

**Revolutionary Russia on Canvas:  
The Visual Voice of Late-Nineteenth Century Radical Russia**

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The dates used in this paper conform to the old-style Julian calendar, which was used in Russia until February 1918. In the 1800s, the Julian calendar lagged twelve days behind the Gregorian calendar used in the West.

Abstract

During the reign of Tsar Alexander III, Russia's political opposition forces suffered from the new emperor's repressive measures. Certain artists, however, were able to continue to praise these anti-monarchical ideals and figures by utilizing their canvases to encourage the cause of the imprisoned and dispersed revolutionaries; thus, Ilya Repin, Vasily Surikov, and Isaak Levitan became the visual voice of revolutionary Russia under Tsar Alexander III.

Specifically, with regard to Repin's *Religious Procession in Kursk Province* (1883), the examination focuses on Repin's desire to create a new hero for Russian society in the portrayal of a crippled young boy. In the painter's other two works, *They Did Not Expect Him* (1888) and *The Arrest of the Propagandist* (1892), the study scrutinizes the numerous manners in which Repin elevates the radicals to a Christ-like status. The study moreover explores Surikov's ability to depict veiled support of the revolutionary movement through the use of history painting in *The Boyarynia Morozova* (1887). The analysis further explores Levitan's use of landscape painting to convey a political message in his masterpiece *The Vladimirk Road* (1892).

As a result of Repin's, Surikov's, and Levitan's paintings, a realization forms that often artists most skillfully express the true prevailing political situations and concerns of an era. These painters, therefore, serve not only as a remembrance of the political opposition in late nineteenth-century Russia, but also, their works serve as a tribute to the rich and diversified artistic legacy of Russia.

With the ascension of Tsar Alexander III (r.1881-1894), Russia's political opposition forces suffered from the new emperor's severe measures to thwart attempts to reduce his autocratic authority. While late nineteenth-century Russia experienced a suppression of effective revolutionary efforts, certain artists were able to continue to promote and to praise these anti-monarchical ideals and figures. Among the most prominent of these painters were Ilya Repin, Vasily Surikov and Isaak Levitan, who managed to either display their works at exhibitions or display their creations in museum galleries. As a result, since the artists' choices of subject matter identified them with the revolutionaries and since these painters' publicly

exhibited their works, they encouraged the cause of the imprisoned and dispersed revolutionaries; thus, Repin, Surikov, and Levitan became the visual voice of revolutionary Russia under Tsar Alexander III.

In the late 1870s and into 1880s, Ilya Repin, among other artists, continued to focus on genre painting.<sup>1</sup> This era of genre painting,<sup>2</sup> known as Critical Realism, had its beginnings in the 1860s.<sup>3</sup> In contrast to the work of artists from the 1860s, who concentrated solely on decrying and critiquing social injustices,<sup>4</sup> the genre painters of the 1870s and 1880s also determined to praise the benevolent characteristics of life and strove to uncover new heroes and heroines.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, to Repin being aligned with these ideas of the *peredvizhniki*,<sup>6</sup> or wanderers, travelers, or Itinerants, who composed the Society of Traveling Art Exhibitions, *Tovarishchestvo peredvizhnykh khudozhestvennykh vystavok*, founded in 1870,<sup>7</sup> the democratic arena in which Repin associated generally acknowledged that artists must focus their attention on furthering the cause of social justice.<sup>8</sup> Artists, therefore, in order to advance this ideal depicted the common Russians in a true manner.<sup>9</sup> Also, in conjunction to the idea of the promotion of social justice, art required a nationalistic aspect. Art, which was to instruct the Russians in the correct manner in which to conduct their lives, was to serve a purpose, and art received its inspiration from the routine lives of the nation's people.

A brilliant example of the convergence of the ideas of the *peredvizhniki* in the 1870s and 1880s and Repin's democratic sentiments of social justice and purpose appears in his *Religious Procession in Kursk Province* (1880-1883). In order to portray realistically his subject, Repin traveled to the Kursk region to view a similar religious procession.<sup>10</sup> In this painting, the crowd trudges onward in two disheveled columns along an inhospitable road overlooked by hills dotted with the stumps of trees.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dmitri V. Sarabianov, *Russian Art: From Neoclassicism to the Avant-Garde: 1800-1917: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1990), 133.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 133

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>8</sup> Orlando Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia* (New York: Picador, 2003), 229-230.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

<sup>10</sup> Grigory Sternin, "Introduction," in *Ilya Repin*, by Grigory Sternin and Yelena Kirillina, in *Great Painters Collection* (Bournemouth, England: Parkstone/Aurora Publishers, 1996), 33.

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 93.



Figure 1. Ilya Repin, *Religious Procession in Kursk Province*, 1880-1883. Oil on canvas, 175 x 280 cm. Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

Among the throng of individuals, Repin depicts a variety of personages found in Russian society: the young, the old, the poor, the rich, the peasants, the merchants, the schoolboys, the monks, the teachers, the soldiers, the police officials, and the governmental clerks.<sup>12</sup> The procession, which is following an icon on its path to a monastery or church, clearly illustrates the disparity characteristic of Russian society.<sup>13</sup> Repin juxtaposes the peasants clad in coarse attire as well as individuals dressed in bright holiday caftans to the variety of more urban types of dress. As a result, the Realist painter minutely delineates the gap in the monetary and the social status of these individuals.<sup>14</sup>

Repin also illustrates the lack of true religious devotion by his pilgrims' scant attention to the cross, a symbol of the holiday<sup>15</sup> and by the hypocritical reverence of the gentry.<sup>16</sup> Specifically, Repin depicts the portly woman holding her icon in a satirical manner.<sup>17</sup> The woman, a member of rural Russia's upper middle class, proudly displays her supposed

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<sup>12</sup> W. Bruce Lincoln, *Between Heaven and Hell: The Story of a Thousand Years of Artistic Life in Russia* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1998), 195.

<sup>13</sup> Sternin, "Introduction," in *Ilya Repin*, 28.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>15</sup> Lincoln, *Between Heaven and Hell*, 195.

<sup>16</sup> Sternin, "Introduction," in *Ilya Repin*, 28.

<sup>17</sup> John Stuart, "Social Revolution and the Arts: 1855-1917," in *Art Treasures in Russia: Monuments, Masterpieces, Commissions and Collections*, introduction by Dmitri Obolensky, gen. ed. Bernard Myers and Trewin Copplestone (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1970), 139.

devotion by her assumed serious pose and by her prominent display of her icon. Further, to announce her piousness, the woman wears elaborate attire. Overall, none of the participants appear remotely concerned with the religious aspects of the ceremony since no eyes fall on these holy symbols.

