

Title: The Experience of Sacred Space in L. N. Tolstói's *Anna Karenina* and Gustave Flaubert's *Un Coeur simple*

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Although L. N. Tolstói's novel addresses religious praxis with portrayals of Jules Landau's trances, Nikolai Levin's acceptance of extreme unction, and Konstantin Levin's personal faith journey, Tolstói does not often place his characters within the confines of sacred liturgical space. When Dolly takes her children to Church, Tolstói focuses on their dressing ritual for service rather than on their impressions of the liturgy. However, his extensive description of Konstantin Levin's experience of Russian Orthodox rituals exemplifies the de-familiarization (*ostranenie*) that Victor Shklovskii finds central to Tolstói's artistic expression of religious meaning. Standing in the church, Levin's initial outsidership renders him incapable of drawing on childhood memories to connect to the physical space so that he fails to comprehend the rote repetition of "Lord Have Mercy [Gospodi pomilui]." Even as Levin recognizes parts of the service and begins to identify with the sacred words, his gaze still remains one of an outsider to the ceremonial space.

By contrast, Tolstói's contemporary Gustave Flaubert in *Un Coeur simple* preserves the distance of the third-person narration while identifying the devout servant Felicite with the Catholic tradition by employing "style indirect libre." Her observations about the mass, the priest, the Church, and Christian history attest to her connectedness to the ritual unfolding before her. Felicite's incomplete understanding of theological concepts does not detract from her religious adoration, whereas Levin's inability to connect with the sacred utterances necessarily estranges him from the holy mysteries. A comparison of Felicite's and Levin's depictions of sacraments, rituals, holy persons, and liturgical space will demonstrate how the varying narrative decisions of their authors inform the unique religious experiences of their characters and readers.