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## Which English *Anna*?

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We Slavists are frequently asked by our anglophone friends, "Which translation of *Anna Karenina* shall I read?" If I am being strictly honest, I have always been forced to respond, "I don't know; I have never seriously compared the existing ones." When pressed, I have sometimes added, "I suspect the one by Louise and Aylmer Maude is probably the best. They were an English couple who lived in Russia for many years and must have known Russian well. They were educated, and they wrote and spoke the King's English. Moreover, Aylmer Maude was a disciple of Tolstoy and author of a thoughtful and well-written biography of the master; he knew Tolstoy well. It is hard to imagine a better set of qualifications. The Maudes' version must be the best." I must shamefully confess that even in assigning the novel in classes, I was governed more by considerations of availability and especially price than by any judgment of quality. In the process, however, of writing a review, commissioned by this journal, of the new *Anna* translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, I came to the conclusion that the review would be more useful if I made at least some effort to compare the new version with others currently available on the market. However, I will still keep the PV translation in the foreground of my attention.

By my count since the novel's appearance in 1877 there have been nine different English translations of *Anna Karenina*, beginning with Nathan Haskell Dole's in 1886. Some of these have been reissued many times, sometimes in revised form. The continued popularity of the book is astounding. People *en masse* keep buying and reading *Anna Karenina*. No fewer than seven different versions are now *in print*. It seems to be

worth publishers' while to keep them available, in the hope of capturing at least some of this lucrative market. The seven to choose from are the following:

1. Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina. A Novel in Eight Parts*. Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky [New York] Viking [2001]. Pp xxii + 838. \$40.00. Hereafter PV.

2. Louise and Aylmer Maude, revised by George Gibian. 2d ed. (NY: W. W. Norton, 1995). Hereafter MG.

3. Constance Garnett, revised by Leonard J. Kent and Nina Berberova. (NY: The Modern Library, first edition, 1965). Hereafter GKB.

4. Rosemary Edmonds, revised edition (Penguin Books, 1978). Hereafter RE.

5. David Magarshack (Signet Classics, 1961). Hereafter DM.

6. Joel Carmichael (Bantam Books, 1960). Hereafter JC.

7. The Maude translation without the Gibian corrections or appended critical articles is also on the market in the Oxford World's Classics series, but I have not included it in my discussion, on the presumption that Maude corrected is necessarily better than Maude virgin. However, Maude virgin does have good commentaries by W. Gareth Jones.

Pevear and Volokhovsky have been very active as translators from the Russian for some years now. Some of their translations from Dostoevsky have received praise from such distinguished and discriminating critics as Donald Fanger and Michael Henry Heim, their remarks emblazoned on the dust cover of their *Anna*. Pevear and Volokhovsky have also translated from Gogol and Bulgakov. One therefore approached this new translation of *Anna Karenina* with high expectations. Unfortunately, in my judgment these hopes, though not exactly dashed, must now be qualified. The PV translation, while perfectly adequate, is in my view not consistently or unequivocally superior to others on the market. I will try to justify this opinion with a series of direct comparisons of the six versions, but first I will record some initial impressions of the newcomer.

First, PV are to be commended for supplying explanatory notes, 19 pages of them, though inconveniently tucked away at the back of the

book. Surely notes are needed. There are in the novel many literary references and allusions to specifics of Russian culture, society, and history that would not be comprehensible to most present-day English-speaking readers. Yet of the six translations now available, three, RE, DM, and JC, have no notes at all. Regrettably, however, PV's notes are not all they might be. They say they are partly indebted for them to the commentaries [by E. G. Babaev, though they do not mention his name] in the 22-volume "Khudozhestvennaia Literatura" Russian edition of Tolstoy's works (vols. 8 and 9, 1981-82) and to Vladimir Nabokov's *Lectures on Russian Literature*—two perfectly good sources. Yet it is most unfortunate that they were apparently unaware of the existence of the *Karenina Companion* by C. J. G. Turner (1993), which is not cited in their bibliography. Turner's book provides fuller and more accurate notes than the Russian edition and would have saved PV from errors.

PV's notes get off to a bad start right on p. 2 with *Il mio tesoro*, sung by the glass tables in Stiva Oblonsky's dream. They have the right opera (*Don Giovanni*), but the aria is surely not the one they cite, "Deh vieni alla finestra," sung by Don Giovanni himself, which contains the words *o mio tesoro*. It is rather the famous tenor aria sung by Don Ottavio in Act II, which begins, and is always known as, precisely *Il mio tesoro*. (Here, to be sure, Turner would not have helped them, since he says only that the aria is from *Don Giovanni*.)<sup>2</sup> Turner would, however (132), have rescued them from another operatic error carried over from their Russian source (vol. 8, 481), which ascribes the whimsical German lines, "Himmlich ist's," recited by Stiva (I, 11) to justify his hedonism, to the libretto of *Fledermaus*. But these lines are just not there, as Turner found after a diligent search (concerning which he and I once corresponded). The lines come, misquoted, from Heine's *Reisebilder*. I note that GKB (49) also gives the correct source.

