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David J. Galloway

Victim of Circumstance: Rastopchin's Execution Of Vereshchagin in Tolstoi's *Voina i mir*

David J. Galloway is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Modern Languages at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. His literary research interests are Russian narrative prose and theory of the 19th and 20th centuries, particularly that of the post-thaw period. This paper is based on his M.A. thesis (Cornell University, 1997).

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The Vereshchagin episode, describing the execution of a young student during the fall of Moscow in 1812, occupies Chapters 24 and 25 of Part 3, Book 3 of Lev Tolstoi's *Voina i mir* (*War and Peace*). This dramatic scene, in which Mikhail Vereshchagin is cut down by a dragoon on the order of Count Fedor Rastopchin, has received little critical attention given the breadth of work on the novel as a whole.[1] This is understandable on the grounds that the text does not constitute a large portion of *Voina i mir* and its characters are far from principal players. Yet investigating the episode reveals how Tolstoi deliberately added psychological, ideological, and theological subtexts to the early drafts, marking such subtexts by changes in narration, language, and direct allusions. Episodes such as this one are intricately structured to produce emotions, raise questions, and initiate a philosophical inquiry into the actions and thoughts of the characters concerned.[2]

The Vereshchagin incident was a significant historical event even before Tolstoi incorporated it into his novel. His adaptation of the execution, fusing philosophical and moral concerns—as couched in French political terms—with Christian imagery, draws parallels between Rastopchin and Pontius Pilate, and between mob violence and the Reign of Terror of the French Revolution. He thus indicts any expedient invocation of the Jacobin concept of the *le bien publique* (the public good) as justification for an execution. Rastopchin's character, as viewed through interior monologue, is shown as a victim of his own attempts at self-justification and rationalization; similarly, Vereshchagin is a victim of circumstance: his execution came about simply because he was a *convenient* subject for Rastopchin's rage. In a manner befitting Tolstoi's theory of history, Count Rastopchin is shown as a victim as well as a victimizer. His actions are part of the inexorable movement of peoples.

The Historical Foundation of the Vereshchagin Episode

The historical record of Mikhail Vereshchagin's execution begins some two months before his death. On July 3, 1812, the governor of Moscow, Count Fedor Vasilevich Rastopchin, ordered a broadsheet distributed on the streets of Moscow (see appendix 1). It announced that the student Vereshchagin had been charged with distributing a pro-Gallic pamphlet predicting that Napoleon would take Moscow and St. Petersburg within six months. Dismissing such predictions as only for the gullible, Rastopchin concluded by stating that the young man would receive the necessary punishment for this offense.[3] Yet despite this public notice of his crime, Vereshchagin's execution was unannounced on the streets. This was due to the fact that it was entirely impromptu.

The account of the execution as presented in *Voina i mir* relies heavily on historical sources for its broad outlines. One of Tolstoi's best-known sources, Count Philippé-Paul de Ségur's *Histoire de Napoléon et de la Grande Armée pendant l'année*

1812 (*History of Napoleon and the Grand Army in the year 1812*), describes how on September 2, in the presence and on the order of Rastopchin, Vereshchagin was killed by a group consisting of soldiers and common people (see appendix 2).[4] The student had not been sentenced to death, but only to hard labor. The execution (a misleading term which implies that the proper judicial process had been carried to its conclusion) was the result of a reaction on the part of soldiers and citizens. In de Ségur's *Histoire* the impetus for this act of murder is the shout of Vereshchagin's father; Tolstoi, however, presents a different scene, assigning principal blame for the young man's death to Count Rastopchin. According to the novel, the event unfolded in this way: on the morning of September 2, 1812, a mob of angry Muscovites gathered at Rastopchin's villa. The crowd, made up of workers from the lower classes, was determined to oppose Napoleon's occupation of the city and looked to the count for direction. Rastopchin, in an apparent effort to appease the threatening mob, ordered that Mikhail Vereshchagin be brought to the courtyard. There, on a direct order from the count, he was struck down and killed by the combined efforts of the soldiers and the crowd.

This is essentially the story preserved in Count Rastopchin's own testimony, published in a Russian translation from the French in *Russkaia starina* in 1889, edited by I. I. Oreus. In this document, the count describes the execution in terms of its actual events, but leaves out any explanation of *why* he ordered Vereshchagin's death:

> Приказав привести ко мне Верещагина и Мутона и обратившись к первому из них, я стал укорять его за преступление, тем более гнусное, что он один из всего московского населения захотел предать свое отечество; я объявил ему, что он приговорен сенатом к смертной казни и должен понести ее,— и приказал двум унтер-офицерам моего конвоя рубить его саблями. Он упал, не произнеся ни одного слова. (723)

> (Having ordered Vereshchagin and Muton brought to me and directing myself to the first of these, I began to reproach him for his crime, all the more vile that he alone of all the Moscow population wanted to betray his own country. I announced to him that he had been condemned to death by the Senate and that he must endure it—and ordered two corporals of my convoy to strike him with sabers. He fell without uttering a single word.)[5]

What is omitted here is precisely what Tolstoi took upon himself to insert when writing *Voina i mir*—the inner psychological processes that both preceded and followed Rastopchin's decision.

While the death of one man may seem insignificant in comparison to the losses at Austerlitz or Borodino, the Vereshchagin incident resonated in the minds of those who

lived through 1812 before Tolstoi ever chose to include it in his novel. The event is noted by Dmitrii Mikhailovich Volkonskii (1769-1835) in his diaries of 1812 and received detailed attention in a number of articles in the serial *Chteniia v imperatorskom obshchestve istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh*.[6] Fifty-six years after the execution, Prince Petr Viazemskii, recalling that tempestuous year, wrote:

> В исторической или гражданской жизни его есть одна темная страница: темная и по печальному событию, которым ознаменована; темная и по сбивчивым сведениям, сохранившимся о ходе и подробностях сего события. Каждому ясно, что мы говорим о смерти Верещагина. (211)
>
> (In his [Rastopchin's] historical or civic life there is one dark page: dark because of the sad event that marks it; dark because of the confused information which has been preserved concerning the course and specifics of this event. It is clear to everyone that we are speaking of the death of Vereshchagin.)

Viazemskii's words reveal much about the public perception of the incident and its resonance in the succeeding years. The execution of Vereshchagin, known to many who lived through 1812, evoked feelings of horror in the populace, and those feelings remained strong enough in the memory so as to be recalled by Viazemskii's epithet "dark page." Though Viazemskii may be exaggerating the situation for dramatic effect, even the tsar's own response to the execution seems indicative of the feelings evoked. In November 1812, Alexander I wrote to Count Rastopchin:

> Я бы совершенно был доволен Вашим образом действий при таких трудных обстоятельствах, если бы не дело Верещагина, или, лучше сказать, его окончание. Я слишком правдив, чтобы говорить с Вами иным языком, кроме языка полной откровенности. Его казнь была бесполезна, и притом она ни в каком случае не должна была совершиться таким способом. Повесить, растрелять—было бы гораздо лучше. (Borsuk 34)
>
> (I would have been completely satisfied with the manner of your actions under such difficult circumstances if it had not been for the Vereshchagin affair, or, better to say, its conclusion. I am too truthful to speak to you in any other language than that of complete frankness. His execution was useless, and in no circumstance had to be resolved in such a manner. To have hanged him; to have shot him—would have been much better.)

The tsar's response does not indicate that he is disappointed in the punishment per se, but that the method (способ) used was less than satisfactory. Obviously, mob justice as exhibited in the Vereshchagin execution was distasteful to Alexander, but whether this was due to the French Revolution or a fear of vigilantism (which could

lead to revolution) is unclear. In any case, the reaction to the execution was not purely a late nineteenth century invention—the historical interest suggests that the incident galvanized Russians of the time.

The historical event, rich with drama and implications for Russia of 1812, acts in the novel much as it did in real life. The death of Vereshchagin, while hardly a climax considering the overall plot of *Voina i mir*, nevertheless functions as a thematic climax during the fall of Moscow, as well as an integral part of the historical chapters of the novel. This is also true for the Vereshchagin episode; the critic Andrei Saburov has recognized the importance of the execution, noting, "Вся группа эпизодов образующих эту часть повествования, вяжется в один узел сценой убийства Верещагина" (167) (The group of episodes [the scenes in Moscow prior to the arrival of the French] comprising this part of the narrative is tied into a single knot by the scene of Vereshchagin's murder). The use of "knot" to describe this episode indicates its relative importance for the novel.