In contrast to these superficially pious members of the gentry and to the prevalent mood of apathy, Repin depicts a young, crippled boy with an engrossing expression.<sup>18</sup> This youth's eyes reveal the only glimmer of hope as the resolute boy holds his head erect and gazes steadfastly into the future.<sup>19</sup> Repin's depiction of the boy as the only character who appears with hopeful eyes is the artist's attempt to introduce a new hero into Russian culture. The boy, whose young age signals the ideas of promise and potential, is the harbinger of a new generation which will not mechanically adhere to the established tenets of Russia's official religion. Instead, the young boy, filled with determination, represents this new generation which will adopt a more reverent and personal stance toward religion. Repin, thus, true to the *peredvizhniki*, creates the image of a new hero and conveys the additional emphasis of focusing on the positive elements within society.

Besides the artist's visually translating the ideas of the *peredvizhniki* onto canvas, Repin's portrayal of the young boy encourages the aspirations of the revolutionary movement. Amid the mass of people, either peasant figures or more affluent personages, individuals appear absorbed with their personal concerns. For instance, the group of monks, carrying the shrine, seems burdened by their woes as illustrated by the older sandy-haired monk's melancholy expression. The depiction of the deformed boy, however, portrays a stubborn defiance not swallowed by the complacency, depression, and anonymity of the crowd. This resolute manner does not remain unnoticed. A young girl walks behind the crippled boy, and though she bows her head and her scarf covers her eyes, the girl fervently stares at the young boy as if to silently encourage him to continue his determination. The boy's unyielding appearance serves to suggest that though the revolutionary movement and the advance of a more democratic Russia made little progress under Alexander III, a new generation is maturing. This new generation has the perseverance and the fortitude to struggle against seemingly insuperable odds, illustrated by the boy's physical disability, to guide Russia along the path of securing a freer and a more just society.

As Ilya Repin depicts the new heroes of Russia and lends reassurance to the anti-monarchical cause, the painter's *Religious Procession in Kursk Province* also is a harsh critique of the Russian Church and the Russian state. For example, the painter shows the dispute between the deformed boy and the police.<sup>20</sup> This scene illustrates the unrelenting behavior of the police as the man threateningly points his stick at the young boy: This depiction captures the brutal nature of the authorities, and the lowered horizon line and the authorities' upraised

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<sup>18</sup> Sternin, "Introduction," in *Ilya Repin*, 28.

<sup>19</sup> Lincoln, *Between Heaven and Hell*, 195.

<sup>20</sup> Sarabianov, *Russian Art*, 140.

positions heighten the emphasis of repressive power. The low horizon line and the treeless, thus lifeless, landscape cause the viewer to notice the downtrodden manner of the masses. The only prominent objects that tower above these people are the religious symbols, which are either disappearing from view or shrouded in dust, and the police and soldiers with their raised whips. Even at religious ceremonies, Repin notes that the distressed and poor cannot find relief from the oppressive manner of the authorities.

A specific condemnation of the Church appears in Repin's portrayal of the absence of assistance afforded to the deformed boy. The boy does not receive aid either from members of the clergy or from the supposedly devout members of the procession. This notion that these outwardly pious individuals cannot give relief to those persons that their religion specifically admonishes to aid reveals a stinging commentary on the shallow state of religion in late nineteenth-century Russia.

Further, Repin's unfavorable analysis of the state religion is a severe criticism of Tsarist authority. To assert his claim as the divinely appointed ruler of Russia, the Tsar, in various aspects of the coronation ceremony, received his trappings of royalty from Church officials. Though Alexander III placed the imperial crown upon his head, he initially received the crown from the Monsignor of Novgorod.<sup>21</sup> This close link between the Tsar and the Church meant that as Repin critiques the flaws of the Russian Orthodox Church, the artist also criticizes tsarist rule, which received a form of approval and blessing from the Church.

Though Repin castigates the authority of Church and state, the painter also separately reserves censure for secular imperial decrees. Ilya Repin's *Religious Procession in Kursk Province* is a sarcastic depiction of the circumstances in provincial Russia during twenty years after the freeing of the serfs. As mentioned previously, the painter illustrates the disparity of the prosperous and indigent individuals.<sup>22</sup> Further, Repin comments on imperial authority with his portrayal of the police's raised whips.<sup>23</sup> It is mentioned in the art journal *Vsemirnaya illiustratsiya, Universal Illustration*, that the picture captured the contemporary political situation in the rural areas since the local authorities approved of callous police measures to control the peasants.<sup>24</sup>

Not only does Repin capture the prevailing currents of rural Russia, but also with the enactment of more stringent provincial laws, the painter foreshadows the continued plight of poor rural Russians. In 1890, the government official, Pazukhin, introduced the formation of Land Captains,<sup>25</sup> individuals who were members of the lower poor gentry and reported to the

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<sup>21</sup> Charles Lowe, *Alexander III of Russia* (1895; repr. 1972., Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1972), 73. Citations are to the 1972 edition.

<sup>22</sup> Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art*, 93.

<sup>23</sup> Stuart, "Social Revolution and the Arts: 1855-1917," in *Art Treasures in Russia: Monuments, Masterpieces, Commissions and Collections*, 139.

<sup>24</sup> Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art*, 94, 96.

<sup>25</sup> Bernard Pares, *A History of Russia*, (def. ed. 1953), with a new introduction by Richard Pares, bibliography and new maps (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 409. Citations are to the 1966 edition.

Minister of the Interior. Among the powers of these newly established Land Captains were the abilities to override assembly resolutions, to halt cantonal court rulings, and to debar peasant officials from their duties.<sup>26</sup> Further, these officials were to direct every facet of peasant life; consequently, the peasants understood this new law as a movement to revert to serfdom.<sup>27</sup> With these future decrees that served to highlight the already prevailing disparity among the provincial Russians, Repin's *Religious Procession in Kursk Province* remains relevant in the 1890s.