Another problem one encounters at once in considering the new translation is its textual source. PV got help with their notes from the 1981-82 edition, but was this the text they translated from? Russian texts of *Anna Karenina*

are not all the same. A new version was established in 1970 for the "Literaturnye Pamiatniki" edition by the joint efforts of another husband-and-wife team, Evelina Zaidenshnur and Vladimir Zhdanov, who went back to the manuscripts and corrected proofs with the particular aim of establishing a "pure Tolstoyan" text by eliminating corrections made by others, notably by Sofya Andreevna (Countess Tolstaia) and Nikolai Strakhov. (One could, of course, argue about the legitimacy of some of these restorations, since Strakhov's corrections, at least, were made at Tolstoy's behest and presumably with his approval.) One significant omission, almost surely inadvertent and restored in 1970, occurred early in the novel. It undoubtedly happened not by anyone's deliberate corrections, but through a process known as "haplography," where the copyist's eye jumps from the first of two identical words or phrases to the second, omitting what lies between. Such an omitted passage informs us that at first Stiva *did* feel some remorse about his infidelities:

Он не мог теперь раскаиваться в том, в чём он раскаивался лет шесть тому назад, когда он впервые изменил ей. Он не мог раскаиваться в том что . . . etc.

PV omit this passage, as do all the other translators except RE, which would indicate that PV took no account of the 1970 Zaidenshnur-Zhdanov text. It also shows that they did not translate from the 1981-82 edition from which they took their notes, since this edition reproduces the 1970 text. (The omission of this sentence in MG was duly noted by C. J. G. Turner in a valuable article, "The Maude Translation of *Anna Karenina*: Some Observations," *Russian Language Journal*, vol. 51, nos. 168-70 (1997), 233-52.)

The sentence does, however, appear in RE, p. 15 (in 1978 she revised her translation, originally published in 1954, in the light of the 1970 text):

He could not now do penance for something he had reproached himself for half a dozen years ago, when he had first been unfaithful to his wife.

One could, of course, find fault with RE's rendition of this sentence. "Do penance" seems to

imply a more active display of contrition than mere "repent," and although Tolstoy uses the same word, *raskaivat'sia*, twice, RE avoids the repetition and substitutes "reproached himself" on its second occurrence—a typical instance of the way well-schooled, style-conscious translators insist on rescuing Tolstoy from his awkwardnesses.

In their introduction (xvii) PV advertise their policy precisely of preserving the "robust awkwardness" of Tolstoy's style with its frequent repetitions. Yet already on page 1 they violate this principle. Tolstoy writes:

Положение это мучительно чувствовалось и самими супругами, и всеми членами семьи, и домочадцами. Все члены семьи и домочадцы чувствовали . . .

PV translate:

The situation was painfully felt by the couple themselves as well as by all the members of the family and household. *They* felt...

PV, like MG and RE, cannot bear the "robust awkwardness" of repeating "All the family members and servants felt..." and therefore substitute for this sequence the pronoun "they." One might also question the word "household" in the PV version as the equivalent of "domochadtsy," which here can only mean "servants," since Tolstoy clearly distinguishes them from "family members." The other translators do better with the repetition, though none is perfect. GKB have "every person in the house" for the second occurrence; DM, "all the members of the family"; and JC, "everyone in the house."

To test to my overall judgment I ran a sort of contest, taking somewhat arbitrarily chosen passages from the novel and comparing the renditions in the six English versions. Several of the selections were suggested to me by Edwina Cruise, for whose assistance I am most grateful.

1. The first passage (I, 2) presents in *erlebte Rede* Stiva's reasons why Dolly, in view of her physical

deterioration and other limitations, should be tolerant of his philanderings. (It is, of course, clear to us readers that the author's attitude toward Stiva's rationalizations is ironic):

Она, [Dolly], истощенная, состарившаяся, уже некрасивая женщина и ничем не замечательная, простая, только добрая мать семейства . . .

PV: She [Dolly] a worn-out, aged, no long beautiful woman, not remarkable for anything, simple, merely a kind mother of a family...