With Napoleon's approach in *Voina i mir*, madness and death envelop the citizens of Moscow, Pierre Bezukhov representing the former and Vereshchagin's execution representing the latter. Yet for all the sweeping effects and thematic links that tie the episode to the greater events of 1812, this small section also deals with a very specific issue in the life of one man: Count Fedor Vasilievich Rastopchin, the governor of Moscow. For the count, the Vereshchagin execution (as portrayed by Tolstoi) is an extremely personal matter. With typical detail, Tolstoi narrows his scope just as the epic sense of the novel reaches its height, and focuses on the moral implications of Rastopchin's choices. Tolstoi's trademark attention to psychological detail makes Rastopchin the centerpiece of the episode's emotional content—for through Rastopchin, Tolstoi engages his historical and moral debate with the reader.

The Psychological Characterization of Count Rastopchin

Tolstoi's depiction of historical figures dominates *Voina i mir*, his portrayal of Napoleon and Alexander being the most significant characterizations. But even a comparatively minor personage such as Count Rastopchin receives detailed treatment in the novel—in the episode, the narrative focus is on Rastopchin, not the young student Vereshchagin. As a participant in the drama of 1812, the count probably warranted a place in the description of the sack of Moscow from early on; Kathryn Feuer has commented that "Tolstoy's long deferral of the depiction of historical figures was a consequence of the novel's first generic conception, however, not of uncertainty in his interpretation of them" (25). The first mention of Rastopchin and Vereshchagin appears in Tolstoi's notes, where we find the three words "Граф Растопчин, Верещагин" (PSS 13: 42) (Count Rastopchin, Vereshchagin).[7] The binary nature of the characters is

explicit here—Tolstoi fully intended to explore the moment in when the two men's paths crossed.

The first work on what was to become the Vereshchagin episode took place from January to March, 1868 (Opisanie rukopisei 135). The majority of extant drafts mirror the final text: Count Rastopchin is the principal subject under consideration in the episode, and the bulk of the events described are viewed by the reader through Rastopchin's eyes and mind—overall, the count is the filter *through* which we see this small part of the history of 1812. The method of narration is one for which Tolstoi is repeatedly credited: deep, insightful exposure of psychological processes.

The insight into the count's mind is the basis of the reader's sympathy for Vereshchagin. There is a strong sense of incremental progression toward Rastopchin's final decision to execute Vereshchagin, and while Rastopchin's thoughts are outlined in various stages, Tolstoi exposes and comments on the count's motivations, revealing psychological processes of which that Rastopchin is unaware. This type of interior monologue, carried forward by the circumstances surrounding Rastopchin—reports of adjutants, meetings with Kutuzov, dispatches—is a feature of the later sections of *Voina i mir*:

> As the novel progressed Tolstoy restored the interior monologue but with a difference—while previously it had taken place entirely within the *thoughts* of the character, and its movement had been motivated by a fluid but still rational progression of those thoughts, now Tolstoy achieved something akin to the free-associational Joycean effect by presenting a series of mental states *not* by logical connections but by a succession of external stimuli (Feuer 22).

Tolstoi thus creates a fabric in which external events and Rastopchin's internal monologue alternate, a pendulum effect that grows until it culminates in death of Vereshchagin.

Tolstoi lays the groundwork for the execution as soon as Rastopchin reenters the narrative after his interview with Kutuzov, though we should note that Vereshchagin first becomes known to the reader when Pierre encounters the student's father (SS 307). The cause of the count's dissatisfaction—the fact that Moscow was being abandoned without a fight—is the spark that sets his mind along its path of blame and a search for retribution. His entire psychological state is summed up in one sentence: "Он почувствовал себя вдруг одиноким, слабым и смешным, без почвы под ногами" (SS: 354) (He unexpectedly felt himself ridiculous, weak, and alone, with no ground to stand on) (986). From this point, there are four more steps Rastopchin takes before conceiving the idea of venting his frustrations and those of the mob on Vereshchagin. In the morning, after waking

and reflecting on the previous day's events, he "почувствовал себя тем более раздраженным, чем более он чувствовал себя виновным" (SS 354) (felt the more irritated the more he felt himself to blame) (986-7). Rastopchin searches for a scapegoat, someone to whom he can transfer his pent-up anger and irritation. While his actions result in violence and death, his motivations are common human impulses—we would much rather blame others than ourselves, for when the fault is ours, the last thing we want to do is admit our guilt. Rastopchin's next mental move, in preparation for this step, is to absolve himself of all blame:

> Кто же виноват в этом, кто допустил до этого?—думал он.—Разумеется, не я. У меня все было готово, я держал Москву вот как! И вот до чего они довели дело! (SS 354)
>
> ("Who is to blame for it? Who has let things come to such a pass?" he ruminated. "Not I, of course. I had everything ready. I had Moscow firmly in hand. And this is what they have let it come to!") (987)

Rastopchin now begins to hate—he feels that it is necessary to hate the traitors who are to blame for his position and the plight of Moscow. At this point, two final actions remain to ensure the execution: the count firmly attaches himself to the idea of finding someone else to blame, and the unlucky Vereshchagin's name is mentioned just when Rastopchin is searching for a subject. The count has, by this stage, cast away all his hopes and plans—his mind begins to be dominated by only one object—revenge on those who caused him such annoyance:

> На все эти вопросы граф давал короткие и сердитые ответы, показывавшие, что приказания его теперь не нужны, что все старательно подготовленное им дело теперь испорчено кем-то и что этот кто-то будет нести всю ответственность за все то, что произойдет теперь. (SS 355)
>
> (To all these inquiries he gave brief and angry replies indicating that orders from him were not now needed, that the whole affair, carefully prepared by him, had now been ruined by somebody, and that that somebody would have to bear the whole responsibility for all that might happen.) (987)

Rastopchin's anger increases simply by looking at the mob below his window, and is elevated to the level of "неудрежимый гнев" (SS 357) (irrepressible rage) (989). The word rage is used four times in this section, and three times in one paragraph alone— it is impossible to be unaware of Rastopchin's surging emotions.

In the first draft of the episode, Rastopchin directs his comments to a red-haired and bearded кучер or извозчик (coachman) who stands in front of the crowd. This

man, who winks affirmatively at Rastopchin's every word, seems to the count "the embodiment of the mob, of the scum of the population."[8] The ominous feeling of danger and imminent violence is overwhelming by this point, augmented by the swelling mob outside the count's window. Then, the reader reads of the count's final thoughts, which pave the way for Vereshchagin as victim:

> Как это часто бывает с горячими людьми, гнев уже владел им, но он искал еще для него предмета. —Il leur faut un victime, пришло ему в голову . . . [и] по тому самому это пришло ему в голову, что ему самому нужна была эта жертва, этот предмет для своего гнева. (SS 357)
>
> (As so often happens with passionate people, he was mastered by anger but was still seeking an object on which to vent it. "Here is that mob, the dregs of the people," he thought . . . and this thought occurred to him just because he himself desired a victim, something on which to vent his rage.) (989)

This is the last time the reader is privy to Rastopchin's thoughts until Vereshchagin is dead. Tolstoi forsakes his omniscience and delivers only reasonable conjectures based on outward physical behavior. It is sudden and startling to move from in-depth psychological detailing to simple physical observation. Tolstoi's intent, I believe, was to increase the tempo of the episode: the inner thoughts of Rastopchin, while engrossing, nevertheless move at a slower pace. By continually building the count's thoughts until they reached the inevitable conclusion and pointed toward Vereshchagin's execution, then releasing the reader from the count's mind, Tolstoi creates a sense of acceleration in the execution scene. During that moment when the mob rushes at the traitor, no characters reveal their thoughts—it is as if the scene were simply being filmed. In addition to speeding up our perception of the action, Tolstoi grounds it in the physical; such a violent death has little mental process in it—the mob is consumed by their hate and desire for justice. Therefore, the thoughts of the participants have no place in the scene, and the arena is fully occupied by physical aggression. It is only after Vereshchagin's death that sanity returns to the mob, and at this point Tolstoi resumes his use of interior monologue.

