

Title: The Unifying Principle in Tolstoy's and Prokofiev's *War and Peace*
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When organizing the “loose and baggy monster” of Tolstoy’s *War and Peace* into a manageable opera libretto, Prokofiev took a fundamentally different approach to the material than Tolstoy, creating a two-part structure that parallels the individual drama of Part I (Peace) with a national-scale drama in Part II (War). Prokofiev’s symmetrical structure links war and peace through careful contrasts and paralleling, giving each section its own scale (individual/national), space (ballroom/battlefield), and form of love (Eros/love of motherland). Tolstoy, on the other hand, manages to unify the war and peace halves of his novel not through clear-cut opposition, but by showing the fundamental sameness of these two contexts. Nikolai Rostov provides an important bridge, linking the two worlds.

Through comparing the opera with the novel, this paper shows how their structures enforce opposing views of human connection. For Tolstoy the ultimate ideal for humankind is the same at home and in the army: to find and embrace the interconnectedness of life. Instead of contrasting Eros and national love, Tolstoy relies on the same kind of love throughout—an expansive love that begins with the family, but can grow at moments of epiphany to include all of humankind. This family love is entirely absent from Part I of Prokofiev’s structure, where there are no complete families and sibling bonds have either been removed or polluted by Eros. Prokofiev transfers family love to the national scale only in Part II, presenting Kutuzov as father, Matushka Rus’ as mother, and the Russian people as their children. This does not reproduce the model for individual human connection that Tolstoy offers, but in 1942, Russia needed this stronger, more unifying vision of the people as one body ready to defend their mother against a new, more vicious Napoleon.