Here Tolstoy's order has been followed exactly, but two words trouble me. "Aged," if pronounced in two syllables, is clearly wrong; it makes Dolly much too old. It might possibly do if pronounced in one syllable, but this very ambiguity could be imputed as a fault. The other questionable choice is "kind." The novel shows that Dolly's qualities as a mother go far beyond mere "kindness": she is most of all a *responsible* parent, as her husband is not, as well as a loving one. Surely the more inclusive term "good" would have been a better choice.

MG: She... was nothing but an excellent mother of a family, worn-out, already growing elderly, no longer pretty, and in no way remarkable—in fact, quite an ordinary woman.

The sentence has been recast far more than it needed to be, with the superfluous addition of the phrase after the dash, which has no equivalent in the original except the word "prostaiia." Like "aged," "already growing elderly" seems to add too many years to poor Dolly's age (33), even allowing for Stiva's bias.

GKB: She, a worn-out woman no longer young or good-looking and in no way remarkable or interesting, merely a good mother.

This version seems almost faultless: "no longer young" seems a good choice for the "sostarivshaiasia," which PV and MG have botched. However, "prostaiia" is not adequately rendered by "in no way... interesting."

RE: She was a good mother, but she was already faded and plain and no longer young, a simple, uninteresting woman.

Here the transpositions simplify the syntax, but at the same time change Tolstoy's, i.e., Stiva's, emphasis—Stiva by no means puts Dolly's qualities as a mother in first place. However, the word choices generally seem good, except that "plain" in the sense of "not pretty" may be felt as a Briticism unfamiliar to young Americans.

DM: ... worn-out, old before her time, and plain as she was, and a kind though rather simple and in no way remarkable mother

Far too much transposition, with the result that "simple and in no way remarkable" are incorrectly made to pertain to Dolly's qualities as a mother rather than as a woman. Again my strictures against "kind" and "plain" apply.

JC: a completely undistinguished woman like her, worn-out, aging, already plain, just a simple, goodhearted mother of a family.

Again too much transposition, and again "simple" is applied to Dolly as a mother rather than in general. "Goodhearted" has the same limitations as "kind." (Incidentally, I calculate that Dolly's maternal statistics fit almost exactly those of Sofya Andreevna, who was just Dolly's age, 33, in 1877, when *Anna Karenina* was finished. She had already borne seven children, of whom two had died, and would deliver her eighth that year.)

2. Stiva has three levels of acquaintance among the rich and powerful (I, 5):

Одна треть . . . были приятелями его отца и знали его в рубашечке; другая треть были с ним на "ты," а третья треть хорошие знакомые.

PV: One third... were his father's friends and had known him in petticoats; another third were on familiar terms with him, and the final third were good acquaintances.

I had some difficulty with "petticoats," which to me are garments worn by women, not babies; but I learned that "to have known one in petticoats," i.e., since infancy, is a set idiomatic expression, current at least in Britain and enshrined in the small Oxford dictionary. All the same, it may puzzle American readers if their vocabulary is as limited as mine. More important is whether the gradation between class two, "on familiar terms," and the more distant class three, "good acquaintances," is adequately expressed. Perhaps "close friends" for "na 'ty'," and "cordial acquaintances" for "khoroshie znakomye" would be better. As the Russian text shows, instead of "final third" Tolstoy actually wrote "third third," a repetition perhaps corrected by Strakhov and restored in the 1970 edition.

MG: One third... were his father's friends and had known him as a baby; he was on intimate terms with another third, and was well acquainted with the last third.

This version gets the distinction between class two and class three pretty well, but one might regret the loss of the metonymy of the "petticoats" or some equivalent.

GKB: One third... had been friends of his father's, and had known him in diapers; another third were his intimate chums; and the remainder were friendly acquaintances.

Here the metonymy has been changed to a mundane garment more familiar to American babies (the original Garnett version had "petticoats"). "Chums" also seems good for Stiva's easygoing relationships.

RE: A third... were his father's friends and had known him from the time he was a baby in petticoats; he was on intimate terms with another third; and the rest were his good acquaintances.

RE was the only translator to use the 1970 text, but she typically could not stomach "third third" and substituted "the rest." The insertion of "a baby" seems superfluous, but the rest is adequate.

DM: A third... were his father's friends and had known him as a baby; another third were on intimate terms with him; and the remainder were his good friends and acquaintances.

Again, the "petticoat" metonymy is lost; "remainder" needlessly avoids the repetition of "third"; and "friends and" is superfluous baggage.

JC: A third... had been friends of his father's and had known him in swaddling clothes; another third were on intimate terms with him; and the rest knew him very well.

A new metonymy is substituted for the petticoats, though one may still wonder how many American students have any clear idea what "swaddling clothes" are, though they may possibly remember the phrase from the Nativity story; "knew him very well" seems weak and ambiguous as an equivalent of "khoroshie znakomye."