Even the moment at which the count finally decides on Vereshchagin as his scapegoat is described without the benefit of omniscient narration. The effect of deliberately withholding Rastopchin's thoughts at this moment is decidedly chilling—his conclusions are obvious without words:

> — Что прикажете насчет Верещагина? Он ждет у крыльца,— отвечал адъютант.

— А! — вскрикнул Растопчин, как пораженный каким-то неожиданным воспоминанием. (SS 357)

("What are your orders about Vereshchagin? He is waiting at the porch," said the adjutant.

"Ah!" exclaimed Rastopchin, as if struck by an unexpected recollection.) (989)

It takes no particular insight to guess at the implications behind Rastopchin's "Ah!" and what they will mean for Vereshchagin.

The sheer irrationality of Rastopchin's rage evokes an involuntary sympathy for its object. Even though the motivation for the count's final order of execution is outside the sphere of most readers' experience, a human mind directs his behavior. The anger that our own failures arouse in us and our desire to place the blame on others are aspects of our daily lives. On one level, we can relate to Rastopchin, but Tolstoi reserves our sympathy for the victim, even though in the novel he is an almost complete unknown. Vershchagin, as we shall see, is not so much a sympathetic victim due to his identity as a Moscow student, but because he symbolizes the victim placed before a man full of his own power and eager for retribution.

Rastopchin's callous thoughts after the execution prevent the reader from quickly forgetting the episode. The count's musings while driving away from the scene of Vereshchagin's death do nothing to change the reader's negative impression of him. Several times after the execution Rastopchin appears to suffer remorse, but these instances are quickly swept away as his arrogant pride resumes its prime position in his psyche. This "teasing" of the reader involves us in the moral decisions of Rastopchin and makes us concerned about the outcome. At the moment the crowd surrounds Vereshchagin, Rastopchin "вдруг побледнел" ("suddenly turned pale") (992), and the reader hopes that his sense of repugnance at the gory death he ordered is a sign of repentance (SS 361). This impression is furthered in the same paragraph: "Лицо графа было бледно, и он не мог остановить трясущуюся, как в лихорадке, нижнюю челюсть" (SS 361) (The count's face was white and he could not control the feverish twitching of his jaw) (992). But Count Rastopchin is a man of transient, impetuous passions, and as soon as he is clear of the scene, safe in his carriage, the startling effects of the execution begin to wear off.

Perhaps the greatest irony of this section lies in Tolstoi's choice of words. As his carriage bears him away, "граф стал раскаиваться. Он с неудовольствием вспомнил теперь волнение и испуг, которые он выказал перед своими подчиненными" (SS 361) (the count began to repent. He remembered with dissatisfaction the agitation and fear he had betrayed before his subordinates) (992-

93). The irony here lies in the use of "to repent" in Rastopchin's situation. Rastopchin *regrets feeling remorse over Vereshchagin's death*. He is regretting the pangs of his conscience, not the act of the execution itself. In this sense, Rastopchin's repentance is an ironic statement in that he regrets what we would term a positive emotion—it is right to feel remorse over ordering a man to be killed.

Having made this significant step in his thoughts, Rastopchin is well on the way to becoming his old self. He justifies his actions twice more, both times focusing on what for him is the true excuse for his actions: the public welfare. Rastopchin uses his office and mostly self-appointed role as public defender for all it is worth, finding in it a complete justification for his actions. To the pragmatic count, Vereshchagin was a traitor, thus the execution was a legal necessity:

> я не мог оставить его безнаказанным, и потом je faisais d'une pierre deux coups; я для успокоения отдавал жертву народу и казнил злодея. (SS 362)
>
> (I could not let him go unpunished and so I have killed two birds with one stone: to appease the mob I gave them a victim and at the same time punished a miscreant.) (993)

Rastopchin, at this point, seems to have resolved any trivial inner qualms he might have had about his role in the execution, but the appearance of the lunatics on the road to the Iauzskii bridge severely upsets his temporary equilibrium. The eerie messianic words of one man bring Rastopchin's mind back to Vereshchagin, while "перед глазами видел одно удивленно-испуганное, окровавленное лицо изменника в меховом тулупчике" (SS 364) (his eyes saw nothing but the astonished, frightened, blootstained face of "the traitor" in the fur-lined coat) (994). Tolstoi, however, leaves the reader with one final, consoling thought:

> Как ни свежо было это воспоминание, Растопчин чувствовал теперь, что глубоко, до крови, врезалось в его сердце. Он ясно чувствовал теперь, что кровавый след этого воспоминания никогда не заживет, но что, напротив, чем дальше, тем злее, мучительнее будет жить до конца жизни это страшное воспоминание в его сердце. (SS 364)
>
> (Recent as that mental picture was, Rastopchin already felt that it had cut deep into his heart and drawn blood. Even now he felt clearly that the gory trace of that recollection would not pass with time, but that the terrible memory would, on the contrary, dwell in his heart ever more cruelly and painfully to the end of his life.) (994-95)

Yet Rastopchin's final words on the subject show that he will never personally

accept the blame for what had happened—he will blame it on anything and anyone except himself and will always hold staunchly to the assertion that everything he did, indeed, everything he does, is always for the public good (SS 364) (995).

The original draft of the episode bears little resemblance to the processes described above and contains little evidence of Tolstoi's thinking along the lines of guilt and blame, as the final text clearly shows. However, there is one instance in the drafts which gives evidence, perhaps the first instance, of Tolstoi's interest in Rastopchin as a man who has committed a criminal act; this moment appears in a meeting between Kutuzov and the count:

> Кутузов взглянул на него и в лице этого беспокойного человека прочел сознание совершенного преступления; он с отвращением еще раз взглянул на него, как бы отыскивая еще признаки, и отвернулся молча. (PSS 14: 295)
>
> (Kutuzov glanced at him and in the face of that uneasy man read the awareness of a genuine crime; he with disgust looked again at him, as if still finding signs, and fell silent.)

Even Kutuzov, who was not present at the execution and could not have heard of it (Rastopchin rode out of town immediately afterward) can sense something in the count. Perhaps Tolstoi considered this symbolic "mark of Cain" on Rastopchin too heavy-handed, for in the final version this scene is reduced and Kutuzov only "attempts" to see something written in Rastopchin's face: "Кутузов . . . старательно усиливался прочесть что-то особенное, написанное в эту минуту на лице говорившего с ним человека" (SS 364) (Kutuzov . . . trying to read something peculiar written at that moment on the face of the man addressing him) (995).

Tolstoi's aim in the detailing of Rastopchin's thoughts and emotions was to provide a complex portrait of the processes that led the count to execute Vereshchagin. In doing so, Tolstoi also selects the false altruism of "the public good" as Rastopchin's principle motivation. The effect of following the count through the episode also allows Tolstoi to present an actual example of the type of behavior he violently opposes—tyranny in the name of the public welfare. Rastopchin thus becomes a case study—for Tolstoi presents and refutes the theory of the public good, and then proceeds to offer a prime example of that theory in practice—Count Rastopchin. The count's constant allusion to the public good makes historical reference to the principle of *le bien publique*, which became infamous as a result of the French Revolution and Reign of Terror. The public good not only drives all Rastopchin's actions as he attempts to reconcile his participation in the execution, but it also is the basis for his use of the

French language.

The Public Welfare and Rastopchin's Use of French

The use of French in *Voina i mir* as a whole has a troubled history—from the first publication of the novel, readers objected to what they saw as the *overuse* of French, which led to dramatic redistributions of the French in the novel through several editions.[9] Tolstoi employs various languages in the novel for specific purposes, whether to introduce irony or enforce verisimilitude.[10] In the Vereshchagin episode, different languages are deliberately used to call attention to the ideological issues raised in the text.

