechanism is between Anna’s feeling of revulsion toward Karenin and the subsequent vision of him as something ugly, misshapen, grotesque:

Она видела, как он подходил к беседке, то снисходительно отвечая на занскивающие поклоны, то дружелюбно, рассеяно, здороваясь с равными, то старательно выжидая взгляда сильных мира и снимая свою круглую большую шляпу, нажимавшую кончики его ушей. Она знала все эти приемы, и все они ей были *отвратительны*.²¹ (208; emphasis added)

[О]на . . . смотрела на подходившего к лошади и садившегося Вронского и в то же время слышала этот *отвратительный*, неумолкающий голос мужа. Она мучалась страхом за Вронского, но еще более мучалась неумолкавшим, ей казалось, звуком тонкого голоса мужа с знакомыми интонациями.²² (209; emphasis added)

—Я еще раз предлагаю вам свою руку, если вы хотите идти,—сказал Алексей Александрович, дотрогиваясь до ее руки.

Она *с отвращением* отстранилась от него.²³ (212; emphasis added)

Алексей Александрович вздохнул и помолчал.

Она тревожно играла кистями халата, взглядывая на него с тем мучительным чувством *физического отвращения* к нему, за которое она упрекала себя, но которого не могла преодолеть.²⁴ (424; emphasis added)

Она, вытянув лицо и полузакрыв глаза, быстро изменила выражение лица, сложила руки, и Вронский в ее красивом лице вдруг увидел то самое выражение лица, с которым поклонился ему Алексей Александрович. . . . Она смотрела на него с насмешливою радостью. Видимо, она нашла еще смешные и *уродливые* стороны в муже и ждала времени, чтоб их высказать.²⁵ (361; emphasis added)

It is a fortunate coincidence that the last passage contains Anna's mocking mimicry of Karenin, for in it we have an enactment of what, simultaneously, is taking place through language: the articulation of the psycho-ethical (*otvrashchenie*) into the "ideo-physical" (*urodlivyy*).

The process by which Anna becomes the "maker" of Karenin's ears here serves as a starting point of an already familiar line of argumentation: from the relatively transparent mechanics of the intradiegetic look—to the hidden optics of the author's eye. As with *War and Peace*, my argument seeks to reveal the way in which the body elicits "truth." The episode at the St. Petersburg station allows for the following preliminary claims: What allows the body in *Anna Karenina* to become visible, to "protrude," as it were, is not a physical oddity (as in *War and Peace*), but a prefatory commanding consciousness understood in ethical terms—that is, the author's ethos, which is rarely directly articulated in the text, but, rather, proceeds through an intermediary zone of what I called the ideo-physical. It is this zone that, within the text, is the *point de caption* at which body is sewed to character. In what follows, this mechanism will be illustrated with reference to some of the most prominent physical portraits in *Anna Karenina*.

It is a telling choice on Tolstoy's part that, when the novel opens and its narrator tells us about Stiva's adultery, Stiva Oblonskii himself is still sleeping. In his sleep, he is somewhere else (in some American Darmstadt), in a non-physical existence more transparent

than the vitreous women of his dream (“какие-то маленькие графинчики, и они же женщины” [6]). In the sequence of the narrative, Stiva’s guilt precedes the physical embodiment of his character: the guilt is already there when he awakens in his body.

The same moment—the awakening of the body into guilt—is taken to the extreme of its explicitness in Nekhliudov’s first morning in *Resurrection*.²⁶ Every detail of Nekhliudov’s appearance, as well as everything that surrounds him, is meant to bear the responsibility for what, in the novel, precedes his awakening—the story of Maslova’s degradation. Nekhliudov is embodied at the site and with the instruments responsible for the shape of his body. The same is true of Stiva Oblonskii: his “well-cared-for” (*vykbolemnoe*) body is fictionally articulated as we see it being “well cared for” during that first morning of the novel:

Он повернул свое *полное, выхолщенное тело* на пружинах дивана, как бы желая опять заснуть надолго, с другой стороны крепко обнял подушку и прижался к ней щекой. . . .²⁷ (5; emphasis added)