3. The distinction between "ty" and "vy" always presents problems. As we saw above, all the translators render "na ty" as "on intimate (familiar) terms," and that seems a reasonable solution, although it is vaguer and less vivid than the original and carries no reference to linguistic symbolism. Earlier, all the translators found the same successful solution to this problem in rendering Dolly's angry tirade (I, 4) against her errant husband. She had been using the formal "vy," as if to convey that to her he was now no more than a stranger; but in the course of the dialogue she softens a bit and shifts to the more natural spousal "ty," for which he feels grateful. All the translators render this change by having her insert the nickname "Stiva" in the "ty" passage—a very good solution. More problematic is the "ty-vy" usage in the case of Nikolai Levin's companion, Masha, the former prostitute (I, 25). Konstantin Levin, to make conversation, addresses a question to her, "Вы никогда прежде не были в Москве?" Nikolai reproves his brother for addressing Masha so formally; the only person who had ever called her "vy," he says, was the magistrate who questioned her when she was

being tried for trying to escape from the brothel: "Да не говори ей вы. Она этого боится."

What is one to do? Apparently none of the professional translators could think of any way of translating that question so that it sounds especially formal or polite, though a possible solution did occur to me in the middle of the night: "Might I ask if this is the first time you have been in Moscow?" Only GKB confront the problem head-on, using a footnote to explain what "vy" and "ty" are. Then Nikolai can say, "Don't say 'vy' to her. It frightens her." PV have Konstantin insert the word "miss" in his question: "You've never been to Moscow before, miss?" To which Nikolai replies, "Don't call her 'miss.' She's afraid of it." It seems a creditable solution, although calling her "miss" does not seem to me quite natural. The best solution would have been to have him address her by her first name and patronymic, Mar'ia Nikolaevna, but it appears that Konstantin had never been properly introduced to her and did not know them. *We* have been informed of them by the narrator.

MG: "You were never in Moscow before?" Constantine asked very politely... "Don't speak to her in that way. It frightens her."

It is hard to see how the wording of this question can be described as "very polite"; the reader must surmise that there must have been something special about Konstantin's facial expression or tone.

RE: "You were never in Moscow before?"... "Only you mustn't be polite and formal with her. It frightens her."

The same strictures apply as to MG.

DM: "You were never in Moscow before?" "Don't be so formal with her. It frightens her."

Same comments.

JC: "Have you been to Moscow before?" "Don't speak to her so politely."

No better. JC also has an especially unsatisfactory way of rendering the *imia-otchestvo*, for instance, as used by Masha in addressing Nikolai Levin. "Nikolai Dmitrich" is transformed into "Mr. Nicholas," which makes her sound a bit like a black slave in the ante-bellum south. PV, incidentally, add a footnote citing Nabokov to explain the marked class difference in this usage. The low-class Masha calling Nikolai "vy" and "Nikolai Dmitrich" is quite different from the aristocratic Dolly's change from "vy" to "ty" in addressing Stiva.

4. Edwina Cruise has kindly called my attention to an instance where PV, along with others, fail to reproduce one of Tolstoy's verbal echoes, which play such an important part as linkages among different parts of the text. For example, Tolstoy uses the same words to describe the feelings aroused in Anna by Vronsky (I, 29) as she returns by train from Moscow to Petersburg (не страшно, а весело) and those experienced by Vronsky (II, 21) before the race (было и страшно и весело). None of the translators appears to have noticed the connection or reproduced it.

PV: Anna: "not frightening, but exhilarating."  
Vronsky: "both terrifying and joyful."

MG: Anna: "did not seem dreadful, but amusing."  
Vronsky: "both frightening and joyful."

GKB: Anna: "not terrible, but delightful."  
Vronsky: "both dreadful and delicious."

RE: Anna: "far from seeming dreadful, was rather pleasant."  
Vronsky: "both disgraceful and delicious" [that "disgraceful" seems uncalled-for].

DM: Anna: "not terrifying but amusing."  
Vronsky: "both terrifying and joyful."

JC: Anna: "it wasn't at all terrifying, it was gay."  
Vronsky: "both terrifying and joyful."