Tolstoi's use of French and Russian throughout the novel represents a historical reality. Count Rastopchin, who is the most prominent figure in the episode and whose thoughts and words are continually reported, uses both languages. His French also seems merely to fit the novel's historical context—Russian noblemen of the period spoke French as well as or better than they did Russian. While on first glance it may appear that the switch between French and Russian has no particular significance, a close analysis of the text reveals that this is not so. The French of the Vereshchagin episode is unified thematically: nearly every French phrase which is uttered, besides being appropriate to the surface narrative, also functions as part of an extended allusion to both the concepts and the historical facts of the French Revolution.[11]

This had been a concern of Tolstoi's from the beginning. As Kathryn Feuer has observed, the development of themes in the second half of the novel came about "from material that Tolstoy had first introduced into *War and Peace* because he wanted to contend with the ideas of the French Revolution" (204). This subtext can be seen right from the start of the finished novel, when Pierre Bezukhov, speaking of the execution of the duc d'Enghien, argues that "а один Наполеон умел понять революцию, победить ее, и потому для общего блага он не мог остановиться перед жизнью одного человека" (SS 4: 28) (And Napoleon alone understood the Revolution and quelled it, and so for the general good, he could not stop short for the sake of one man's life) (19). Already here Tolstoi mentions the public good, a principle critical to the Vereshchagin episode.

The count's French, by expressing ideological concepts of the Revolution such as *le bien publique*, creates a correspondence between Moscow of 1812 and Paris of the 1790s. Moscow's situation in 1812 factually parallels the French setting before the Terror. Aptly, Tolstoi compared the city to a "queenless hive," and this is exactly what Paris was in late 1794.[12] With the king dead, the French were left at the mercy of two forces–the Assembly and the Parisian mob. Moscow before Napoleon's

occupation is also without a leader—though St. Petersburg was the capital, the threatened city was Moscow. Alexander's absence and Rastopchin's lack of control mirrors the Parisian conflicts: tension between the central government and the small mobs and growing criminal impulses.

However, the allusion to the French Revolution also functions on a more specific and detailed level. Tolstoi's object is not simply a vague connection between the two time periods, but a close correspondence of social theory. The focus of the Vereshchagin episode is the principle of mob justice. We should remember that for Muscovites of 1812, the French Revolution had occurred less than two decades previously and undoubtedly still echoed in their collective consciousness. With Louis XVI's death in 1793, the monarchies of Europe suffered a brutal shock, and the nobility also saw itself as threatened. The dominant images of the Revolution, no doubt, were that of the guillotine and the Terror, although the mob executions preceding the Terror proper, when victims were torn apart by bystanders en route from prison to their execution, also must have retained a visceral impact. The general lesson that aristocratic Europe learned from the 1790s was that the common people, if pushed too far, could erupt in a violent manner. In addition, Tolstoi's novel resonates on two historical levels: as a comment on the French Revolution, but also as a note on contemporary events. Russia's struggle with reforms in the 1850s and 1860s, particularly regarding the peasants and the institution of serfdom, intrigued Tolstoi. However, this interest met with eventual frustration and impatience, and he turned from his intial optimism. The mob of the Vereshchagin episode is not merely a reflection of a Parisian mob in 1790—it is also Tolstoi's vision of a Russian mob in 1860 or later, and his fear of revolution as a result of mismanaged reforms.

But in the past or the present, the revolutionary mobs that terrorized Paris stood as a dangerous symbol for the European ruling elite. Any sort of mob movement, however benign, could not help but be viewed as a menacing specter of the Revolution or as the fruit of its teachings. As an example, Maximilien Robespierre, who popularly epitomized the Terror and its ideological basis, expressed the following sentiment, which typifies the principle of mob justice:

> Si nous trouvions trop d'obstacles à faire justice des traîtres, des conspirateurs, des accapareurs, nous dirions au peuple de s'en faire justice lui-même. (10: 94)
>
> (If we found too many obstacles to do justice to traitors, conspirators, and monopolists, we would say to the mob to take justice into their own hands.)

The significant word here is "lui-même." For the people to take justice into their own hands was to disregard the monarchy's system of justice, a step that also

communicated a disregard for the head of the monarchy. This breakdown of state structure into something very close to anarchy is at the heart of the fears of European monarchies after the French Revolution. Therefore, from Count Rastopchin's point of view, the mere *presence* of a mob in Moscow instantly signals the dangerous disregard for order that characterized Paris during the Terror.

Although Count Rastopchin's reaction to the Moscow mob convincingly suggests that Tolstoi deliberately constructed the episode to exploit the historical associations of the mob and the principle of mob justice, this was not a last minute change, but rather a connection that Tolstoi had considered for some time. In Variant 217 of the episode, written in early 1868, Rastopchin explicitly echoes the connection that Tolstoi makes more subtly in the final text:

> «А как ужасна чернь. . . . Чернь, да, это—та чернь, которая делала революцию во Франции.» И мысли далекие от революции и т. д. пришли ему в голову, но представление лица Верешагина беспрестано перебивало их. (PSS 14: 296)

> ("And how horrible is the mob . . . The mob, yes—that mob which carried out the revolution in France." And thoughts distant from the revolution, et cetera entered his head, but the appearance of Vereshchagin's face continually interrupted them.)

Perhaps the allusion here is heavy-handed, with its deliberate mentioning of the "revolution in France," and thus led Tolstoi to rewrite it. His reasons may also have stemmed from the fact that the final version of the episode, without such explicit statements, fully conveys the correspondences between the two historical periods. But whatever the reasoning behind the editorial changes, it should be clear that Tolstoi's agenda included the allusion to revolutionary Paris.

The mob's actions dominate the Vereshchagin episode. It is both the catalyst for the execution and the inspiration for many of Rastopchin's French comments. These comments are isolated in the sense that the count speaks French in the episode—his adjutants and soldiers converse solely in Russian—and this isolated use of the language naturally calls attention to itself, for although other characters seem aware of the mob's threat, especially the superintendent of police, whose carriage is pursued by the crowd in chapter 23, only Rastopchin refers to them in French. While other characters refer to the mob with words like люди, толпа, and народ, the count uses *la populace*, *le peuple*, and *la plébe*. The distinction is subtle: simply referring to the crowd in French connects the reader to history, and the further actions of the mob reinforce the parallel to the Revolution. Tolstoi also uses the concept of contradiction in the episode: Rastopchin, as a monarchist and supporter of the tsar, holds ideas of mob rule and

revolution in contempt; therefore, it is out of character for him to use French revolutionary jargon. The odd juxtaposition of his personal beliefs with the words he speaks alerts the reader. With this foundation in place, Tolstoi builds his correspondences by focusing on the mob, the most potent symbol of the Revolution.

Count Rastopchin's attitude toward the mob indicates his awareness of its potential power. Though he clearly holds the people in contempt, calling them "la lie du peuple" (the dregs of the people) he nevertheless consistently adopts a submissive stance from the moment the crowd appears. This posture belies his derogatory remarks and suggests that latent fear, rather than feelings of disgust or superiority, are foremost in his mind:

> "La voilà la populace, la lie du peuple,— думал он, глядя на толпу, — la plèbe qu'ils ont soulevée par leur sottise. Il leur faut une victime",— пришло ему в голову, глядя на размахивающего рукой высокого малого. (SS 357)
>
> ("Here is that mob, the dregs of the people," he thought as he gazed at the crowd, "this rabble they have roused by their folly! They want a victim," he thought as he looked at the tall lad flourishing his arm.) (989)

The count's method of negotiation can only be described as an attempt to pacify the mob. When he first sees the crowd, he remarks, "Il leur faut une victime." This comment, oddly enough, occurs before he has even spoken to the Muscovites (and we should note that the mob never has an opportunity to address Rastopchin concerning its reasons for assembling) and reflects his attitude: as he sees it, the mob *requires* a victim, and it is as if no other option exists for him but to obey. Similarly, after the execution the count reflects, "Il fallait apaiser le peuple," a statement which echoes throughout the episode:

> «J'avais d'autres devoirs,—подумал он—Il fallait apaiser le peuple. Bien d'autres victimes ont péri et périssent pour le bien publique»,—и он стал думать о тех общих обязанностях которые он имел в отношении своего семейства. (SS 361-62)
>
> ("I had other duties," thought he. "The people had to be appeased. Many other victims have perished and are perishing for the public good"—and he began thinking of his social duties to his family.) (993)

Apaiser as used by Rastopchin not only has connotations of submission to the mob's authority, but also a lack of personal responsibility for whatever may follow. The introduction of "family" here makes it seem as if he is seriously considering his position for a moment, but this is undercut in the next sentence, when he continues by

stating, "я должен был сохранить и жизнь и достоинство главнокомандующего" (SS 362) (it was my duty to safeguard my life and dignity as commander in chief) (993). One's life and dignity are not "public" concerns, and Rastopchin confusedly sees personal survival and triumph as an integral part of "the public good."