Степан Аркадьич . . . надел серый халат на голубой шелковой подкладке, закинул кисти узлом и, вдоволь забрав воздуха в свой широкой грудной ящик, привычным бодрым шагом вывернутых ног, так легко носивших его *полное тело*, подошел к окну, поднял шторы и громко позвонил.²⁸ (8; emphasis added)

Матвей уже держал, слушая что-то невидимое, хомутом приготовленную рубашку и с очевидным удовольствием облек в нее *холщенное тело* барина.²⁹ (10; emphasis added)

Одевшись, Степан Аркадьич прыснул на себя духами, вытянул рукава рубашки . . . и встряхнув платок, чувствуя себя чистым, душистым, *здоровым и физически веселым*, несмотря на свое несчастье, вышел, слегка подрагивая на каждой ноге, в столовую, где уже ждал его кофей и, рядом с кофеем, письма и бумаги из присутствия.³⁰ (10; em-

phasis added)

Окончив газету, вторую чашку кофе и калач с маслом, он встал, стряхнул крошки калача с жилета и, расправив широкую грудь, радостно улыбнулся, не оттого, чтоб у него на душе было что-нибудь особенно приятное,—радостную улыбку вызвало хорошее пищеварение.³¹ (12)

We see both Nekhliudov's and Oblonskii's bodies being, literally, produced out of the conditions of their existence. While in *War and Peace* we saw the surplus that makes the body visible come into being through repetition, through the too frequent representation of a given physical detail, in the case of Stiva Oblonskii this surplus is simply "fed" into the body, "groomed" onto the body. Repetition of physical detail plays a much less significant role in *Anna Karenina*, the efforts of the narrator being focused more on revealing the organic connection between the physical/physiological and the existential/social. In the above quoted sequence, what recurs is not a specific part of the body, but the adjective *kholenyi* ("well-groomed," "well-cared-for," "pampered"), which emphasizes a general condition, a surplus that emanates from the body as a whole and points beyond the body, toward habits and a way of life. This is the reason that the figures of *Anna Karenina* are also less "synecdochic" than their counterparts in *War and Peace*. What dominates the representation of the character is not so much a bodily part, but "shape," understood in the double meaning of the word—as both a general physical contour and general physical/physiological condition. "Shape" points in two directions simultaneously: toward the spectral, but also toward the existential/physiological, and here, on this second ground, it becomes subject to ethical evaluation.

Thus we need to ask not only what is the shape of Stepan Oblonskii's body, but also "in what shape" it is, the two questions being isomorphic. The answer to the second is made visible in the text: Stiva is physical well-being as such. Even when not emotionally happy, he cannot help but be physically happy (*fizicheski veseiyi*; see the passage quoted above). The surplus of his body is a surplus of health and vitality that produces (to use again Žižekian phraseology) what in Stiva is more than Stiva: a peculiar equivalent of the saintly halo—Stiva's radiance. This para-spectral phenomenon manifests itself, quite

literally, despite Stiva:

Он втянул голову в плечи и хотел иметь жалкий и покорный вид, но он все-таки *сиял свежестью и здоровьем*.

Она [Долли] быстрым взглядом оглядела с головы до ног его *сияющую свежестью и здоровьем фигуру*.³² (14; emphasis added)

Когда Левин вошел с Облонским в гостиницу, он не мог не заметить некоторой особенности выражения, как бы *сдержанного сияния*, на лице и во всей фигуре Степана Аркадьича.³³ (37; emphasis added)

—Что, не ждал?—сказал Степан Аркадьич, вылезая из саней, с комком грязи на переносице, на щеке и брови, но *сияющий весельем и здоровьем*.³⁴ (161; emphasis added)

With this halo, we are introduced to the metaphysics of the body in *Anna Karenina*. This “residue” of the physical is an externalization of some mysterious agency, a “force” quite beyond the control of the individual. It is an extra-personal agency, whose roots are to be sought at the intersection of the social and the physiological. In the case of Stiva, it is treated with a mixture of humor and irony, but it is, undoubtedly, the same agency that is to blame for the destruction of Karenin’s family. Karenin identifies it by the same physical condition as the one displayed by Stepan Oblonskii’s body:

“И как они все сильны и *здоровы физически*,—подумал Алексей Александрович, глядя на могучего с расчесанными душистыми бакенбардами камергера и на красную шею затянутого в мундире князя, мимо которых ему надо было пройти.—Справедливо сказано, что все в мире есть зло”—подумал он, косясь еще раз на икры камергера.³⁵ (513; emphasis added)

And, so that there will be no confusion about whom Karenin means

by “they,” we are made witnesses to another of his inner monologues:

“Но в чем же я виноват?”—говорил он себе. И этот вопрос всегда вызывал в нем другой вопрос—о том, иначе ли чувствуют, иначе ли любят, иначе ли женятся эти другие люди, эти Вронские, Облонские . . . эти камергеры с толстыми икрами. И ему представлялся целый ряд этих сочных, сильных, не сомневающихся людей, которые невольно всегда и везде обращали на себя его любопытное внимание.³⁶ (517)

It will not be difficult to convince ourselves that Vronskii’s body is shaped by the same force, down to the specific body parts that attract Karenin’s attention at the ball—calves and a red neck:

Когда в Петербурге он вышел из вагона, он чувствовал себя после бессонной ночи оживленным и свежим, как после холодной ванны.³⁷ (108)

—Не может быть!—закричал он, отпустив педаль умывальника, которым он обливал свою красную здоровую шею.³⁸ (117)

Вронский покатился со смеху. И долго потом, говоря уже о другом, закатывался своим здоровым смехом, выставя свои крепкие сплошные зубы . . .³⁹ (118)

Вронский обливался водой. Он, свяв китель, подставив обросшую волосами красную шею под струю умывальника, растирал ее и голову руками.⁴⁰ (310)

The culmination comes with what one might call a narcissistic hymn to the body, preceding Vronskii’s meeting with Anna in Vrede’s garden:

[В]се соединялось в общее впечатление радостного чувства жизни. Чувство это было так

сильно, что он невольно улыбался. Он спустил ноги, заложил одну на колено другой и, взяв ее в руку, ощущал упругую икру ноги, зашибленной вчера при падении, и, откинувшись назад, вздохнул несколько раз всю грудью. . . . Он и прежде часто испытывал радостное сознание своего тела, но никогда он так не любил себя, своего тела, как теперь. Ему приятно было чувствовать эту легкую боль в сильной ноге, приятно было мышечное ощущение движений, своей груди при дыхании. Тот самый ясный, холодный августовский день, который так безнадежно действовал на Анну, казался ему возбuditельно оживляющим и освежал его разгоревшееся от обливания лицо и шею.⁴¹ (314)

Comparing “all these Vronskiis and Oblonskiis” (and there is no reason to exclude Vasen’ka Veslovskii from the group)⁴² makes it clear that their physical descriptions are derived from the same matrix whose imprints Karenin detects so easily. Tolstoy individualizes the separate figures that make up this group portrait by choosing different focal points on the body: with Stiva, it is his radiating smile and eyes; with Vronskii—his neck and “regular teeth”; with Vasen’ka—his fat legs. These, however, must not be confused with the physical “accents” that we find in *War and Peace*. In *Anna Karenina*, these bodily *loci* are simply points of condensation, reification, from which the irrational force that puzzles Karenin pulsates in the fictional world.

Karenin pronounces the first verdict on all the above-mentioned bodies by identifying the force that shapes and propels them with the source of evil in the world (see the passage quoted on p. 50). There are enough reasons for one to distrust his judgment. As a deceived husband and new convert to a faith that “is not of this world,” Karenin is, by all standards, a biased witness. But his verdict on physicality, paradoxically enough, is confirmed by the main “accused”—Vronskii. During the visit of the “foreign prince,” to whom he is attached as a “master of ceremonies,” Vronskii is presented with the already familiar constellation of traits, and comes to recognize in them... himself:

Принц пользовался необыкновенным даже между

принципами здоровьем; и гимнастикой и хорошим уходом за своим телом он довел себя до такой силы, что несмотря на излишества, которым он предавался в удовольствиях, он был свеж, как большой зеленый глянцевитый голландский огурец. . . . Главная же причина, почему принц был особенно тяжел Вронскому, была та, что он невольно видел в нем себя самого. И то, что он видел в этом зеркале, не льстило его самолюбию. Это был очень глупый, и очень самоуверенный, и очень здоровый, и очень чистоплотный человек, и больше ничего. . . . “Глупая говядина! Неужели я такой?”—думал он.⁴³ (355-56)

One motif that connects all the physical descriptions discussed thus far is the emphasis on health and physical well-being. And if Karenin's words have failed to convince us, Vronskii's moment of self-revelation should leave no doubt that “physical health” is not what it says it is. We know that most of the characters in the novel, for most of the time, are healthy. And yet Tolstoy insists on telling us again and again that some of them are. . . healthy. This is what, in speaking about *War and Peace*, I referred to as excess (*lishnee*). But let us be clear about what is in excess in each of the two novels. In *War and Peace* it is the signifier of the (synecdochic) body (functioning similarly to what Žižek calls a “pure signifier”) that becomes more than itself through repetition. In *Anna Karenina*, however, the excess is in the signified: some characters are more “healthy” than others. And since it makes no sense to mark those who are ordinarily healthy—Levin, Dolly, Sviazhskii, etc.—the signifier is reserved only for the surplus and comes to designate the surplus. But the surplus, in this case, is also where the signifier “turns” and becomes its opposite: physical health becomes (stands for) moral disease (promiscuity, gluttony, etc.). In this way, through a hoax of signification, physical health becomes a mediator of the negative ethical meanings attached to the particular character.

At its other end, as the quoted passages show, the signifier “physical health” is in a regime of metonymic substitution with concrete physical details, over which it presides: all those fat legs, large chests, red necks, and springy calves, which, in themselves, are quite innocent. Through the presiding signifier, they are “sewn” not so

much to the character as to the type (if the group of “all those Vronskiis and Oblonskiis” may constitute a type), and, from there, derive their semiotic value. In order to access the truth of the body in *Anna Karenina*, the reader need only follow the metonymic chain: from the concrete detail—through the presiding signifier, which is the realm of the ideo-physical, and where the physical is “stitched” to phenomena that are subject to ethical evaluation (in our case, a certain way of life associated with a certain social milieu, etc.)—to the source of this evaluation: the author’s consciousness. This route—along the metonymic chain—describes the hermeneutic experience proper, an experience that, at best, has a very limited role in our contact with the bodies of *War and Peace*. While there we witnessed a process whereby something resembling a stain in the field of vision becomes a metaphysical guarantee and is saturated with meaning, the procedure in *Anna Karenina* is much less “mystical.” The body enters the field of vision pre-programmed. As it does, it already points back, along the metonymic chain, to the place from which it was derived: the author’s idea of the character. Thus, in a sense, the reader is asked to begin with the body and read “backward”: Stiva Oblonskii expands his wide chest, then wakes up in his well-cared-for body, then dreams, falls asleep, and three days ago his adultery is disclosed.

Notes

- * Part of this paper, entitled “How Does the Seer Make Us See: Representations of the Body in Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*,” was presented in December 2000 at the annual AATSEEL conference in Washington D. C.
- ** I want to express my gratitude and acknowledge my intellectual debt to Helena Goscilo, whose illuminating suggestions played a major part in the conception of this essay, and whose generous critical feedback was the main driving force for its improvement.
- 1. See the telling title of a collection of essays devoted to Tolstoy: *Tolstoi-khudozhnik*. Moskva, Izd. ANSSSR, 1960.
- 2. I am preserving the spelling and transliteration of the original.
- 3. In the Russian original, the verb is *oznachat*’.
- 4. “Oblonsky let go of Levin’s arm, as though wishing to indicate that the danger was over” (Magarshack 33). In the case of both David Magarshack’s translation of *Anna Karenina* and Louise and Aylmer Maude’s translation of *War and Peace*, I am preserving the transliteration of the original, though occasionally adjusting the translation.
- 5. “Levin was silent, looking at the unfamiliar faces of Oblonsky’s two colleagues and especially at the hands of the elegant Grinyevich, who had

such long white fingers with such long yellowish nails, curving at the tips, and such huge glittering cuff links. These hands apparently absorbed all Levin's attention and deprived him of freedom of thought. Oblonsky noticed it at once and smiled.