5. Professor Cruise commends PV for retaining Tolstoy's or his characters' ways of referring to people: sometimes by first name and patronymic,

sometimes by surname, sometimes by first name, sometimes by nickname. Though foreign readers may at first have some difficulty in adjusting to this system and recognizing its symbolisms, they can be helped, as they are by PV, by providing an introductory list of characters with all their possible appellations. In the long run this seems to me better than trying to devise English equivalents. I noted above my dislike of JC's having Masha address Nikolai Levin as "Mr. Nicholas." Professor Cruise notes in particular how in Part III, Chapters 13 and 14, when Tolstoy is conveying Karenin's thoughts and feelings as he contemplates what to do now that Anna has confessed to him her infidelity, Tolstoy refers to him consistently as "Aleksei Aleksandrovich," which seems to convey a somewhat respectful attitude, as to a man of status and dignity, with whom we are already acquainted. On the other hand, in the narrator's text at this point Anna is always "Anna" and Vronsky "Vronsky"—which is how they would figure in Karenin's mind. The only change occurs when Karenin (or I should say Aleksei Aleksandrovich) addresses a servant concerning his wife; then she properly becomes "Anna Arkad'evna." How do the translators handle this usage? PV loyally follow Tolstoy throughout, except for one shift, apparently to avoid repetition, from Aleksei Aleksandrovich to "Karenin." MG change all references from "Aleksei Aleksandrovich" to "Karenin." GKB retain "Aleksei Aleksandrovich" throughout and thus win this round. Both DM and JC consistently change to "Karenin."

6. Professor Cruise likewise called my attention to a characteristic Tolstoyan sentence (in IV,9), a comic build-up to a rhetorical climax, in which a series of anticipatory phrases is finally resolved by a long-awaited main verb. Stiva Oblonskii, playing matchmaker but with typical unobtrusive fact, contrives to seat Kitty and Levin next to each other at a dinner party:

Совершенно незаметно, не взглянув на них, а так, как будто уж некуда было больше посадить, Степан Аркадьич посадил Левина и Кити рядом.

How good are the translators at reproducing this effect?

PV: Quite inconspicuously, without looking at them, but just like that, as if there were nowhere else to seat them, Stepan Arkadyevich placed Levin and Kitty next to each other.

Here the climax works well, but there is a slight expansion of Tolstoy's jest. PV's "just like that" would be appropriate only if the Russian read "a *prosto tak, kak budto*." As it stands, the phrase "tak, kak budto" means nothing more than "as if."

MG: Quite casually, without looking at them, and just as if there were nowhere else to put them, Oblonsky placed Levin and Kitty side by side.

Almost perfect, except that Stiva's *imia-otchestvo* has been replaced by his surname.

GKB: Quite without attracting notice, without glancing at them, as though there were no other place left, Stepan Arkadyevich seated Levin and Kitty side by side.

Also good, but "no other places left" is not quite accurate.

RE: Quite casually, without looking at them, and as though there were no other place to put them, Oblonsky sat Levin and Kitty beside each other.

Same comment as for MG.

DM: Quite casually, without looking at them, and as though there were no other place to put them, Oblonsky made Levin and Kitty sit side by side at the dining table.

The addition of "at the dining table" is unnecessary.

JC: Quite casually, without looking at them but as though there were no other place for them to sit, Oblonsky seated Levin and Kitty side by side.

Again the change of Stiva's name; shift from tran-

sitive "seat" to intransitive "sit," with a different implied subject.

Note that *all* the translators avoid Tolstoy's repetition of the verb "to seat" (*posadit'... posadil*). However, all of them do, as Tolstoy did, place this single sentence in a separate paragraph, resisting the frequent temptation to straighten out Tolstoy's eccentric paragraphing.

7. Professor Cruise has also singled out what she thinks may be "the longest sentence in the novel." It occurs in V, 22, where Tolstoy is conveying the thoughts of Karenin, brooding over his predicament after a consoling conversation with Countess Lidia Ivanovna:

Правда, что легкость и ошибочность этого представления о своей вере смутно чувствовалась Алексею Александровичу, и он знал, что когда он, вовсе не думая о том, что его прощение есть действие высшей силы, отдался этому непосредственному чувству, он испытал больше счастья, чем когда он, как теперь, каждую минуту думал, что в его душе живет Христос, и что, подписывая бумаги, он исполняет его волю; но для Алексея Александровича было необходимо так думать, ему было так необходимо в его унижении иметь ту, хотя бы и выдуманную высоту, с которой он, презираемый всеми, мог бы презирать других, что он держался, как за спасение, за свое мнимое спасение.

It would be too long to reproduce all the translations of this marathon sentence, but let us quote the one in PV (p. 511), which wins the round by being the only one to preserve Tolstoy's single sentence intact:

It is true that Alexei Alexandrovich vaguely sensed the levity [this word, implying "frivolousness," does not seem quite right; perhaps "superficiality" or "lack of substance" would be better.] and erroneousness of this notion of his faith, and he knew that when, without any thought that his forgiveness was the effect of a higher power, he had given himself to his spontaneous feeling, he had experienced greater happiness than when he thought every minute, as he did now, that Christ

lived in his soul, and that by signing papers he was fulfilling His will; but it was necessary for him to think that way, it was so necessary for him in his humiliation to possess at least an invented loftiness from which he, despised by everyone, could despise others, that he clung to his imaginary salvation as if it were salvation indeed.

