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From Achilles to Christ: The Myth of the Hero in Tolstoy's "War and Peace." by Laura Jepsen

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work developed from story to novel and eventually provided the structural pattern for the rest of the novels. When discussing *Fathers and Sons*, she outlines the controversy surrounding the new concept of political nihilism, pinpoints as far as possible Turgenev's own position, and shows how much of the to-do resulted from the inability on the part of readers of all stripes to draw the line between life and literature. Throughout her study she uses the tools of the historian to illuminate literature and the tools of the literary critic to illuminate history.

Another attractive feature of Zöldhelyi's approach is her ability to bring across the excitement involved in research and scholarly discovery. Not only does she list the essential Russian, English, French, German, and of course, Hungarian sources in an excellent, up-to-date bibliography; she identifies recent breakthroughs and rejoices in the ways they enhance our knowledge and appreciation of the works. One example among many: Turgenev and the Viardots made a parlor game of sketching portraits of non-existent people and then inventing biographies for them. Both drawings and texts have only recently come to light. Zöldhelyi reproduces two of them and applies them ingeniously to her analysis of Turgenev's technique of characterization.

There is much else worthy of praise in the book: the able treatment of Turgenev's non-Russian literary companions (Flaubert, Maupassant, Henry James), the occasional touches of humor (it begins, for example, with a testimonial in Turgenev's words to the effect that a Hungarian wine saved his life when he was four), the abundant and well-chosen illustrations (it contains an extensive iconography of Turgenev along with numerous drawings by him and his friends, portraits of the main figures in his life, political cartoons, and land- and cityscapes). Most important, however, it will encourage the uninitiated to go out and read Turgenev, the initiated to go back and read him in a new light.

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JEPSEN, LAURA. *From Achilles to Christ: The Myth of the Hero in Tolstoy's "War and Peace."* Tallahassee, FL: Laura Jepsen, 1978. xii, 179 pp. \$10.00.

Tolstoi continues to attract the interest of non-specialists over a century after the publication of *War and Peace*. The point of this privately published book, by one of them, is stated repeatedly: "Although the early Prince Andrew has a number of Homeric attributes, he dies a Christian hero" (p. 28). "From Achilles to Christ, from the classical archetype of the *Iliad* to the Christian antitype of the Gospels, Prince Andrew undergoes transformation" (p. 31). "At the crisis of death, Tolstoy's Homeric hero of 1807 becomes the Christian hero of 1812" (p. 49). "In the early part of *War and Peace*, the standard is that of the good man . . . Later in the epic, the standard is that of the peasant [Karataev], who represents a simple Christian ethic" (p. 88). All this, I think, could have made an interesting article, but not a study this long.

The author sometimes cites Greek in the original but virtually always sees Tolstoi's text through the Maudes' eyes. This sometimes lets her down. For example, citing Maude, she thinks that Tolstoi in the 1860s accepted war as ironic and inevitable. Had she dug a bit deeper, even in English, she could

have discovered the germs of Tolstoi's pacifism at the end of the first part of "Sevastopol in May," in a passage not to be found in the Maude translation from the censored original. (Compare Tolstoi, *Tales of Sevastopol* [Moscow, 1946], pp. 28–29, with the Maude translation in Tolstoi, *Tales of Army Life* [London, 1951], p. 107.) It is also strange to read a treatment of "The Raid" and its relationship to courage without any indication that Boris Eikhenbaum has dealt brilliantly with the same idea (in *Lev Tolstoi v 50-ye gody* [Leningrad, 1928], p. 140).

A judicious pruning of Jepsen's text could have eliminated some strained passages, such as when she writes, "At the opportune moment, Helene's father, Prince Vasili [Kuragin], plays the part of Homer's Paris . . .," (p. 57), or the comparison between the Tatars claiming the corpse of the *abrek* in the Cossacks with Priam ransoming Hector's body from Achilles (p. 134).

It is good that Tolstoi's relationship to Homer fascinates Jepsen. Should she wish to proceed further, she would be well advised to show greater awareness of what is written in Russian and to have closer contacts with professionals who have also worked on this great author.

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LUKER, NICHOLAS J. L. *Aleksandr Grin: The Forgotten Visionary*. Newtonville, MA: Oriental Research Partners, 1980. xii, 93 pp. \$9.50.

The recent centenary of Aleksandr Grin (1880–1932) was marked in the Soviet Union by widespread notices in the press and by several publications, including a revised edition of the (still quite incomplete) six-volume collected works. However, the occasion aroused little interest in the West, where Grin's works are still largely unknown despite the enormous popularity they have enjoyed in the Soviet Union. All the more reason then to welcome this concise biography, which serves to make the details of Grin's life accessible to a broad audience and which by happy circumstance appeared during the anniversary year.

The would-be biographer faces certain obstacles in his efforts to present a reliable and reasonably full chronicle of Grin's career: memoirs of Grin are relatively few and not always trustworthy; Grin, with the exception of his late *Avtobiograficheskaia povest'* (which does not go beyond 1905, a year before the start of his literary career) and one or two short pieces, was reticent about himself; and there are several short periods in his life about which virtually nothing at all is known. Nicholas Luker has managed to overcome most of these difficulties quite successfully. He has talked to some of those who knew Grin, has combed through various archives and private collections for letters and manuscripts, and has assembled all the information into a thoroughly-documented, highly readable account. Particularly valuable are the frequent remarks on links between events in Grin's life and certain aspects of his stories as well as the detailing of Grin's financial hardships and isolation during his last years. The short bibliography is meant to be selective and does include most of the important studies on Grin; however, several other noteworthy items are mentioned only in the footnotes and for the convenience of readers might well have been listed in the bibliography as well. Along similar lines, the footnotes contain numerous references to memoirs