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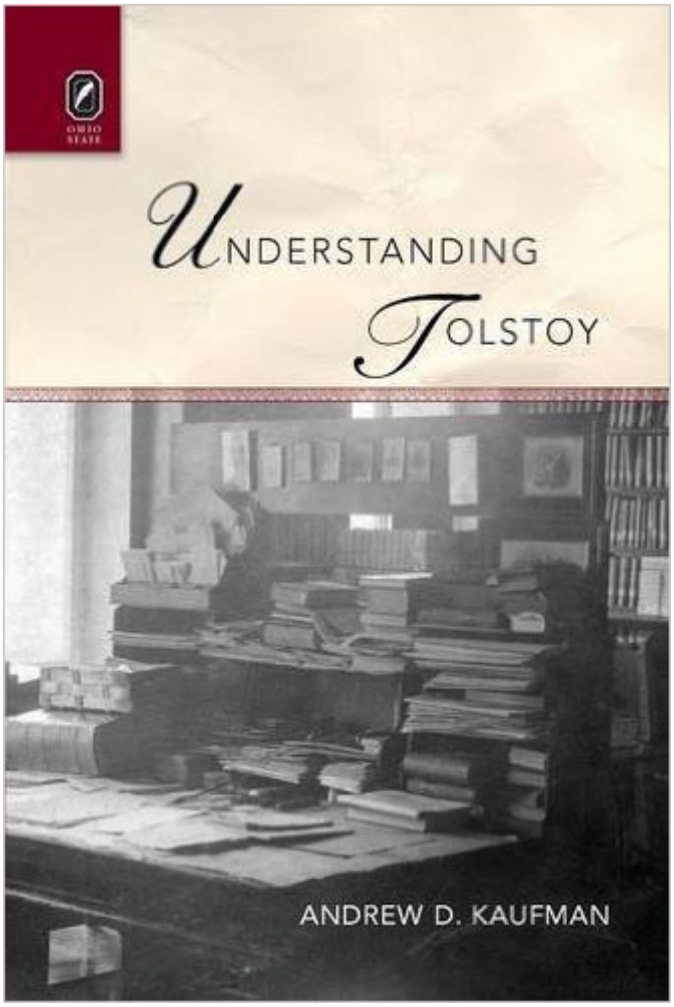
Understanding Tolstoy



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Synopsis

Understanding Tolstoy recreates Tolstoyâ ™s lifelong artistic and spiritual journey, taking readers to the core of the writerâ ™s world through nuanced close readings of his major novels and novellas. Andrew D. Kaufmanâ ™s broad and accessible analysis of Tolstoyâ ™s work speaks to the ways in which Tolstoy, despite living in a manner far removed from the experiences of most modern-day Americans, is still applicable and contemporary.From a reconstruction of Oleninâ ™s search for truth in The Cossacks to an illuminating analysis of Hadji-Muratâ ™s tragic last stand, Understanding Tolstoy brings to life the fascinating parallels between Tolstoyâ ™s personal quest and his charactersâ ™ journeys. Whether writing about the ballrooms and battlefields of War and Peace or the spectrum of sexual and spiritual attachments in Anna Karenina, Tolstoy emerges as a vital, searching artist who continually grows and surprises us, yet is driven by a single, unchanging belief in universal human truths.Understanding Tolstoy is a treasure trove of critical and philosophical insights that will appeal to Tolstoy aficionados of all kinds, from advanced scholars to undergraduate students. The book offers an eminently readable guide to those entering Tolstoyâ ™s world for the first time or the tenth, and it invites them to grapple alongside the writer and his characters with the most urgent existential questions of our time, and all times.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

You need to know that Andy is my son. Having said that, you also need to know that I will not perjure myself for anyone, even my son.Here is my reaction to the book. You may be interested to know that a major publishing house found this book so intriguing that Andy is half-way through

another book on Tolstoy that is under contract with this publishing house.Here is my review.I enjoyed this personal conversation with the author of Understanding Tolstoy immensely. He brought Tolstoy to life once again as I recalled each work he discussed. His knowledge of the works of Tolstoy and of Tolstoy himself provided new and exciting insights into one of the world's greatest writers and into the existential issues that Tolstoy dealt with and that each of us deals with frequently. Each chapter stands by itself and adds additional insight and introspection. The book does not need to be read sequentially or in a short prior of time. I read a chapter or two, put it down, returned to read another chapter and another. I wished it were longer. I'll read it again. It's that good!

Understanding Tolstoy is scholarly, perceptive, beautifully written - and revolutionary in the cyclical way of intellectual trends. Eschewing the "isms" that stalk current academic criticism and the tendency to take a miniscule piece of the painting and analyze it to death, Andrew Kaufman invites us to look at the whole glorious landscape of Tolstoy's fictional oeuvre. Neither ponderous nor airborne with empty generalizations, his book takes us from The Cossacks to Hadji Murat, making probing excursions on the way into Tolstoy's masterpieces, War and Peace, Anna Karenina, and The Death of Ivan Ilyich. Kaufman gives us a Tolstoy who cares for nothing less than understanding why we live and the power of art to unveil the mystery, a writer whose ideas are inextricable from his art. His study is a gift to both scholars and ordinary readers seeking a key - elegant but by no means contrived - to the work of this great Russian writer. - SL, professor of literature, Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Virginia.

This book arrived as advertised, was well packaged, and contains excellent information

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