This painting, acquired by the Tretyakov Gallery, was in the Eleventh Traveling Exhibit in 1883.<sup>28</sup> At these exhibitions, Russians viewed paintings by Repin that explore the issues important to the welfare of Russia.<sup>29</sup> During the same year that Repin displayed his Realist work, the revolutionary movement trembled as a result of the measures of the Tsar. Upon Alexander III's assumption of the throne, the new sovereign began a concerted effort to eliminate the threat of revolutionary terror.<sup>30</sup> He issued stringent sentences to radicals who had assassinated his father such as members of the People's Will, *Narodnaia Voila*.<sup>31</sup> In addition to the reactions of Alexander III, in the following years, the secret police were able to capture and to disperse radical movements and figures. With the assistance of the secret police agent Sergei Degaev, a former political agitator, the police were able to eradicate radical movements connected to the military. Also, the authorities were able to arrest prominent nihilists such as Vera Figner and destroy the radical cells she established.<sup>32</sup> Figner was the sole remaining free key leader of the People's Will who remained in Russia.<sup>33</sup> Amid these occurrences, Repin's painting, with its public showing, manage to educate the viewer about the harsh reality of rural Russia, acts as stringent critique of established authority, and offer a glimmer of hope about the future of Russia. With the revolutionary movement suffering significant defeats in 1883, Repin's *Religious Procession in Kursk Province* becomes a supportive pictorial voice to the suppressed revolutionaries.

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<sup>26</sup> Walter G. Moss, *A History of Russia*, vol. 1: to 1917 (The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 1997), 439.

<sup>27</sup> Pares, *A History of Russia*, 409.

<sup>28</sup> Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art*, 93.

<sup>29</sup> Sternin, "Introduction," in *Ilya Repin*, 18.

<sup>30</sup> W. Bruce Lincoln, *In War's Dark Shadow: The Russians before the Great War* (New York: The Dial Press, 1983), 169.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 163, 169-170.

<sup>32</sup> Norman Naimark, *Terrorists and Social Democrats: The Russian Revolutionary Movement under Alexander III* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 53.

<sup>33</sup> Lincoln, *In War's Dark Shadow*, 170.



Figure 2. Vasily Surikov, *The Boyarynia Morozova*, 1887. Oil on canvas, 304 x 587.5 cm. Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

The theme of censure of Church and imperial actions reappears in Vasily Surikov's *The Boyarynia Morozova* (1887). This painting brought great acclaim to Surikov and is a superb example of history painting; however,<sup>34</sup> interestingly, Surikov's artistic style originated in Realism.<sup>35</sup> As with Repin's, Surikov's creations greatly reflect the ideas of the *peredvizhniki*,<sup>36</sup> and similar to Repin, Surikov associated with the Itinerants and other individuals who favored democratic ideals and called for political change and social improvement.<sup>37</sup> Surikov, as with other artists, sought to depict national concerns; therefore, Surikov's creations or style were not departures from Realist ideas.<sup>38</sup> Further, while Surikov outwardly examined the Russia of the late 1600s, an era glorified in official state beliefs, in reality, his work was indicative of the late 1800s as Russia seemed ready to collapse.<sup>39</sup> Specifically, in the 1880s, Surikov's paintings captured the internal strife between the various societal elements and depict the individual's heroic strength during tumultuous periods.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Vladimir Kemenov, *Vasily Surikov 1848-1916*, ed. Olga Pirumova, trans. Arthur Shkarovksy-Raffe and Yury Nemetsky, in *Great Painters Collection* (Bournemouth, England: Parkstone Publishers, 1997), 71.

<sup>35</sup> Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, "The Intelligentsia and Art," in *Art and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Russia*, ed. Theofanis George Stavrou (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1983), 169.

<sup>36</sup> Steve Smith and Catriona Kelly, "Commercial Culture and Consumerism," in *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution: 1881-1940*, ed. Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 147, 149.

<sup>37</sup> Kemenov, *Vasily Surikov 1848-1916*, 7.

<sup>38</sup> Valkenier, "The Intelligentsia and Art," in *Art and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Russia*, 169.

<sup>39</sup> Rosamund Bartlett and Linda Edmondson, "Collapse and Creation: Issues of Identity and the Russian *Fin de Siècle*," in *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution: 1881-1940*, ed. Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 185.

<sup>40</sup> Kemenov, *Vasily Surikov 1848-1916*, 20.

Significantly, *The Boyarynia Morozova* concluded the works Surikov produced during his “tragic”<sup>41</sup> era.<sup>42</sup> The subject of this creation is the central figure, Morozova, who dared to flout the decrees of the Russian Patriarch and thus the Tsar. As a result of her treasonous actions, Morozova suffered death.<sup>43</sup> Morozova was a devout follower of Avvakum, who opposed the ideas of Patriarch Nikon.<sup>44</sup> In 1656, the program that Patriarch Nikon proposed included an alteration of certain church rituals. In response to these suggested changes, the Archpriest Avvakum led a group of individuals against such reforms as he declared that these alternations would bring about the destruction of the world.<sup>45</sup> Patriarch Nikon’s program, however, received endorsement from the state and later approval from a church council. As a result, in 1682, the authorities burned Avvakum at the stake.<sup>46</sup> Similar to Avvakum, Morozova suffered for her ideals. Officials confined the noblewoman to a convent, and she endured harsh questioning. Eventually, Morozova underwent torture and died in a pit in Borovsk in November 1675. The episode depicted by Surikov captures the scene in which the Tsar declared that Morozova be paraded in a peasant sledge to undergo the jeers of the people.<sup>47</sup>

As Morozova travels on the peasant sledge, the sledge cuts the mass of people into two groups. To the right of Morozova appear mostly supporters or sympathizers.<sup>48</sup> For instance, the pilgrim standing almost behind the seated Holy Fool shows an expression of respect and sorrow for Morozova. As this pilgrim reflects on the plight of Morozova, his expression also reveals that he is contemplating his own beliefs and ideals. Importantly, Surikov relied on sketches of self-portraits partially to depict the pilgrim’s countenance.<sup>49</sup> Further, to illustrate sympathy toward Morozova, the artist included the young noblewoman dressed in a rich blue coat. The young woman, with her bowed head, reflects on her weakness since she is not as courageous as Morozova. Additionally, the woman’s bowed head serves as the manner in which the young woman respectfully bids farewell to Morozova.<sup>50</sup> The other young noblewoman, sheltered from harsh reality, exhibits her horror at the tragic scene unfolding before her.<sup>51</sup>

Surikov further underscores the revered torment of Morozova by the strategic placement of the two youths, one alongside the sledge and the other directly behind Morozova. The young boy next to the sledge has seen Morozova, and his gaze focuses on the doomed woman. As he remains fascinated with Morozova, his former smile slowly disappears and his

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<sup>41</sup> Sarabianov, *Russian Art*, 152.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>43</sup> Kemenov, *Vasily Surikov 1848-1916*, 71.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>45</sup> Arthur L. George, “Prologue A Tale of Three Cities,” in *St. Petersburg: Russia’s Window to the Future: The First Three Centuries*, with Elena George (Lanham, Taylor Trade Publishing, 2003), xxxix.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, x1.