'I know your brother,' said Grinyevich, holding out his slender hand with its long fingernails. . . .

'Aha,' said Oblonsky, 'I can see that you've now entered a new phase, a conservative one this time. However, we'll talk about this later.'

'Yes, later. . . .' said Levin, staring at Grinyevich's hand with hatred" (Magarshack 34).

6. "You don't care much for oysters, do you?" said Oblonsky, draining his glass. 'Or are you worried about something? Eh?'

'Me? Yes, I am. Besides, all this makes me feel uncomfortable,' he said. 'You can't imagine how strange all this seems to one like myself who lives in the country. Like the fingernails of that gentleman I saw in your office. . . .'

'Yes, I noticed that you were very interested in poor Grinyevich's nails,' Oblonsky said, laughing.

'I can't help it,' replied Levin. 'Try and put yourself in my place. Look at it from the point of view of a countryman. We in the country do our best to make it easy for ourselves to work with our hands, and so we cut our nails and sometimes roll up our sleeves. But here people purposely let their nails grow as long as they can and wear little saucers for cuff links so that it's quite impossible for them to do anything with their hands'" (Magarshack 51).

7. "His eyes, screwed up with fear as if every moment he expected another blow, gazed at Rostóv with shrinking terror. His pale and mud-stained face—fair and young, with a dimple in the chin and light-blue eyes—was not an enemy's face at all suited to a battlefield, but a most ordinary, homey face" (Maude 581).

8. The page numbers in parentheses reference the text of the English translation.

9. "But he still felt that same vaguely disagreeable feeling of moral nausea. 'But what on earth is worrying me?' he asked himself as he rode back from the general. 'Ilyín? No, he's safe. Have I disgraced myself in any way? No, that's not it.' Something else, resembling remorse, tormented him. 'Yes, oh yes, that French officer with the dimple. And I remember how my arm paused when I raised it.'"

"Rostóv saw the prisoners being led away and galloped after them to have a look at his Frenchman with the dimple on his chin. . . . Rostóv was always thinking about that brilliant exploit of his, which to his amazement had gained him the St. George's Cross and even given him a reputation for bravery, and there was something he could not at all understand. 'So others are even more afraid than I am!' he thought. 'So that's all there

is in what is called heroism. And did I do it for my country's sake? And how was he to blame, with his dimple and blue eyes? And how frightened he was! He thought that I would kill him. Why should I kill him? My hand trembled. And they have given me a St. George's Cross. . . . I can't make it out at all" (Maude 581-82).

10. "As you can see, the whole meaning of this passage is that Tolstoy attacked not merely a Frenchman, but a Frenchman with a dimple on his chin" (my translation).
11. In the classical Greek tale, two painters, Parrhasios and Zeuxis, compete in artistry. Zeuxis paints grapes that are so lifelike they attract the birds. Parrhasios, however, wins the competition by painting a veil that deceives Zeuxis into asking, "And now show us what you have painted behind it." Jacques Lacan often refers to Parrhasios' painting to illustrate his concept of *trompe-l'œil*.
12. "To attract the reader's attention, Tolstoy needs to relate something superfluous; this is some kind of registration on a fake passport. Apart from this, the provided feature gives the reader the impression of a complete portrait, and he imagines that he sees a character. Hence those merchants who appear in two lines during the destruction of Moscow, but not without the author's mention of a mole next to their noses" (my translation).
13. "Habitualization devours works, clothes, furniture, one's wife, and the fear of war. . . . And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life: it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone *stony*. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar,' to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged" ("Art" 12).
14. For a comprehensive documentation of contemporary readers' response to Tolstoy's novel, see Morson 37-72.
15. Roland Barthes develops the concept of the *punctum* in one of his later works, *Camera Lucida*. Henry Krips, who uses the *punctum* to reveal the mechanism of the subjectifying gaze, offers a succinct explanation:

