



Apr 14th, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Levin's Happiness as Tolstoy's Model for Life

Rachel Branson

Illinois Wesleyan University

Marina Balina, Faculty Advisor

Illinois Wesleyan University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc>

Branson, Rachel and Balina, Faculty Advisor, Marina, "Levin's Happiness as Tolstoy's Model for Life" (2012). *John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference*. 3.

<http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc/2012/oralpres12/3>

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by The Ames Library, the Andrew W. Mellon Center for Curricular and Faculty Development, the Office of the Provost and the Office of the President. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digital Commons @ IWU by the faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

Oral Presentation O12.3

LEVIN'S HAPPINESS AS TOLSTOY'S MODEL FOR LIFE

Rachel Branson and Marina Balina*

Modern and Classical Languages and Literature Department, Illinois Wesleyan University

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.