<sup>47</sup> Kemenov, *Vasily Surikov 1848-1916*, 74.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

inquisitiveness transforms into sorrow. Conversely, the youth behind Morozova has not yet seen her, so he remains simply excited by the event.<sup>52</sup> Unlike these sympathetic or naïve individuals, the priest, to the left of Morozova, sneers at the noblewoman's plight. With this depiction of the priest, a Church figure, Surikov continues the anti-clerical nature of Repin and Critical Realism.<sup>53</sup>

The artist, therefore, covertly demonstrates his sympathy for and veneration of individuals willing to defy the Church and state to defend their beliefs. Surikov's inclusion of himself as the compassionate pilgrim illustrates his approval and esteem for the unjustly persecuted. If Surikov had been ambivalent about such emotions or had he simply desired to create a work glorifying Russia's past, then the painter would not have included himself in such a poignant manner. Additionally, if Surikov were dismissive of individuals like Morozova, then the artist would have depicted himself as one of the figures who expressed joy at Morozova's fate.

Respect for those who opposed the established authority further appears in the artist's portrayal of the two youths to the side and to the back of the sledge. As the one young boy perceives the expression of Morozova, he becomes engrossed with her presence. This young man's recognizes the dedication and seriousness of the noblewoman. Surikov included these youths to show that when confronted with an individual devoted to his or her cause, the cheerful naïveté of society about the motivations and beliefs of these individuals slowly fades into an expression of subdued admiration. In contrast to this message, the inclusion of the sneering priest serves to remind the viewer that those individuals who defy established authority will continue to face the jeers and sadistic taunts of their oppressors.

In conjunction with these messages, the artists' depiction of Morozova serves to emphasize his attitude toward the unjustly persecuted. The noblewoman travels to her fate with her hand upraised, making the sign of the two-fingered cross, which flouted the new Church law of crossing oneself with three fingers.<sup>54</sup> Most significantly, Morozova is the focal point of the painting as her hand and her head draw the picture together.<sup>55</sup> Specifically, her head serves as the point which by invisible lines links all the other figures in the crowd.<sup>56</sup> Further, the colors employed in *The Boyarynia Morozova* have a psychological function.<sup>57</sup> Morozova's black attire as well as her pale, drawn countenance is the antithesis of the rich attire and healthy complexions of the noblewomen in the crowd.<sup>58</sup> These efforts differentiate Morozova from the other numerous figures and draw the viewer continually to the figure of the noblewoman.<sup>59</sup> In association with these elements, the clearly defined space between the sledge and the crowd

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>54</sup> Sarabianov, *Russian Art*, 151-152.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>56</sup> Kemenov, *Vasily Surikov 1848-1916*, 79.

<sup>57</sup> Sarabianov, *Russian Art*, 152.

<sup>58</sup> Kemenov, *Vasily Surikov 1848-1916*, 85.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 75-77. 85.

also forces the viewer to concentrate on the figure of Morozova. Additionally, the artist's skilled coloration of the background draws the viewer's eyes to Morozova. Snow blankets the distant background, but the decorations on the buildings, placed on the opposite sides of the procession, bring the viewer's unconscious eyes to converge on the defiant heroine. As Surikov compels the viewer to return his or her gaze to Morozova, who was willing to endure unfathomable horrors for her beliefs, then as with the young boy beside her sledge, one begins to slowly understand the magnitude and significance of Morozova.

This painting which portrays the condemned protagonist,<sup>60</sup> appeared in the Fifteenth Itinerant Exhibition in 1887.<sup>61</sup> At the painting's showing, the democratic intelligentsia recognized the painting as a challenge to the state and to the Church. Further, these individuals considered Morozova a martyr.<sup>62</sup> In accordance with these ideals, in 1881, Surikov witnessed the execution of a female revolutionary, who without reluctance faced death for her beliefs. The expression of Morozova thus stemmed from the countenance of a late-nineteenth century Russian female radical.<sup>63</sup> To substantiate this claim, the revolutionary Vera Figner saw Morozova as representing the courageousness of such revolutionaries as Sophia Perovskaia,<sup>64</sup> who, on April 3, 1881, was hanged for her leadership in orchestrating the assassination of Alexander II.<sup>65</sup>

The same year that Vasily Surikov exhibited *The Boyarynia Morozova*, authorities thwarted a group of revolutionaries who planned to assassinate Alexander III. Previously, the government's quelling of the organizations composed of students with similar nationalities and from similar locations,<sup>66</sup> the *zemliachestvo* associations, caused a former *zemliachestvo* organization, the Circle of the Don and Kuban, to become the Terrorist Fraction.<sup>67</sup> The group decided to align with the radical Peter Shevyrev in an effort initiate grave political action.<sup>68</sup> At the same time, the momentary success of the students against the Cossacks in November 1886 stimulated revolutionaries such as Alexander Ulianov and Peter Shevyrev to attempt more extreme measures.<sup>69</sup> This group of violent nihilists proudly proclaimed their indebtedness to the People's Will and viewed terrorism as a legitimate means in their struggle.<sup>70</sup> These revolutionaries decided to plan to assassinate Alexander III on March 1, 1887. The police, however, intercepted the letters by one of the members of the group;<sup>71</sup> therefore, the authorities

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<sup>60</sup> Sarabianov, *Russian Art*, 151.

<sup>61</sup> Kemenov, *Vasily Surikov 1848-1916*, 173.

<sup>62</sup> Figes, *Natasha's Dance*, 190.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>64</sup> Valkenier, "The Intelligentsia and Art," in *Art and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Russia*, 168.

<sup>65</sup> Moss, *A History of Russia*, vol. 1: to 1917, 438.

<sup>66</sup> Naimark, *Terrorists and Social Democrats*, 136.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 139, 141.

<sup>69</sup> Lincoln, *In War's Dark Shadow*, 170.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

apprehended the radicals before they could murder the emperor.<sup>72</sup> As one of the incarcerated nihilists remarked, with this attempt, the revolutionary movement ceased to exist for years.<sup>73</sup>

With the exhibition of Surikov's *The Boyarynia Morozova*, the imprisoned revolutionary forces' brave character and defiance continued to confront the public. This visual reminder of the opposition forces illustrated that though revolutionaries faced persecution for their ideals, these political agitators, as with Morozova, received silent sympathy from members of the Russian population. In addition, the setting of the painting, the late 1660s, showed the nihilists as well as other members of the democratic movement that often oppositional forces in Russia faced terrible repercussions. Finally, as with Repin's depiction of the young, crippled boy in *Religious Procession in Kursk Province*, the boy whose expression transforms upon seeing Morozova offers a new form of hero to the people. This boy signifies that as the collective Russians realize the perseverance and deep motivations of the revolutionaries, the mass of Russian people will come to better identify with the revolutionaries' causes and plight and thus join to make Russia a more democratic society. Surikov, therefore, with his depiction of a Russian's past defiance, manages to encourage the current dispersed revolutionaries and becomes a veiled but powerful visual proponent of Russia's radical movements.