Though all the translators duly follow Tolstoy in placing this sentence in an independent paragraph, none of the others could resist the impulse to "fix" Tolstoy's cumbersome and involved syntax, to clarify and simplify. Were they right to do so? The question goes to the heart of the whole philosophy of translation. In my opinion, it is an illegitimate intrusion, where translators impose themselves as co-authors. Translators should not make themselves into editors.

MG break the long sentence into three, which perhaps makes the passage clearer, but defeats whatever purpose Tolstoy had in constructing such a complex sentence, perhaps designed to encapsulate the confusion and conflicting impulses in Karenin's mind. Like other translators but not PV, MG avoid Tolstoy's repetition of the word "salvation" at the end.

GKB: Two sentences; one "salvation."

RE: Two sentences, one "salvation."

DM: Three sentences, two "salvations."

JC: Two sentences, two "salvations."

8. Professor Cruise next calls attention to a passage in VI, 16, where Tolstoy has Levin use the word *nepriiatno* four times in six lines to convey the conflicting feelings aroused in him by Dolly's plan to visit Anna at Vronsky's estate, using horses hired for the trip. In the first place he is at best ambivalent about her going there at all; further, as her host he feels obliged to provide her with horses, even though his horses are needed for farm work. He is also secretly bothered by the thought that his ordinary farm horses will look disreputable by comparison with Vronsky's elegant ones, and his rivalry with Vronsky stirs in him old emotions. Rendering the word *nepriiatno* as "unpleasant," PV faithfully repeat it four times. This score is equalled only by MG. All the others translate the word differently, and none of these

versions is repeated four times. GKB has "dislike" three times and "distasteful" once. RE has three variants: "disapprove," "less pleasant," and "not very nice," with one *nepriiatno* omitted entirely by the use of an implied verb: "And if I did . . . , [i.e., disapprove]. DM have three variants: "am against," "against," "resent," and "unpleasant." JC has "disagreeable" twice, "more so" once, and omits one entirely, also by the use of implication: even if it were [i.e., disagreeable]. Of course, it could be argued that it is more important to have Levin speak normal colloquial English than to echo Tolstoy's insistent repetitions, but I would disagree, asserting that Tolstoy could have varied Levin's language just as inventively as any translator had he chosen to do so; but he did not, perhaps to show that Levin's inner conflicts render him a bit tongue-tied.

9. Another interesting passage occurs in VII, 14, where Tolstoy is conveying Levin's feelings at the time of the birth of his son. A parallel is drawn between two basic biological events, birth and death, the happy present occasion of Kitty's delivery (despite all her agony) being contrasted with the recollected sadness of his brother Nikolai's demise. Both these events are transcendental occasions for Levin, experiences that lift him out of the run of ordinary life into awareness of something higher. In this connection Tolstoy uses the verb *sovershat'sia*, "to be accomplished":

Он знал и чувствовал только, что то, что совершалось, было подобно тому, что совершалось год тому назад. . . Но и то горе и эта радость . . . были в этой обычной жизни как будто отверстия, сквозь которые показывалось что-то высшее. И одинаково тяжело мучительно, наступало совершающееся.

PV deserve great credit for rendering *sovershat'sia* as "to be accomplished" in all its occurrences. MG, however, like several others, translate it with "to happen." Yet Tolstoy could himself have used a more usual Russian verb, such as *sluchit'sia* or *proizoiiti*. However, he chose *sovershit'sia* instead, as if to imply some element of purposefulness in



these events. Tolstoy, via Levin, is asserting that birth and death are more than mere "happenings"; they have cosmic dimensions. There is also a more serious error in MG:

But that sorrow and this joy... were like openings in that usual life through which something higher became visible. And as in that case, what was *not* [sic; my italics] being accomplished came harshly, painfully, incomprehensibly.

The presence of that "not" is itself incomprehensible, completely unjustified, and a most disturbing error that seriously distorts the meaning of the passage. (Professor Turner identifies another instance in MG of a totally unjustified negation: see "The Maude Translation," 235.)

GKB also use "to happen," and they have omitted the whole phrase beginning "And just as painful..." I note that this phrase was also omitted in the original Garnett translation, and Kent and Berberova did not catch the mistake.

RE, like others, writes "happen" for the first two appearances of *sovershat'sia*, but on its third occurrence she not only renders it "to be accomplished," but even manages a repetition not in the original: "And what was being accomplished now, as in that other moment, was accomplished harshly, painfully."