Barthes develops this concept in the context of a distinction between the "true photograph" and the myriad banal images that circulate in the media. The surfaces of these banal images are covered in their entirety by visual elements to which meaning adheres by courtesy of highly conventionalized cultural codes. Such elements, which constitute the "*studium*," evoke at most a polite interest or prurient "half-desire". . . . A "true" photograph by contrast, one that makes its viewers "pensive" . . . , is distinguished by a *punctum*, which breaks up the tedium of the *studium*. The *punctum* is a detail or spot that arrests the viewer's eye, or, as Barthes says, "pricks" it. Refusing conformity with any creative logic, the *punctum* is a point of real violence, which in its sheer contingency, oddity, or even

uncanniness violates the familiar codes of the *studium*. (Krips 10)

16. "Platon Karataev . . . remained in his mind a most vivid and precious memory and the personification of everything Russian, kindly, and round. When Pierre saw his neighbor next morning at dawn the first impression of him, as of something round, was fully confirmed: Platon's whole figure . . . was round. His head was quite round, his back, chest, shoulders, and even his arms, which he held as if ever ready to embrace something, were rounded, his pleasant smile and his large, gentle brown eyes were also round" (Maude 859).
17. "Goodness, why are his ears like that?" she thought, looking at his cold, distinguished figure and especially at the cartilages of his ears, pressing up against the rim of his round hat" (Magarshack 117).
18. "[A]s though she expected to find him looking different" (Magarshack 118).
19. That morning, Vronskii's vision, indeed, paints Karenin in much more grotesque colors:

Он [Вронский] знал, что у нее есть муж, но не верил в существование его и поверил в него вполне, только когда увидел его, с его головой, плечами и ногами в черных панталонах; в особенности когда он увидал, как этот муж с чувством собственности спокойно взял ее руку.

Увидев Алексея Александровича с его петербургски-свежим лицом и строго самоуверенною фигурой, в круглой шляпе, с немного выдающеюся спиной, он поверил в него и испытал неприятное чувство, подобное тому, которое испытал бы человек, мучимый жаждою и добравшийся до источника и находящий в этом источнике собаку, овцу или свинью, которая и вышла и взмутила воду. Походка Алексея Александровича, ворочавшая всем тазом и тупыми ногами, особенно оскорбляла Вронского. (108)

(He [Vronsky] knew she had a husband, but he did not believe in his existence and only fully believed in him when he saw him there, his head, shoulders, and legs in their black trousers; and especially when he saw this husband calmly take her arm with an air of ownership.

When he saw Karenin with his fresh Petersburg face and his sternly self-confident figure, in his round hat and with his slightly stooping back, Vronsky believed in his existence, and he experienced the same disagreeable feeling a man tortured by thirst may feel on reaching a spring and finding that a dog, a sheep, or a pig in it had not only drunk but also muddied the water. Karenin's way of walking on his flat feet, swinging his [hips], seemed particularly offensive to Vronsky. [Magarshack 119])

20. "All the same, he's a good man; upright, kind, and remarkable in his own sphere," Anna said to herself when she had returned to her room, as

though defending him against someone who was accusing him and maintaining that one could not love him. 'But why do his ears stick out so oddly? Has he had a haircut?'” (Magarshack 125).

21. “She saw him approaching the grandstand, now condescendingly replying to obsequious bows, now exchanging friendly greetings with his equals, now sedulously trying to catch the eye of the great ones of this world and raising his big, round hat that pressed on the tips of his ears. She knew all those ways of his and she thought them disgusting” (Magarshack 217).
22. “[S]he leaned forward and did not take her eyes off Vronsky while he went up to his horse and mounted it, and at the same time she heard the repulsive, never-ceasing voice of her husband. She was tormented by anxiety for Vronsky, but a still greater torment was what seemed to be the incessant flow of her husband’s high-pitched voice with its familiar intonations” (Magarshack 218).
23. “‘I again offer you my arm if you wish to go,’ said Karenin, touching her arm.

She recoiled from him with a look of revulsion and, without looking at him, replied:

‘No, no, leave me alone! I’m staying!’” (Magarshack 221).