The count's later remarks simultaneously indicate his disgust for the mob and his recognition of its strength. Again, after the execution, Rastopchin confesses: «La populace est terrible, elle est hideuse, —думал он по-французки.—Ils sont comme les loups qu'on ne peut apaiser qu'avec de la chair» (SS 361) ("The mob is terrible-disgusting," he said to himself in French. "They are like wolves whom nothing but flesh can appease") (993). He derides the bestial nature of the mob, but those same qualities make the mob "unappeasable" and therefore unstoppable. Also, Tolstoi calls attention to the use of French by clearly informing the reader that the count "thought" this sentiment in French.

The counterpoint to the idea of the mob, and Tolstoi's second significant ideological concept in the episode, is the principle of *le bien publique* or "the public welfare." This phrase, like the concept of the mob, is heavy with connotations of the Reign of Terror. *Le bien publique*, or общественное благо, can be interpreted in two ways: either as a justification for autocracy or as an excuse for submission and slavery. Or, in other words, an individual can claim to represent the public welfare and follow a personal agenda, or can plead impotence by stating that he or she was only submitting to the demands of the public welfare. Rastopchin uses both interpretations in the course of *Voina i mir*, exploiting the first before the French invasion and falling back on the second after Vereshchagin's execution.

The concept of the public welfare influenced most of the events of the French Revolution. It was more than simply a theory in the heads of a few Jacobins or Assembly members—it became a slogan for the Revolution and could be heard on the streets in the Latin "Salus populi, suprema lex (the people's welfare is the supreme law)" (Bernier 392). While the revolutionaries lacked consensus, and their opinions on which form of government was best for France varied from an English-model constitutional monarchy to an American-style republic, nevertheless the common principle that grounded all these ideas was that of the people's welfare, tranquillity, or safety. Government, to the revolutionaries, should base itself on the needs of the people. Tolstoi's idea of public welfare has its origins in the Revolution's *salut public*, or "public safety," a notion that essentially embodies the same approach toward democracy. Robespierre expressed this sentiment in 1793 when he wrote:

> "[Le gouvernement revolutionaire] est appuyé sur la plus sainte de toutes les lois: le salut du peuple; sur le plus inéfragable de tous les titres, la nécessité" (10: 275)

(The revolutionary government is founded on the most holy of all laws: public safety; on the most ineffable of all rights, necessity).

"Le salut du peuple" reveals that the common basis of revolutionary ideals is not in the hereditary nobility, but in the common people. Thus, the people's welfare is the guiding principle of government.

Tolstoi prepares for the introduction of the public welfare in an allusion to the Terror, which actually appears before the Vereshchagin episode. However, given the dense ideological ground covered in the episode, this allusion only acquires its true impact *after* reading the whole of the episode. The quote is in Russian rather than French, but its role should not be understated simply because of that fact. It functions as a prelude to the ideas of the episode: "Все ужасы террора основывались только на заботе о народном спокойствии" (SS 353) (All the horrors of the reign of terror were based only on solicitude for public tranquility) (985). These lines seem more ominous and visionary when reread—we see that what Tolstoi hinted at was Vereshchagin's death. The idea of "public tranquillity" is essentially *le bien publique*—both terms tap into the vague notion of the public or народ as the source of law.

Le bien publique occurs four times in the text: in two of these cases, the count is the speaker; in the remaining two, the implied narrator breaks into the story to insert a personal comment. In addition, Tolstoi makes a direct allusion to the Terror in chapter 24, using a variation of *le bien publique*, "public tranquillity." Count Rastopchin uses the notion of the public welfare to ease his guilty conscience and justify the death of Vereshchagin—he places his actions along with those of other noble Muscovites who have died, are dying, and will die for the public good. His role is that of a servant, and therefore he has no responsibility for his actions. Rather, the people as a whole are guilty. Presumably this thought continues to occupy him as he absently repeats the phrase at the end of the chapter:

«Но я не для себя сделал это. Я должен был поступить так. La plèbe, le traître . . . le bien publique»,—думал он. (SS 364)

("But I did not do it for my own sake. I was bound to act that way. The mob, the traitor . . . the public welfare," thought he.) (995)

The two narrative comments repeat the idea of *le bien publique* for the reader, but with a significant bias. The first of these is a rather sarcastic dismissal of Rastopchin's justification, an ironic comment whose significance rests solely on the word полагал: "Он полагал, что Федор Васильевич Растопчин жертвует собою для bien publique" (SS 362) (He fancied that Theodore Vasilyevich Rastopchin was sacrificing himself

for the public good) (993). The second, however, is another matter entirely. Tolstoi here seems to want to reinforce the connection to the Revolution, but on his terms alone. His opinion of *le bien publique* is nothing but negative, as we see in his long indictment of the concept after Vereshchagin's execution:

> Мысль, успокоившая Растопчина, была не новая. С тех пор как существует мир и люди убивают друг друга, никогда ни один человек не совершил преступления над себе подобным, не успокоивая себя этой самой мыслью. Мысль эта есть le bien publique, предполагаемое благо других людей. Для человека, не одержимого страстью, благо никогда не известно; но человек, совершающий преступление, всегда верно знает, в чем состоит это благо. И Растопчин теперь знал это. (SS 362)

> (The thought which tranquillized Rastopchin was not a new one. Since the world began and men have killed one another no one has ever committed such a crime against his fellow man without comforting himself with this same idea. This idea is *le bien public*, the hypothetical welfare of other people. To a man not swayed by passion that welfare is never certain, but he who commits such a crime always knows just where that welfare lies. And Rastopchin now knew it.) (993)

This comment attacks *le bien publique* as a principle. The words "ни один человек" speak for the whole of human civilization rather than isolated violent incidents such as the Revolution. This quotation embodies a strong suspicion on Tolstoi's part—suspicion of altruistic motives and a desire to pierce any pretensions to discover the true motivations of people.

For Rastopchin, the phrase *le bien publique* represents the ultimate avoidance of responsibility for his actions. Tolstoi directly attacks this ability to displace blame by using the public welfare as a noble goal, the attainment of which validates any action. It is another application of the principle that the end justifies the means. Rastopchin's thoughts and actions after the execution are an interesting narrative record of his attempt to deal with his feelings of guilt over Vereshchagin's death. In keeping with Tolstoi's condemnation, *le bien publique* has no positive examples in the episode.

The French of the Vereshchagin episode serves not only to force the reader to recognize the connection between the events of 1812 and the 1790s, but also to judge them—Tolstoi's condemnation of the principle of the public welfare echoes his underlying sentiment that such false social philosophies embody too much potential for ill compared to their potential for good. For Tolstoi, the events of 1812 must have been a clear example of how quickly and violently a mob can act. He took the historical drama of the Vereshchagin episode and connected it to the last great manifestation of the mob—the French Revolution. There can be no comparison in terms of degree—the death of

one student by the mob can in no way equal the guilt of the Terror's many murders—but Tolstoi seems to suggest that once we have made this first step, it is not so difficult to proceed. He views the act of lightly dispensing with human lives, and justifying one's role as a servant of the public welfare, as simply following the paradigm of the Revolution and Terror.

