

War and Peace, Notes on the translations:

Dear Readers,

If you are buying a new copy of *War and Peace* for this class, I recommend either of the following: the Aylmer and Louise Maude translation, or the Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky translation. (If you choose something different, that's fine, but do make sure it is not abridged.)

I will be working with both of these. My Maude copy is the Norton Critical Edition, 2nd edition, edited by George Gibian. My Pevear and Volokhonsky copy is the 2008 paperback edition.

The two translations are organized differently, so I have provided a tandem syllabus to accommodate either choice.

There are excellent reasons for choosing either of these.

The Maude translation has been the gold standard for a long time, ever since it first came out in 1920. The couple knew Tolstoy personally, and both husband and wife were fully fluent Russian speakers. Their notes on the text are included at the bottom of the pages on which they appear. Maps are included. Chapter summaries are also provided, and this can be a big help when you are reviewing. The work is organized into fifteen books, plus epilogues. The Norton Critical edition includes critical essays and source material.

The Pevear and Volokhonsky translation is fairly recent, and in my opinion, a little more artistic. Volokhonsky is a native Russian speaker, and she and Pevear have made some lovely word choices which may be

closer to Tolstoy's actual style than those of previous translations. Maps are also included. Notes are at the back of the book, because passages written by Tolstoy in French or German are presented fully in French or German, and translations of these passages appear at the bottom of the pages.

This can slow the reading down, but does have the advantage of showing us which characters speak mainly French.

There are no critical essays, and no chapter summaries. The work is organized into four volumes, plus epilogues. Interestingly, Pevear and Volokhonsky are also a husband and wife team.

I like both translations quite a lot, but there are definite differences. It might be fun to compare parallel passages from time to time.

So choose what you like, and enjoy the experience!

Leslie Frantz