Though Surikov's *The Boyarynia Morozova* and Repin's earlier work *Religious Procession in Kursk Province* attempt to conceal their blatant encouragement of the revolutionaries, later paintings by Repin clearly express the artist's sympathy with the radicals. In Repin's paintings, the revolutionary subject became an aspect of Realism;<sup>74</sup> furthermore, works in the later 1800s clearly illustrate the artist's views on the revolutionary movement and the consequences faced by those individuals who were active in its cause.<sup>75</sup> Additionally, two important characteristics of Repin's ability were his constant search for "Truth"<sup>76</sup> and the reasons for existence as well as the painter's inborn empathy for common Russians' daily lives and their despair or happiness.<sup>77</sup> With this further understanding of Repin's artistic style in the late 1880s as well as his personal concerns, the full meaning of *They Did Not Expect Him* (1884-1888) becomes readily apparent.

Repin's subject for this creation is drawn from the actions of Alexander III, who on the occasion of his coronation, issued amnesty for certain exiles. *They Did Not Expect Him* is a depiction of an exiled revolutionary coming back to his provincial estate.<sup>78</sup> In the painting, the main figure, the former exile, hesitantly enters the room. As the woman in the chair, the mother, eventually realizes that her son has returned, she leaves the chair.

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 174.

<sup>74</sup> Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art*, 103.

<sup>75</sup> Sternin, "Introduction," in *Ilya Repin*, 35.

<sup>76</sup> Sternin, "Introduction," in *Ilya Repin*, 20.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>78</sup> George, "Prologue A Tale of Three Cities," in *St. Petersburg: Russia's Window to the Future: The First Three Centuries*, 353.

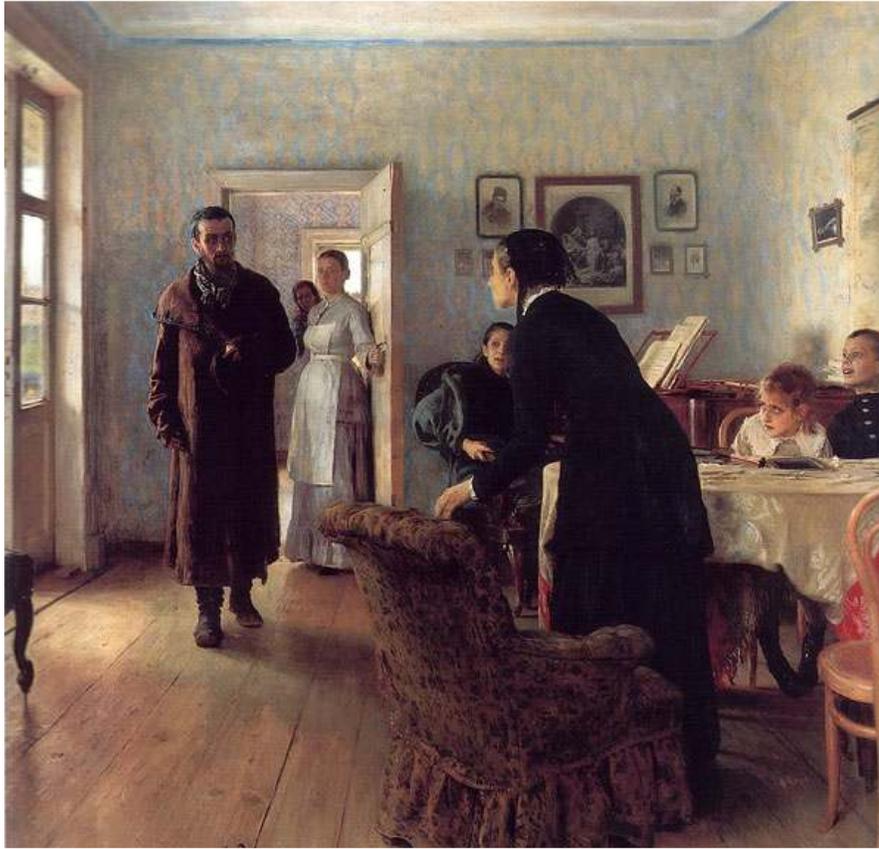


Figure 3. Ilya Repin, *They Did Not Expect Him*, 1884-1888. Oil on canvas, 160.5 x 167.5 cm. Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

The expression of the children varies from happiness to fear as expressed by the youngest child, who appears scared of the gaunt man.<sup>79</sup> Further, the placement of the figures mirrors the location of the figures in Rembrandt's *Pilate Presents Christ to the People*. The former exile's position is suggestive of Rembrandt's placement of Christ whereas the positioning of the woman, rising from the chair, is similar to Rembrandt's figure of Pontius Pilate. In both paintings, the similar moral theme appears: a superb life dedicated to an ideal is to undergo public review.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> George Heard Hamilton, *The Art and Architecture of Russia*, in *The Pelican History of Art*, founding ed. Nikolaus Prevsner, ed. Peter Lasko and Judy Nairn, 3<sup>rd</sup>. integrated ed. (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1983), 385.

<sup>80</sup> Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art*, 123.



Figure 4. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Pilate Presents Christ to the People*, 1634. Oil on paper stuck on canvas, 54.5 x 44.5 cm. The National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, London.



Figure 5. Ilya Repin, *They Did Not Expect Him*, 1884-1888. Oil on canvas, 160.5 x 167.5 cm. Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

In addition to Repin's positioning of the painting's figures in locations that resemble previous religious works, the use of lighting serves to reinforce the Christ image. Reminiscent of Christ's crucifixion, the former exile stands at the focus of two crossing beams of light. Even more suggestive of the comparable sufferings of the revolutionary and Christ is the placement of Karl Schteriben's engraving of Golgotha on the wall of the man's house.<sup>81</sup> With Repin's association of the former revolutionary with Christ, the artist selects the most poignant manner in which to express his approval for and sympathy with the apparent noble cause of the radicals. By Repin closely identifying this freed exile with Christ, as with the protagonist bathed in the light from the window, the artist imported the message that all radicals, whether they die for their cause or receive a possibly more lenient sentence, are worthy of the elevation and respect of a genuine martyr. The artist visually states that these individuals, similar to Christ, dedicated their lives to the truth, which sought to elevate and to give empathy to all peoples. Further, though the revolutionaries' cause is just, Repin reminds these political agitators that as with the man in the painting facing the reaction of his family they too will experience judgment and reaction by their families and the Russian people.