Tolstoi's final agenda is to condemn Rastopchin and to create a backdrop of tension and fear, preparatory to the execution, which gives the episode its dramatic power. The French allusions and coincidental historical parallels turn the Vereshchagin episode from a brief moment during Napoleon's invasion into a significant Tolstoian commentary on both the ethics of men like Rastopchin and the values of humanity in general. Rastopchin is the embodiment of the principles Tolstoi detests and fears—principles inherent in the French phrases the count expresses in both his mind and in his speech. Having now fleshed out the psychological and philosophical bases for Rastopchin's actions, Tolstoi added a final layer—the metaphysical, in which the Christian legend is presented as a correspondence to the count's actions as well as a standard by which he is to be judged.

Christian Ideals and the Role of Ivan Makarovich

The third feature of the Vereshchagin episode is Tolstoi's addition of a Christian religious context after the execution, which directly affects Rastopchin's interior monologue and the circumstances of the episode's conclusion. The prime figure in this religious material is Ivan Makarovich or Makarych, named only in the drafts of the episode.[13] Variant 214 gives a few details of his history and 216 includes him as a witness to Vereshchagin's death. Ivan's only surviving appearance in the final version occurs in the last section of part 3, book 3, chapter 25, where he is the unnamed lunatic who runs after Rastopchin's carriage, uttering messianic religious gibberish. The proof that the wild-eyed inmate of the lunatic asylum is the same man who appears in the drafts as Vereshchagin's friend lies in the identical description of his eyes in both the variants and the final text: "Черные, агатовые зрачки его бегали низко и тревожно по шафранно-желтым белкам" (SS 363) (His black, agate pupils with saffron yellow whites moved restlessly near the lower eyelids)[14] (994). The shouting lunatic, then, is none other than Ivan Makarovich. The obvious question should be, what led Tolstoi to make such a change in this character?

By examining Makarych's role in the variants, we can state that Tolstoi initially viewed Ivan's role as important to the structure of the episode: he is a friend of both Vereshchagin and Pierre Bezukhov, thus providing a more personal connection between the novel's hero and the seemingly unrelated execution. The connection with Pierre is apparent in Variant 231, in which the hero's words

imply a stronger and closer connection to Vereshchagin than is apparent in the final text. When Rastopchin asks Pierre about Kliucharev, Bezukhov replies: "Я мало знаю его и не могу и не хочу сказать вам, это есть масонская тайна; но как человека знаю его, как прекрасного, честного, благородного человека и также и Верещагина, его товарища" (PSS 14: 349) (I know him little, and I cannot nor do I wish to say to you that it is a masonic secret; but as a man I know him as an excellent, honest, noble person as too is Vereshchagin, his friend). Ivan Makarych's presence as an observer at the execution itself also is necessary, since the reader has no sympathetic relationship with Count Rastopchin as a character. Yet Tolstoi evidently decided in the end that Ivan served no great purpose in the episode as originally written.

Variant 216, the original version of the death of Vereshchagin, is a slim text of two and a half pages, which Tolstoi expanded to nearly four times its length in the final version. It does not describe Rastopchin's psychological dilemma, as I have described earlier, and certain prominent details are absent. First, a reader notices that the personalities in the mob have changed. In the final text, the tall youth, who in the previous chapter incited the mob to go to Rastopchin, plays a major part in the execution and is practically beaten to death in the confused melee that kills Vereshchagin. In the variant, however, no such person exists, and the nearest parallel is the red-haired coachman who stands nodding and winking as the count speaks. The coachman is also described as a "representative of the people," intimating that perhaps the tall youth takes his place in the later version with only a change of physical description (PSS 14: 294).

Ivan Makarych functions as a strict observer until after Vereshchagin is dead—he then becomes the center of the action for a brief moment:

> Иван Макарыч дотеснился до ядра толпы и увидал разбитое и измазанное в крови пыли, мертвое лицо, которое билось по мостовой . . . . —Люди, что вы сделали?—закричал он и, закрыв лицо руками, зарыдал и побежал из толпы. (PSS 14: 294)
>
> (Ivan Makarych pushed his way to the center of the crowd and saw, broken and smeared in blood and dust, the dead face, which had been struck against the pavement. "People, what have you done?" he shouted out, and covering his face with his hands, broke into sobs and ran from the crowd.)

Immediately before this incident, the red-haired coachman is also overcome and runs off. The fact that two men are so affected by the execution is a powerful indictment of Rastopchin's action, but Tolstoi evidently decided otherwise. The only remnant of this scene remaining in the final text is when the crowd, the

members of which come up one by one to look at the corpse, turn away disgusted (SS 360). No one is overcome and runs off, but the basis for this movement seems to be the coachman's and Ivan's actions in the variant.

In the variant, there are only two instances where God is mentioned, and it does not imply that Vereshchagin is in any way analogous to Jesus Christ. The first person who uses the name of God is Ivan Makarych, who, after the execution, says, "Убийцы царства божия не узрят, кто ударит мечом—от меча и погибнут" (PSS 14: 294) (Murderers do not see the heavenly kingdom—those who strike with the sword, die by the sword). Other than this, the passage is decidedly devoid of religion, in contrast to the final version, which in addition to Ivan's rantings has Vereshchagin shouting, "Граф, один бог над нами . . . " (Count, there is one god above us . . .) before he is fatally struck (SS 359) (991).

Ivan Makarych's role as observer and commentator on the execution is exchanged, in the end, for his role as an escaped lunatic encountering Rastopchin on the Sokolniki field.[15] From Tolstoi's description, Ivan is placed with the lunatics milling about on the field around the asylum—there is no indication that he has just run from the city center to intercept the count. But it is my opinion that Ivan's presence at the execution is not to be posited here, since there is more spiritual and mystical value in assuming that he was not present. It seems that Tolstoi decided that the personal presence of Ivan, a minor character at best and one whom the reader had little opportunity to come to know, only marginally added to the execution scene. His final role, springing from his connection in the variants with the asylum, allows his words to strike a direct blow at Rastopchin and is perhaps Tolstoi's personal retribution for the count's cruelty. Ivan's appearance and his words are a direct moralistic and religious call for an accounting of Rastopchin's actions.

The underlying motivation for this change must have been the nature of the historical context for the episode, particularly as it corresponds with the tale of Christ's life as told in the Gospels. Of course, at the moment of the execution no such connection is mentioned, but it becomes more and more clear as the events unfold. Consider the facts of the execution as originally portrayed by Tolstoi: a young man is the accused, he is undeserving of capital punishment, and the governor's decision to put him to death is influenced by the behavior of the crowd outside. Add to this the knowledge that the governor was directing the other prisoners and lunatics to be released, and we have a fairly close correspondence to the Christian paradigm. Count Rastopchin takes the part of Pontius Pilate, while Vereshchagin assumes the role of Christ. That these elements are all historical facts rather than the products of Tolstoi's imagination lends them even greater impact. If we imagine the author examining this scene, it is not unlikely to see him suddenly struck by the correspondences between what took place in ancient Jerusalem and Moscow of 1812.

In addition, Tolstoi's second thematic line, that of *le bien publique*, also finds a supporting detail in the Christian legend. In the Gospel of John, a sentiment remarkably similar to *le bien publique* appears. The scene is the debate of the Pharisees and their council as they attempt to decide on what action to take regarding Jesus.

> But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all; you do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish." He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation. (John 11: 49-51)

Caiaphas made his decision based on his own position and responsibility and his attention to the needs of the nation and the people as a whole, without apparent regard for personal feeling. This is not to say that he may not have had a *personal* motivation, but that externally he did not reference such an emotion and instead cited *le bien publique* as his reason. Rastopchin is in a similar situation—though Tolstoi presents both sides of his inner debate to the reader. The count, as the only figure of authority at Vereshchagin's execution, is a combination of both Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate in that he possesses the viewpoints of the former and the political strength of the latter, which allows him to carry out the execution. In exploiting the Christian connection Tolstoi links the theme of Rastopchin's guilt and the philosophy of public good with his role as Pontius Pilate. This strengthens the author's philosophical case and advances his argument, as revealed by the Christian story and the Vereshchagin incident, that the needs of the public should not outweigh those of the individual.

