

Title: Oh Boy! Tolstoy! New Translations of *War and Peace*
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Three new versions of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1865-69) have appeared in the last few years and created a storm of controversy in the popular press: the first (Viking, 2005), an "English academic version," by Anthony Briggs; the second (Knopf, 2007), by the prolific duo, Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, free-lance translators who have published numerous translations of works by Gogol, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Chekhov, and Bulgakov; the third (HarperCollins, 2007), by Andrew Bromfield. This last claims to be the "original version," never before translated into English and published now for the first time.

This paper begins with the question of why this novel has suddenly attracted so much attention, when there is certainly no shortage of previous translations. It argues that the political controversy surrounding the war in Iraq is one of the main reasons for this renewed interest in Tolstoy's classic text. It cites numerous articles from various literary and political sources to substantiate this claim.

The paper then analyzes and compares the new versions with the two most respected earlier translations, those by Aylmer and Louise Maude (1922-23) and by Ann Dunnigan (1968). The analysis focuses on the scene in Vol. IV, Pt. One, Ch. 12, the first encounter between Pierre Bezukhov and Platon Karataev. Pierre's profound despair and total loss of faith in the universe, in God, and in his own soul is brilliantly described; this is followed by Platon's own demonstration of order, human kindness, and simple folk wisdom, all of which rekindle Pierre's faith and result in a sudden rebirth of his spirit and faith. I compare the language of the various versions of this scene and conclude that Pevear and Volokhonsky's translation best preserves Tolstoy's stylistic originality, both semantic and syntactic, and conclude that their efforts convey a much closer equivalent in English of the experience of reading *War and Peace* in the original.