24. “She was playing nervously with the tassels of her dressing gown, glancing at him with that agonizing feeling of physical loathing for which she reproached herself, but which she could not overcome. All she wanted now was to get rid of his hateful appearance” (Magarshack 430).
25. “She pulled a long face and, half shutting her eyes, quickly changed her expression and folded her hands; and on her beautiful face Vronsky suddenly saw the same look with which Karenin had bowed to him. . . .
She looked at him, gloating. She had apparently remembered other ridiculous and grotesque sides of her husband’s character and was waiting for an opportunity to reveal them” (Magarshack 368).

26. “В то время когда Маслова, измученная длинным переходом, подходила с своими конвойными к зданию окружного суда, тот самый племянник ее воспитательниц, князь Дмитрий Иванович Нехлюдов, который соблазнил ее, лежал еще на своей высокой, пружинной с пуховым туфяком, смятой постели и, расстегнув ворот голландской чистой ночной рубашки с заутюженными складочками на груди, курил папиросу. . . .

[O]н вздохнул и, бросив выкуренную папироску, хотел достать из серебрянного портсигара другую, но раздумал и, спустив с кровати гладкие белые ноги, нашел ими туфли, накинуд на полные плечи шелковый халат и, быстро и тяжело ступая, пошел в соседнюю с спальней уборную, всю пропитанную искусственным запахом эликсиров, одеколна, фиксауров, духов. Там он вычистил особенным порошком пломбированные во многих местах зубы, выполоскал их душистым полосканьем, потом стал со всех сторон

мытья и вытираться разными полотенцами. Вымыв душистым мылом руки, старательно вычистив щетками отпущенные ногти и обмыв у большого мраморного умывальника себе лицо и толстую шею, он пошел еще в третью комнату у спальни, где приготовлен был душ. Обмыв там холодной водой мускулистое, обложившееся жиром белое тело и вытершись лохматой простыней, он надел чистое выглаженное белье, как зеркало, вычищенные ботинки и сел перед туалетом расчесывать двумя щетками небольшую черную курчавую бороду и поредевшие на передней части головы вьющиеся волосы” (*Voskresenie* 16-17).

“At the time Maslova, exhausted after the long walk with her guards, was nearing the courthouse, Prince Dmitri Ivanovich Nekhlyudov, the nephew of her patronesses and the man who had seduced her, was still lying on his high crumpled bed with its springs and down mattress. He had unbuttoned the collar of his fine linen night-shirt with the well-pressed pleats over the chest, and was smoking . . .

“[T]hrowing away the butt of his cigarette [he] was about to take another from his silver case but changed his mind, put down his smooth white legs, felt for his slippers with his feet, threw his silk dressing-gown over his broad shoulders and, stepping heavily, hurried into his dressing-room, where the air was oppressive with the artificial odours of elixirs, eau de Cologne, pomatum and perfumes. There, with a special powder, he cleaned his teeth, many of which had gold fillings, rinsed his mouth with scented water and then began to wash his body all over, drying himself with various towels. Having washed his hands with scented soap, he carefully cleaned his long nails with a nail-brush and rinsed his face and stout neck at the large marble wash-stand. Then he walked into a third room off the bedroom where a shower-bath awaited him. Here he bathed his muscular, plump white body in cold water and dried it with a rough bath-sheet, put on clean freshly ironed linen and boots, which shone like glass, and finally seated himself at the dressing-table with a brush in each hand to brush his short curly black beard and the curling hair on his head which was beginning to thin at the temples” [Edmonds 29-30.]

27. “He turned his plump, well-cared for body on the well-sprung sofa, as though intending to go to sleep for a long time, hugged the pillow on the other side, and pressed his cheek against it. . . .” (Magarshack 17).
28. “[Stepan Arkad’ich] put on his gray dressing gown with the pale-blue silk lining, knotted the cord, and drawing a deep breath into his powerful lungs, he walked to the window with his usual springy step, which carried his plump body so lightly, raised the blind, and rang loudly” (Magarshack 20).
29. “Matvey, blowing off some invisible speck, held up the shirt, which he gathered up like a horse’s collar and with evident satisfaction put it on his