All the Christian imagery in the final text appears in one saying of Ivan Makarovich's as he runs alongside Count Rastopchin's carriage near Sokolniki. As I have pointed out above, just prior to the encounter Rastopchin has largely come to grips with his actions regarding Vereshchagin's execution. The meeting, however, instantly calls Rastopchin's actions into question. Ivan's shouts recall the image of Vereshchagin to the count's mind, and turn his thoughts back to the young man's death.[16]

Ivan's words, as he runs alongside Rastopchin's carriage, are as follows:

> — Трижды убили меня, трижды воскресал из мертвых. Они побили каменьями, распяли меня . . . Я воскресну . . . воскресну . . . воскресну. Растерзали мое тело. Царствие божие разрушится . . . . Трижды разрушу и трижды воздвигну его,— кричал он, все возвышая и возвышая голос. (SS 363)

> ("Thrice have they slain me, thrice have I risen from the dead. They stoned me, crucified me . . . I shall rise . . . shall rise . . . shall rise. They have torn my body. The kingdom of God will be overthrown . . . Thrice will I overthrow it and thrice re-establish it!" he cried, raising his voice higher and higher.) (994)

Ivan's shouts are a curious mixture of prophecy and history in the Christian vein.[17] When we analyze his words for meaning, it is difficult to arrive at a clear picture of how they should be interpreted. The first sentence, speaking of being thrice killed and thrice risen, obviously taps into the Christian paradigm of Jesus being executed and resurrected on the third day. However, Ivan's use of the pattern suggests that he somehow fits into this pattern. If we posit Christ as the first in this series, then the second and third martyrs are unknown, although given Rastopchin's reaction, we may safely say that Vereshchagin is one of them, possibly the third. The use of воскресну (I will rise), however, suggests that we are either in the midst of the third event, or another (the fourth). Either a resurrection is to come, or first another death and then a resurrection. Tied to Vereshchagin, the words suggest that somehow Rastopchin has ordered the killing of someone holy, or one who will/has taken on holy significance by virtue of his death. The paradigm is then repeated with the alteration of an individual for the Kingdom of God. Christ speaks often of the Kingdom of God and its establishment, but not of its destruction—that is the fate assigned to the earth and humankind.

This Christian imagery is Tolstoi's most significant thematic addition to the episode, although we should note that Ivan does not use the name Christ or even the appellation God or Lord. The words have Christian implications because of their references to death and resurrection, crucifixion, and the reestablishment of the Kingdom of God. All these images abound in the Gospels and Revelation. The insertion of Christ into the equation suddenly calls an entirely new association to mind when viewing Rastopchin. He suddenly appears as a Pontius Pilate intent on appeasing the crowd, with Vereshchagin as the obvious Christ figure. Ivan's comments, while opening up a wide forum of discussion for readers, evidently cause Rastopchin much consternation, and as he urges his coachman to drive faster, he can only think what the allusion means for him personally. Of course, as I have shown above, the psychological detail devoted to Rastopchin, as well the moral quandary he undergoes, are not elements of either Pilate or Caiaphas.[18] These are Tolstoi's additions, designed to show how Rastopchin wrestles with his own conscience in an attempt to justify and rationalize his role.

The Christian coloring of the episode not only adds another dimension to our evaluation of Rastopchin, but also moves the episode itself to a different level of discourse. The early variants were areligious—they possessed the fine philosophical debate on *le bien publique* and related ideals, but were bare of religious trappings. Tolstoi's revisions produced a chapter that integrated philosophy, morals, and religion into the dilemma of Count Rastopchin. His prose thus leaves no room for varying interpretations of Rastopchin—to read the episode is to participate in an attack on false altruism and self-justificatory

rationalization.

The use of Christian imagery represents an ironic reading of Rastopchin's actions. Tolstoi's use of *le bien publique*, which suggests the Christian parallel, allows the reader to compare Rastopchin with Caiaphas and Pilate. It is the Gospel sentiment that condemns the count, since Caiaphas and Pilate did remove a threat of sorts by executing Jesus. Rastopchin, however, removes no threat and solves no issue. He does not prevent Napoleon from taking Moscow by his actions, nor does he enable the people to better resist the French. Tolstoi shows that Rastopchin's "selfless" act (as the count sees it) is nothing more than an individual attempt to transfer blame and expiate his own anger. Rastopchin is merely the latest in a line of men who sought to separate their personal responsibility from their actions—just as Pilate washes his hands to absolve himself of blame, Rastopchin resorts to *le bien publique* as a defense against the prickings of his own conscience.

The Legacy of Vereshchagin

Tolstoi's preoccupation with the French Revolution as both historical event and social phenomenon is apparent from his formative work on *Voina i mir* as well as its early appearance in the finished text—in Pierre Bezukhov's statements at Anna Scherer's soirée. But it also concludes the novel: in the second epilogue, Tolstoi presents the reader with this argument:

> В 1789 году поднимается брожение в Париже; оно растет, разливается и выражается движением народов с запада на восток. В этот двадцатилетний период времени огромное количество полей не паханы; дома сожжены; торговля переменяет направление; миллионы людей беднеют, богатеют, переселяются, и миллионы людей-христиан, исповедующих закон любви ближнего, убивают друг друга. (SS 7: 310-22)
>
> (In 1789 a ferment arises in Paris; it grows, spreads, and is expressed by a movement of peoples from west to east. During that twenty-year period an immense number of fields were left untilled, houses were burned, trade changed its direction, millions of men migrated, were impoverished, or were enriched, and millions of Christian men professing the law of love of their fellows slew one another.) (1314)

This movement, for which Moscow is the farthest point (крайный предел), is the focus of all Tolstoy's historical questions of *why* such events took place. His investigation into motives and causes is directly expressed through the Vereshchagin episode, in which the reader is granted a detailed analysis of Rastopchin's progression to the execution.

In fact, to label this section of *Voina i mir* the "Vereshchagin" episode may be to interpret Tolstoi's work incorrectly. If the criteria for labeling the section rests solely on the matter of which character appears, is influenced, or acts more, then we should properly term it the "Rastopchin" episode. It is the count who uses Jacobin philosophy to defend his actions; it is the count whose psychological struggles with those actions occupy most of the chapter; and it is the count who must face the ravings of Ivan Makarovich, the lunatic prophet whose words have too much relevance. Vereshchagin, on the other hand, is hardly even a character—he becomes a symbol, or perhaps a backdrop which helps us evaluate the count. The reader never meets him before the execution, and while our sensitivity may be aroused by his death, we do not so much mourn the passing of Vereshchagin as we mourn the death of a young innocent—his personality and identity are immaterial, and his death only moves us as the death of a helpless human being. Furthermore, as Kathryn Feuer has observed, Tolstoi's primary emphasis in *Voina i mir* is on the nobility: "in [Tolstoi's] view of Russian society the people, in the sense of the common people, played only a supporting role; they were objects, not subjects; material, not makers" (145). This is why the focus on the episode is on Rastopchin—for the count as a *nobleman* is important to the author. Similarly, Tolstoi's reaction to *le bien publique* can be connected to the historical reality of the emancipation question: he felt that such an act should be undertaken on an individual basis rather than with professed obligations to the populace (Feuer 145).

Given the level of attention that the death of Vereshchagin received in the years after 1812, it was almost a certainty that once Tolstoi decided to depict Moscow's fall, the execution would appear in some form in *Voina i mir*. The question was, then, how to portray an event that still managed to galvanize his countrymen. He chose, to my mind, a unique approach: rather than showing the event through the eyes of Pierre Bezukhov, or another of the protagonists, Tolstoi elected to have the villain of the episode—a decidedly minor character in the novel—speak his own defense. By placing Rastopchin at the chapter's center, Tolstoi gives the reader a chance to either forgive or condemn the count—the reader is invited to share in an evaluation of Rastopchin's actions. The effect is a curious example of justice: first we have the execution and then the trial, as Tolstoi depicts Rastopchin's skirmishes with his conscience.