DM uses "to happen" three times and also loses the effect of Tolstoy's inversion in the last sentence. JC has "happen" twice and "accomplished" once; he also eliminates the inversion. PV clearly win this round.

10. One final example, the account of Anna's suicide in VII, 31.

... что-то огромное, неумолимое толкнуло ее в голову и потащило за спину. "Господи, прости мне все!" — проговорила она, чувствуя невозможность борьбы. Мужичок, приговаривая что-то, работал над железом. И свеча, при которой она читала исполненную тревог, обманов, горя и зла книгу, вспыхнула более ярким, чем когда-нибудь, светом, осветила ей вес то, что прежде было во мраке, затрепала, стала меркнуть и навсегда потухла.

Tolstoy begins with the horrendous image of the terrible, inexorable, crushing wheels of the train, advancing and colliding with Anna's body. She has time for one last prayer and then surrenders to the inevitable. The next sentence is ambiguous: there may be a real workman whose presence Anna dimly perceives, linking him with an ominous figure that has appeared in her life several times before, both in reality and in dreams, going back to the workman crushed by a train at the very beginning of the novel (and the beginning of her acquaintance with Vronsky); or this may be only a fantasy, a creature of Anna's soon-to-be-extinguished brain. Finally, Tolstoy invokes an entirely metaphorical candle by whose light Anna can now read, in her last moments of consciousness, the entire "book" of her life, before the candle goes out forever.

I will intersperse my comments on the translations in brackets within the texts.

PV: ... something huge and implacable pushed at her head [although "pushed at" may be a correct rendition of *tolknulo v*, it does not seem to me adequate to convey the collision between the wheels and Anna's head] and dragged over her [this phrase too seems to me obscure. The wheels could drag the body, but how could they drag over it? And the "za spinu" has been entirely omitted.] "Lord, forgive me for everything!" she said, feeling the impossibility of any struggle. A little muzhik, muttering to himself, was working over some iron." [This rendition is perhaps too literal, since *rabotat' nad chem-to* usually means to work on something. The "iron" possibly indicates the rails, as MG and RE render it (illegitimately, in my opinion), apparently assuming that this *muzhichok* is really present. But the word "iron" is needed, as an echo of Anna's previous encounters with this workman, real and oneiric, in which the word "iron" invariably occurs, sometimes in French: "Il faut le battre le fer..." The Russian term for "railroad," *zheleznaiia doroga*, "iron road," is also relevant, as well as countless metaphors about the hardness of iron.] And the candle by the light of which she had been reading that book filled with anxiety, deceptions, grief and evil, flared up brighter than ever [why not "with a brighter light than ever," as in the original?] lit up for her all that

had once been in darkness, sputtered, grew [began to grow] dim, and went out for ever. [It is interesting that *all* the translators change Tolstoy's word order here, making the sentence conclude with the powerful word "forever." This is understandable if "*potukhla*" is rendered with such a low-style term as "went out"; "forever went out" seems too anticlimactic. However, "was forever extinguished" might be dignified enough.]

MG: ... something huge and relentless struck her on the head and dragged her down [again, *za spinu* is omitted]. "God forgive me everything!" she said, feeling the impossibility of struggling. A little peasant muttering something was working at the rails [see above concerning these rails]. The candle, by the light of which she had been reading that book filled with anxieties, deception, grief and evil flared up with a brighter light than before, lit up for her all that had before been dark, flickered, began to grow dim, and went out for ever. [Quite good on the physical images, but the change from "iron" to "rails" is editing, not translating.]

GKB: ... something huge and merciless struck her on the head and dragged her down on her back. "Lord, forgive me everything!" she said, feeling it impossible to struggle. A peasant muttering something was working above [on?] the iron. And the light of the candle by which she had read the book filled with troubles, falsehoods, sorrow, and evil flared up more brightly [with a brighter light] than ever before, lighted up for her all that had been shrouded in darkness [the addition of this shroud seems to me unnecessary], flickered, began to grow dim, and was quenched forever. [I have some qualms about the word "quench" in the meaning of "extinguish." In this sense it is marked "chiefly poet. or rhet." in the Oxford dictionary, whereas Tolstoy's *potukhla* has no such overtones.]

RE: ... something huge and relentless struck her on the head and dragged her down on her back. "God forgive me everything!" she murmured [Tolstoy says simply "said"], feeling the impossibility of struggling. A little peasant, muttering something, was working at the rails [again!]. And the candle by which she had been reading the book filled with trouble and deceit, sorrow and evil, flared up with a brighter light, illuminating for her everything that before had been enshrouded [again that shroud!] in

darkness, flickered, grew dim, and went out for ever.