Besides the glorification of the revolutionaries, the painting also signifies the harsh effects of tsarist oppression. Repin presents the horror that the young people suffered because of Siberian solitude and forced labor. In addition, in *They Did Not Expect Him*, Repin reminds the viewer that the anguish of exile extends beyond the personal torment of the

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<sup>81</sup> Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art*, 119.

revolutionaries.<sup>82</sup> The work, thus, looks to the past and the future, and the viewer privately arrives at the conclusion of the situation behind the personal heartache.<sup>83</sup> As one critic noted, “Do we witness the end of one tragedy or the start of a new one?”<sup>84</sup>

The artist furthermore evokes the sufferings of the exile through the man’s physical appearance. The former exile’s years of torment appear in the form of his sunken cheeks, which denote the years of inadequate food coupled with the efforts of surviving in Siberia. In conjunction with this aspect of the man’s appearance, the protagonist’s reserved manner and the way the tattered coat hangs resignedly over his hands note the insecurity and broken spirit of the former radical. Further, though the man’s eyes hopefully yearn for a sign of welcome from his mother, the viewer can only imagine the woman’s expression. The young man’s tragedy may be only beginning as perhaps his family will not forgive him for his supposed treasonous acts and the associated shame endured by the family. Conversely, possibly, the young man’s family, upon recognition that he is their father and son, will gladly welcome him. No matter which reception awaits the man, Repin’s concern with the personal emotions of Russian lives and thus his depiction of the scene remind the viewer that tsarist repression and punishment caused the former exile to endure years of hardship and ultimately to face an uncertain future.

As this painting appeared at the 1884 Twelfth Traveling Exhibition of Peredvizhnik Art,<sup>85</sup> Repin again created a new hero, the individual who suffered as a result of Russia’s exiling of its political dissidents.<sup>86</sup> At the same time that Repin was celebrating the heroism of the revolutionaries, these radicals continued to confront defeats. For instance, during the reign of Alexander III, the revolutionary intelligentsia consisted of hundreds of current or former students, who often had withdrawn from or who suffered expulsion from universities for small violations. These students were poor and young, and the descendants of common Russians or were of non-Russian ancestry.<sup>87</sup> In addition, the suicides, the attempted suicides, and the failed protests in exile illustrated the horrible alienation the revolutionaries of the Bogoraz-Orzhikh group, a radical faction allied with violent revolutionary associations, faced from such sources as the liberal and autocratic Russian intelligentsia.<sup>88</sup>

This general prevailing attitude toward specific student and non-student radicals appears lessened by Repin’s depiction of the main figure in *They Did Not Expect Him*. Repin portrays a once affluent and prosperous individual as evidenced from his return to his provincial estate. Though the man was not an immediate participant of the 1880s’ radical movement, his appearance seems to remind the upper class members of the intelligentsia of the more affluent classes’ involvement in the struggle to create a democratic Russia. Repin’s attempt to capture

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<sup>82</sup> Lincoln, *Between Heaven and Hell*, 195.

<sup>83</sup> Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art*, 118.

<sup>84</sup> Lincoln, *Between Heaven and Hell*, 196.

<sup>85</sup> Lincoln, *Between Heaven and Hell*, 195.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>87</sup> Naimark, *Terrorists and Social Democrats*, 28.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 109

sympathy for this man, and thus the revolutionary cause, is successful as the artist humanized the plight of the radicals with his depiction of the man in a recognizable family setting. With this exhibited painting, Repin not only visually encouraged the continuation of and glorification of the revolutionary movement and its members, but provided his viewer with an understanding of the human context and sacrifice of the revolutionary struggle.



Figure 6. Ilya Repin, *The Arrest of the Propagandist*, 1880-1892. Oil on canvas, 34.8 x 54.6. Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

The continuation of the veneration of and the encouragement of the revolutionary movement and the commendation of imperial authority reappears in Repin's work of the 1890s. In *The Arrest of the Propagandist* (1880-1892),<sup>89</sup> Repin shows in a dramatic manner a young Russian being captured by the police and the authorities searching the man's room for illegal literature.<sup>90</sup> In contrast to the first edition of the painting, in which various suspicious, belligerent, or sympathetic figures surround the young man, in the later version, the central figure is in complete opposition with the other characters in the room.<sup>91</sup> During the young revolutionary's arrest, at the window is the man who denounced the propagandist. A notion of isolation of the radical is additionally enhanced with the use of specific colors. The protagonist has red clothing and red hair, but around him, the world appears in a harsh, silver light.<sup>92</sup>

Not only do the placement of the figures and the use of light serve to denote the nihilist's isolation, but also the expressions of his captors as well as other possible informers

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<sup>89</sup> Sternin, "Introduction," in *Ilya Repin*, 34.

<sup>90</sup> Hamilton, *The Art and Architecture of Russia*, 385.

<sup>91</sup> Sarabianov, *Russian Art*, 141.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

illustrate the young man's plight. To the right behind the door frame, an official triumphantly holds up a bundle of papers. This man appears excited at his find and attempts to attract the attention of the more senior official seated at the forefront of the painting. Additionally, one of the propagandist's captors, the man in the brown ragged coat appears jubilant as he maintains a firm grasp on the revolutionary. In conjunction with the man's gloating expression are the two individuals at the window who reveal their joy at the unfolding event. Further, the other individual at the window stares directly at the propagandist while the mysterious figure in the background, to whom the revolutionary may be attempting to cast his eyes, exudes an aura of sadistic satisfaction. This figure, who glares menacingly at the propagandist, may be another possible informer or the instigator of the search as suggested by his fiendish and calculating grin. Generally, this figure represents the demonic nature of oppressive authority.

Importantly, Repin also depicts a young woman dressed in white and pink standing in the immediate background. This woman expresses worried terror at the unfolding scene. Obviously not a participant in the arrest or search, the woman may be a close personal associate or revolutionary associate of the propagandist. Further, to connect the woman to the propagandist, Repin depicts her in pink, a derivative of red. As with *They Did Not Expect Him*, if the young woman is a friend of the revolutionary, Repin again captures the emotions of common Russians as he addresses the personal losses and human aspect of the radicals.