- master's well-tended body" (Magarshack 22).
30. "Having dressed, Oblonsky sprayed himself with Eau de Cologne, pulled down his cuffs . . . and shaking out his handkerchief and feeling clean, scented, physically fit, and cheerful in spite of his misfortune, he went, with a slight tremor in each leg, into the dining room, where his coffee was already waiting for him" (Magarshack 22).
31. "Having finished the paper, a second cup of coffee, and a roll and butter, he got up, brushed the crumbs from his waistcoat, and expanding his broad chest, smiled happily but not because he felt particularly pleased; his happy smile was simply the result of a good digestion" (Magarshack 24).
32. "He drew his head into his shoulders and tried to look miserable, but he could not help radiating freshness and good health.
She [Dolly] cast a quick glance over his fresh, healthy figure" (Magarshack 26).
33. "When they entered the restaurant, Levin could not help noticing a certain peculiarity of expression, a sort of suppressed radiance, on Oblonsky's face and in his whole person" (Magarshack 49).
34. "'You did not expect me, did you?' said Oblonsky, getting out of the sledge, with specks of mud on the bridge of his nose, his cheeks and eyebrows, but beaming with cheerfulness and health" (Magarshack 171).
35. "'And how strong and healthy they all are physically,' he thought, glancing at a powerfully built Court chamberlain with well-brushed and perfumed whiskers and at the red neck of a prince in a tight-fitting uniform, whom he had to pass on his way. 'It is truly said that everything in the world is evil,' he thought, casting another sidelong glance at the Court chamberlain's calves" (Magarshack 518).
36. "'But how am I to blame?' he kept asking himself. And this question invariably gave rise to another: did those others—those Vronskys, Oblonskys, those Court chamberlains with their fat calves—did they marry differently? And there passed before his mind's eye a whole row of those full-blooded, virile, self-confident men, who always and everywhere involuntarily aroused his curiosity and attention" (Magarshack 522).
37. "When he got out of the train in Petersburg, he felt, in spite of his sleepless night, as vigorous and fresh as after a cold bath" (Magarshack 119).
38. "'Impossible!' he cried, releasing the pedal of the washstand before which he had been washing his healthy, [red] neck" (Magarshack 128).
39. "Vronskii shook with laughter. And long afterward, talking of other things, he would . . . burst into roars of healthy laughter, showing his strong, even teeth" (Magarshack 129).
40. "Vronsky was pouring water over his head. He had taken off his coat and put his hairy red neck under the tap and was rubbing his head with his hands" (Magarshack 317).
41. "[A]ll combined into one general impression of a joyous sense of life. This feeling was so strong that he kept smiling involuntarily. He dropped

his legs, crossed one leg over the other, and taking it in his hand felt the springy muscle of the calf, where he had hurt it in the fall the day before, and throwing himself back, he drew several deep breaths.

‘Oh, it’s good, very good!’ he said to himself. He had often before had this joyous sense of physical well-being, but never before had he been so fond of himself, of his own body, as at that moment. It gave him pleasure to feel the slight pain in his strong leg, it was pleasant to feel the muscular sensation of movement in his chest as he breathed. The same bright and cold August day which made Anna feel so hopeless seemed exhilarating and invigorating to him and refreshed his face and neck, which were still glowing after the drenching he had given them under the tap” (Magarshack 321).

42. Helena Gosçilo-Kostin, in her article “Tolstoyan Fare: Credo à la Carte” has discussed persuasively the double connection behind this group image of “facile, fat-calved virility” (488): all the members of the group—Oblonskii, Vronskii, and Veslovskii—are characterized by what, in Tolstoy, are two sides of the same coin—excessive culinary and excessive sexual appetite.

43. Shklovskii’s term (*Mater’ial i stil’* 101).

44. “The prince enjoyed unusually good health even among princes; both by gymnastic exercises and by taking good care of his body he had brought himself to such a state of physical fitness that in spite of the excesses he indulged in when enjoying himself, he looked as fresh as a big shiny green Dutch cucumber. . . .

The main reason, however, why Vronsky found him so hard to stomach was that he could not help seeing himself in him. And what he saw in that mirror was not flattering to his self-respect. The prince was a very stupid, very self-assured, very healthy, very immaculate man, and that was all ‘What a stupid piece of beef! Am I really like that?’ he thought” (Magarshack 362-63).

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