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Levin's Happiness as Tolstoy's Model for Life

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Oral Presentation O12.3

LEVIN'S HAPPINESS AS TOLSTOY'S MODEL FOR LIFE

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This presentation will examine the distinct didactic role of the Constantine Levin character in Leo Tolstoy's novel *Anna Karenina*. Through Tolstoy's own views on the purpose of art – that an artist should unreservedly relive his or her own experience for the sake of an audience's vicarious experience – he created a protagonist of such a compelling imitation of humanity that Levin lives beyond the pages of the novel. As such, Levin's educational role is unique. Tolstoy does not advocate that Levin's life is to be emulated by the reader, but rather that it should serve as a cause to reexamine our own lives by means of the common human experiences which Tolstoy so deftly illustrates in *Anna Karenina*. Examining Tolstoy's purpose for Levin primarily through Gary Saul Morson's theory of "prosaics" and Levin's own weaknesses in coping with everyday life occurrences, the author's own conflicts are revealed, allowing the reader to more fully experience the power of Tolstoy's message.