The assortment of individuals opposed to the man's actions affirms to the revolutionaries that their cause is often fraught with disillusionment. Repin, however, continues to encourage the movement in that the young propagandist's expression remains resolute though he suffers defeat. This determined character, amid treachery and hostility, admonishes the other radicals to maintain their obstinate stance against authority.

Further, Repin's use of the color red serves to reinforce the defiance of the propagandist. In contrast to the young former exile in *They Did Not Expect Him*, who appears in brownish hues, the propagandist appears with red attire and hair. This difference in color choice signifies that unlike the former exile, the propagandist's defiant revolutionary spirit continues. As with the nihilist's unyielding expression, the use of the color red reinforces the continued virulent nature of the radical cause.



Figure 7. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Christ Preaching (La Petite Tombe)*, C. 1652. Etching, 15.5 x w: 20.6 cm. Origins: Netherlands.



Figure 8. Ilya Repin, *The Arrest of the Propagandist*, 1880- 1892. Oil on canvas, 34.8 x 54.6. Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

Not only did Repin's use of color and depiction of the figures in *The Arrest of the Propagandist* illustrate the message of the painting, but also, the placement of the main figures portrays the radical as a glorified martyr. The propagandist's positioning clearly stems from Rembrandt's positioning of Christ in *Christ Preaching*.<sup>93</sup> Further, Repin was not the only member of Russian society to make this association between the revolutionary cause and its members. Vera Figner stated that if one thoroughly contemplated Christ's life as the supreme example of unselfish love, then he or she would comprehend the radicals' mood of thought.<sup>94</sup> In accordance with Figner's comments, the nihilists often referred to themselves as

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<sup>93</sup> Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art*, 123.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

“apostles”<sup>95</sup> and their cause as “the new religion.”<sup>96</sup> With these notions and Repin’s portrayal of the propagandist in the same stance as Christ, the artist sought to directly encourage the political agitators to continue to spread their message or in essence to preach the new meaning of the truth.

Repin’s *The Arrest of the Propagandist* appeared at his personal exhibition in November 1891,<sup>97</sup> and as with his works in general, the radicals and liberals tended to see Repin as praising their deeds and hopes.<sup>98</sup> Also, this picture serves as a monument to young Russians, who disseminated radical pamphlets to the complacent peasants.<sup>99</sup>

At the same time that Repin completed this work, radicals deluged St. Petersburg with revolutionary literature. As a result, arrests ensued;<sup>100</sup> nevertheless, the authorities were unable to locate the printing press of the People’s Will.<sup>101</sup> Similar to the defiant stance of the revolutionary in Repin’s work, the members of the radical cause remained steadfast to their mission. Repin’s exhibited painting, with its association of the radical with Christ and the nihilists’ continued resolute will, therefore, pictorially exalts and encourages the virtuous nature of revolutionary Russia.

In addition to the Realist and historical works of Repin and Surikov, Isaak Levitan sought to support the agitators as well as capture the suffering of these revolutionaries. Levitan was the most prominent of the landscape artists to fill the 1880s void,<sup>102</sup> and he may possibly be the most outstanding landscape painter in Russian history.<sup>103</sup> As with Repin and Surikov, Levitan associated with the Itinerants, specifically with the movement known as the “young itinerants.”<sup>104</sup> Further, on March 6, 1891, with fourteen of eighteen votes, the artist became a member of the Society for Itinerant Art Exhibitions.<sup>105</sup>

Levitan, therefore, dealt with social concerns through landscape painting.<sup>106</sup> Similar to the other painters, Levitan attempted to find the answers to the pressing questions in painting and

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>97</sup> “Russian Visual Arts Project: Timeline,” *Russian Visual Arts: Art Criticism in Context, 1814-1909*. The University of Sheffield: Humanities Research Institute: hriOnline Publications, 2005: 1.

<http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/rva/timeline/notes/1891-1.html>, 28 October 2006.

<sup>98</sup> Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art*, 103.

<sup>99</sup> Lincoln, *Between Heaven and Hell*, 195.

<sup>100</sup> Lowe, *Alexander III of Russia*, 268.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 268-269.

<sup>102</sup> Sarabianov, *Russian Art*, 160.

<sup>103</sup> James H. Billington, *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 437.

<sup>104</sup> Alexei Feodorov-Davydov, “Introduction,” in *Isaac Levitan: The Mystery of Nature*, trans. George Nemetsky, in the Great Painters Collection (Bournemouth, England: Parkstone/Aurora Publishers, 1995), 12.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>106</sup> Feodorov-Davydov, “Introduction,” in *Isaac Levitan: The Mystery of Nature*, 24.

literature, ““what is to be done?””<sup>107</sup> and ““who is to blame?””<sup>108</sup> As if in response to these questions, in *The Vladimirka Road* (1892) Levitan is able to unite the social and the historical aspect of the steppes to his ability to depict landscapes.<sup>109</sup>



Figure 9. Isaak Levitan, *The Vladimirka Road*, 1892. Oil on canvas, 79 x 123 cm. Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

The creation’s composition began as Levitan and his companion, Sophia Kuvshinnikova, were traveling from a hunt and realize that they were following the Vladimirka Road. Upon Levitan’s understanding the significance of the road, the painter commented on the fate of the numerous miserable individuals, who trudged along the road often with the sounds of their chains reverberating as they plodded onward to a life of exile in Siberia.<sup>110</sup> As Levitan and Kuvshinnikova contemplated the plight seen by the roadside and the tearful prayers addressed to the weathered altar, they sat at the base of the small shrine. The following day Kuvshinnikova noted that Levitan returned to the Vladimirka Road with an enormous canvas, and there in the presence of this symbol of Russia and in nature, he produced his work.<sup>111</sup>

The most prominent feature of the painting is the eternal road, common in Russian art, which now symbolizes hopelessness. The road exists in a state of seclusion with only the lone woman as a reminder of human life.<sup>112</sup> As the road disappears into the horizon, the low, darkening clouds that evoke rain fill the sky. The simple lay out of the road and the clouds

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<sup>107</sup> Feodorov-Davydov, “Introduction,” in *Isaac Levitan: The Mystery of Nature*, 24.

<sup>108</sup> Feodorov-Davydov, “Introduction,” in *Isaac Levitan: The Mystery of Nature*, 24.

<sup>109</sup> Figs, *Natasha’s Dance*, 407.