DM: ... something huge and implacable struck her on the head and dragged her down on her back. "Lord, forgive me everything!" she cried [i.e., said], feeling the impossibility of struggling. The little peasant, muttering something, was working over [on] the iron. And the candle, by the light of which she had been reading the book filled with anxieties, deceits, grief, and evil, flared up with a brighter light than before, lit up for her all that had hitherto been shrouded [again!] in darkness, flickered, began to grow dim, and went out forever.

JC: ... something huge and implacable struck her on the head and dragged her down [the identity with MG is perhaps a little suspicious]. "Lord, forgive me everything!" she murmured [said], feeling the impossibility of struggling. A little peasant was working at the rails, muttering something to himself [the changed word order does not improve the passage, and again the concrete "rails" seems to preempt the decision as to whether there is actually a workman present]. And the candle by which she had been reading that book that is [does this added phrase imply that the book is common to all?] filled with anxiety, deceit, sorrow, and evil flared up with a brighter flame [too concrete] than before, lighted up everything for her that had previously been in darkness, flickered, dimmed, and went out forever.

None of the translations is flawless, but I am inclined to award the round to GKB: the physical events are clearer than in PV, the "iron" is preserved, and there is no shroud. My misgivings about "quench" are not strong.

One could doubtless continue, almost ad infinitum, adducing examples and passing judgment on the translations. Perhaps more illustrations would lead to different opinions. However, from the cases examined here I reach the following conclusions:

● *None* of the existing translations is actively *bad*. From any of them the ordinary English-speaking reader would obtain a reasonably full and adequate experience of the novel. The English in

all of them sounds like English, not translationese. I found very few real *errors* and only a few omissions, and of the latter most were only a few words or phrases. One's choice among the existing translations must therefore be based on nuances, subtleties, and refinements.

● Following Professor Turner and with the addition of the disturbing error pointed out in example 8 above, I would be inclined to eliminate the Maude translation (MG) from the competition. However, the valuable additional critical matter supplied by Gibian for the Norton edition might possibly be enough to bring that version back into contention, but I doubt it. Turner has found a number of equally disturbing errors, enough, I am afraid, to disqualify the Maudes entirely. So much for my off-the-cuff recommendation.

● I did not find either the Magarshack (DM) or Carmichael (JC) version ever superior to the others, and the lack of notes is a drawback. I would therefore eliminate them.

● The three remaining contenders are PV, GKB, and RE. Of these RE (1978 version) has the important advantage of being based on the most up-to-date text. However, her version has no notes at all and all too frequently errs in the direction of making Tolstoy's "robust awkwardness" conform to the translator's notions of good English style.

I consider GKB a very good version, even though it is based on an out-of-date Russian text. Kent and Berberova did a much more thorough and careful revision of the Garnett translation than Gibian did of the Maude one, and they have supplied fairly full notes, conveniently printed at the bottom of the page.

● Finally, PV, the original subject of this overgrown review. It is certainly a good translation and generally follows Tolstoy's style more closely and with less editing and "prettifying" than other versions. But one must still regret that it is not better than it is, that the Zaidenshnur-Zhdanov text was not used or at least considered, nor the Turner *Companion*.

### Notes

1. I am grateful for many valuable suggestions for improvements to this review article made by friends and colleagues: Robert P. Hughes, Simon Karlinsky, James L. Rice, Brian Horowitz, Anne Hruska, and C. J. G. Turner. My esteemed colleague Liza Knapp has herself written a sensitive appraisal of *Anna Karenina* translations for the MLA teacher's guide to the novel now in preparation (Liza Knapp and Amy Mandelker, eds, *Approaches to Teaching Tolstoy's Anna Karenina*) which I found most valuable and stimulating. Professor Knapp has also kindly called my attention to yet another earlier toiler in this arduous vineyard, Richard Sheldon, whose thoughtful and discriminating article, "Problems in the English Translations of *Anna Karenina*," appeared in *Essays in the Art and Theory of Translation*, ed. Lenore A. Grenoble and John M. Kopper (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellon Press, 1997), 231-264. Professor Sheldon and I disagree on some points—Joel Carmichael wins the prize in his contest—but our very disagreements are indicative of the difficulty and elusiveness of the very process of translation, with its countless effortful approximations, painful choices, and regrettable compromises.

2. In connection with *Don Giovanni*, I would like to remind readers of the excellent article by Ian Saylor, "*Anna Karenina* and *Don Giovanni*: The Vengeance Motif in Oblonsky's Dream," *Tolstoy Studies Journal*, VIII (1995-96): 112-16.