<sup>110</sup> Averil King, *Isaak Levitan: Lyrical Landscape* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2004), 67.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>112</sup> Sarabianov, *Russian Art*, 177.

induce a grand rhythm to the work. In addition, on either side of the road appears a set of footpaths made by an untold number of travelers.<sup>113</sup> The presence of the clouds hanging threateningly in the sky reflects the oppressive nature of tsarist Russia under which the people, not only the exiles, toiled. The depiction of the footpaths illustrate that life in Russia continues though the prisoners no longer play a role in Russian society. Further, of importance in the painting is that the barren landscape and the absence of trees, structures, or persons underscores the solitude and deprivation that awaited the exiles as they marched to Siberia.

As a result, Levitan's *The Vladimirka Road* is a sad painting with the atmosphere of an almost unyielding force in the lay of the expansiveness of the land and the manner in which the road cuts the footpaths and then continues to fade away.<sup>114</sup> In addition, the atmosphere of the painting, furthered by the artist's use of wide brush strokes of ash and gray-blue hues, vividly captures the despondency of the chained prisoners as they continued their laborious march to frigid Siberia.<sup>115</sup> This notion of the slowly disappearing road evoked the fate of the exiles. As these individuals gradually disappeared down the road and eventually into the loneliness and anonymity of Siberia, they too disappeared from the view of their families and friends thus becoming only memories. For these exiles, their former lives and aspirations, perhaps of the dream of a more just Russia, like the road, gradually dissipated as their thoughts became preoccupied with survival during the Siberian winters. For other exiles, the ability to be a martyr, to suffer, and possibly to endure death for the revolutionary cause gave them a sense of purpose and lessened the sorrow they felt as they left their loved ones.

Levitan is able to convey such various moods simultaneously with the altering light causing intricate shadows across the landscape.<sup>116</sup> The artist without the use of blatant symbols of the revolution or the use of thinly veiled revolutionary figures is able to capture the conflicting sentiments of these exiles. Further, Levitan's absence of the use of figures and the reliance on lighting to create the varying atmosphere of the painting intimately stirs the viewer's emotions as he or she understands the work's depiction of the Vladimirka Road in a more personal manner.

As a result, *The Vladimirka Road* appears as an eternal Russian symbol of an august but melancholy aspect of the nation. This painting could only arise from a person consumed by the idea of a democratic Russia and concerned over the future of his nation. As a result, though this is one of Levitan's simpler creations, it was also his most socially conscious creation,<sup>117</sup> and *The Vladimirka Road* received by the Tretyakov Gallery on March 11, 1894,<sup>118</sup> struck a nerve in Russian society as strong as any history or genre painting.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Feodorov-Davydov, "Introduction," in *Isaac Levitan: The Mystery of Nature*, 24.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>115</sup> King, *Isaac Levitan: Lyrical Landscape*, 69.

<sup>116</sup> Lincoln, *Between Heaven and Hell*, 253.

<sup>117</sup> Feodorov-Davydov, "Introduction," in *Isaac Levitan: The Mystery of Nature*, 24.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>119</sup> Sarabianov, *Russian Art*, 168.

During the preceding years, the 1880s, and into the 1890s, Russians faced more stringent penalties for involvement in revolutionary actions. For instance, a fear of radicals caused the Department of Police to mandate an increase in the double maximum punishment of administratively exiled agitators from five years to ten, and the authorities exiled Jewish dissents to the Yakutsk province in the northern region of Siberia.<sup>120</sup> In addition the “Regulations on Measures for the Safety of the State and the Protection of Public Order”<sup>121</sup> allowed governors to simply ignore the regular laws and courts. Governors, depending on the circumstances, could exile a person suspected of illicit acts, surrender a person to military courts, and render fines or imprison persons for a maximum of three months. Also, governors could disallow meetings of the local assemblies, fire specific officials, subdue newspapers, and close schools and factories.<sup>122</sup>

These situations and penalties made revolutionary activities more dangerous; consequently, in this atmosphere, Levitan’s work became more clearly recognizable as a tribute to the suffering of these political agitators. In this context, Levitan responds to the two pressing questions of his era. The mood of the painting suggests that the reactionary authorities are to blame for the suffering of the Russian people. Levitan, however, leaves the viewer to ponder whether individuals should continue to attempt to push Russia to adopt a more progressive agenda, though this action has caused and will result in the deaths of thousands of individuals, or should the Russian people, in order to seek societal stability, submissively yield to tsarist demands. Levitan’s *The Vladimírka Road* thus supremely captures the human aspect of tsarist oppression and becomes the visual outcry for Russia’s revolutionary movement through the delicate and haunting image of the landscape along the Vladimírka Road.

As Ilya Repin, Vasily Surikov, and Isaak Levitan became the visual revolutionary voice of Alexander III’s Russia, these painters encouraged the cause of the dispersed and imprisoned radicals with the artists’ choice of subject matter and subsequent exhibition of their works. With a study of these paintings, a realization forms that often artists most skillfully express the true prevailing political situations and concerns of an era. These painters, therefore, serve not only as a remembrance of the political opposition in late nineteenth-century Russia but also leave works which serve as a tribute to the rich and diversified artistic legacy of Russia.

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<sup>120</sup> Naimark, *Terrorists and Social Democrats*, 22.

<sup>121</sup> Moss, *A History of Russia*, vol. 1: to 1917, 439.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 439.

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### Biographical Sketch

Cadra Peterson McDaniel, born on April 13, 1984, lives in Little Rock, Arkansas. In 2002, McDaniel enrolled in Henderson State University, and in May 2005, she obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science with minors in Spanish and International Studies. While at Henderson, McDaniel was a member of Pi Sigma Alpha-Phi Tau Chapter, The National Political Science Honor Society, Undergraduate, 2004-2005; Alpha Chi-Arkansas Epsilon Chapter, National College Honor Scholarship Society, 2004-2005; The Gamma Beta Phi Society, 2003-2005; and The Honors College, 2002-2005. In addition as she pursued her undergraduate work, McDaniel received the Outstanding Graduating Senior Award in Political Science, 2005, the Lions Club Curtis Echols Scholarship in International Studies, 2005; and University Academic Scholarship, Henderson State University – 2002-2005. In August 2005, McDaniel began work on her Master of Liberal Arts degree in the Social Sciences with emphasis in Political Science. While pursuing this degree, McDaniel was a Graduate Assistant and was a member of Alpha Epsilon Lambda–Alpha Delta Chapter, 2006-2007; Who’s Who among Students in American Universities & Colleges, 2007; and Pi Sigma Alpha–Phi Tau Chapter, The National Political Science Honor Society, 2005-2007. McDaniel graduated with her M.L.A. degree in May 2007. Currently, she is applying to doctoral programs which focus on Russian history.