Though it first may appear that the victim of the episode is clearly Vereshchagin, I think Tolstoi's view is more complex. Keeping in mind the author's conception of history, we see that Rastopchin is a truly helpless man: observe how, at the end of chapter 5, Tolstoi announces the coming execution:

> этот человек [Растопчин] не понимал значения совершающегося события, а хотел только что-то сделать сам, удивить кого-то, что-то совершить патриотически-геройское и, как мальчик, резвился над величавым и

неизбежным событием оставления и сожжения Москвы и старался своей маленькой рукой то поощрять, то задерживать течение громадного, уносившего его вместе с собой, народного потока. (SS 290-291)

(this man [Rastopchin] did not understand the meaning of what was happening but merely wanted to do something himself that would astonish people, to perform some patriotically heroic feat; and like a child he made sport of the momentous and unavoidable event—the abandonment and burning of Moscow—and tried with his puny hand now to speed and now to stay the enormous, popular tide that bore him along with it.) (931)

Rastopchin emerges as a victim due to his lack of understanding of how human history functions. The count is a dabbler, a meddler—not fully realizing, until after the execution, how powerful the mob is and how serious the consequences of his actions can be. The fervor that caught the Muscovites in the courtyard and led to Vereshchagin's death was also the fervor that prompted Rastopchin's order to strike. In this sense, all present that day were victims of the tides of history, which led them to that place and made it so easy for the choices of that instant, when Rastopchin's shout hung in the air with the raised sabers of the dragoons, to follow a particularly destructive path.

Rastopchin's only opportunity to avoid the flow of history is during his self-reflection; but here Tolstoi shows us a man who is flawed in his understanding and appreciation of his office and his class: flawed as a human being in that he cannot take responsibility for his actions and finds nothing reprehensible in his conduct, as revealed through interior monologue. But of course the count cannot console himself without a prop, a support, a historical precedent which will justify his role—and thus he turns to the Jacobin ideal of *le bien publique*. Through this concept, Rastopchin can completely push away his doubts and remorse by making Vereshchagin a martyr for the good of the people. But human history has a long list of martyrs, so Tolstoi draws the reader back to one who for many would be the epitome of martyrdom—the New Testament Jesus. The Christian context is yet another indication by the author that Rastopchin is playing with fire—and that the consequences are lasting and profound. By the end of the Vereshchagin episode, Tolstoi has transformed a minor historical incident into a complex narrative which, though appearing to strike out in new directions with minor characters, in fact touches on nearly every major theme of *Voina i mir*.

Appendix 1: The Broadsheet of Count Rastopchin Concerning Vershchagin

The following is the text of the broadsheet distributed on the streets of Moscow, July 3, 1812 (quoted from Borsuk [74]).

Московский военный губернатор, граф Растопчин, сим извещает, что в Москве показалась дерзкая бумага, где между прочим вздором сказано, что французкий император Наполеон обещается через шесть месяцев быть в обеих российских столицах. В 14 часов полиция отыскала и сочинителя, и от кого вышла бумага. Он есть сын московскаго второй гильдии купца Верещагина, воспитанный иностранным и развращенный трактирною беседою. Граф Растопчин признает нужным обнародовать о сем, полагая возможным, что списки с сего мерзкаго сочинения могли дойти до сведения и легковерных, и наклонных верить невозможному. Верещагин же сочинитель и губернский секретарь Мешков переписчик, по признанию их, преданы суду и получат должное наказание за их преступление.

The Moscow military governor, Count Rastopchin, informs all that in Moscow an impertinent paper has appeared, where among other nonsense it was stated that the French emperor Napoleon has promised to be in both Russian capitals within six months. At 2:00 the police tracked down both the author and the source of this paper. He is the son of the merchant Vereshchagin of the second Moscow guild, educated by foreigners and corrupted by tavern conversation. Count Rastopchin deems it necessary to make this public, thinking it possible that copies from this loathsome piece may have come to the notice of both the gullible and those inclined to believe impossibilities. Vereshchagin the author and Meshkov the provincial secretary (the copyist), according to their confessions, will be brought to trial and receive the requisite punishment for their crime.

Appendix 2: De Ségur's Account of Vereshchagin's Execution

Count de Ségur's *Histoire de Napoléon et de la Grande Armée pendant l'année 1812* (1824) describes the gathering of the mob and the young student's execution (259-60).

That day a terrible scene brought this melancholy drama to an end. When the last day of Moscow had dawned, Rastopchin mustered as many men as he could seize and arm. The prisons were opened, and a dirty, disgusting mob poured out. These miserable creatures rushed into the streets with ferocious joy. Two men, a Russian and a Frenchman, were picked up in the midst of the horde and taken before Rastopchin, who reproached the Russian with his betrayal. He, the son of a merchant, had been arrested while inciting the people to revolt. The alarming aspect of the case was that the young man had been found to belong to a sect of German religious and political fanatics called Matinists. His audacity had not failed him in prison. It seemed for a moment that the spirit of "egalite" had entered into Russia. He could not, however, be made to disclose any accomplices.

At the last moment his father rushed in. All expected to hear him plead for his son's life; but it was his death he demanded. The governor granted him a few minutes in which to speak with his son and gave him a blessing. "I bless a traitor!" he cried, and turning upon him in a terrible voice with threating gestures.

This was the signal for his execution. The unfortunate lad was cut down with the badly aimed blow of a saber. He fell, but only wounded; and perhaps the arrival of the French might have saved him if the people had not noticed he was still alive. The wild mob forced the barrier, threw themselves upon him, and tore him to pieces (95-96).

Appendix 3: French Phrases in the Vereshchagin Episode[19]

Voina i mir, Ch. 25 (SS)

La voilà du populace, la lie du peuple, — думал он, глядя на толпу,— la plèbe qu'ils on soulevée par leur sottise. Il leur faut une victime (357).

"Here is that mob, the dregs of the people," he thought as he gazed at the crowd: "this rabble they have roused by their folly! They need a victim." (989)

La populace est terrible, elle est hideuse,— думал он по-французки. — Ils sont comme les loups qu'on ne peut apaiser qu'avec de la chair (361).

"The mob is terrible—disgusting," he said to himself in French. "They are like wolves whom nothing but flesh can appease" (993).

Ill fallait apaiser le peuple. Bien d'autres victimes peri et perissent pour le bien publique (361).

The people had to be appeased. Many other victims have perished and are perishing for the public good (993).

Мысль это есть bien publique, предполагаемое благо других людей (362).

This idea is le bien publique, the hypothetical welfare of other people (993).

«Ежели бы я был только Федор Васильевич, ma ligne de conduite aurait été tout autrement tracée. . . .

Had I been simply Theodore Vasilyevich my course of action would have been quite different . . . . (993).

Он полагал, что Ф. В. Растопчин жертвует собою для le bien publique . . . .

he fancied that F.V. Rastopchin was sacrificing himself for the public good. . . . (993).

я не мог оставить его безнаказанным, и потом je faisais d'une pierre deux coups (362).

I could not let him go unpunished and so I have killed two birds with one stone (993).

«La plèbe, le traître. . . . le bien publique»,—думал он (364).

"The mob, the traitor . . . the public welfare," thought he (995).

Variant 216 (PSS, vol. 14)

«Il faut être Romain». Граф Растопчин велел вывести Верещагина на крыльцо и вслед за ним вышел сам (293).

"One must be a Roman." Count Rastopchin ordered Vereshchagin brought out to the porch, and went out himself right after.

Для Растопчина это было олицетворение de la plèbe, de la lie du peuple, и он к нему более обращался (293).

For Rastopchin this man was the personification of the common people, of the dregs of society, and he directed himself more to him.

. . . крикнул Растопчин и опять невольно взглянул на рыжего представителя de la plèbe (294).

. . . Rastopchin shouted and again involuntarily glanced at the red-haired representative of the common people.

Variant 217 (PSS, vol. 14)

Ему казалось, что его волнует весь ужас положения Москвы, отечества, le bien publique (295).

It seemed to him that the whole horror of Moscow's situation, of the fatherland, the public welfare—concerned him.

Как ужасна чернь—la populace (295).
How horrible is the mob—the rabble.

Il leur fallait une victime. J'ai fait ça pour le bien publique (295).

They required a victim. I did that for the public good.

J'ai fait ça pour le bien publique,—повторял он себе. . . (295-96).

I did this for the public good, he repeated to himself.

Variant 240 (PSS, vol. 14)

—Вот она, la plèbe, la lie du peuple, la populace», думал он. —Les grands moyens dans les grandes circonstances, dans les grandes calamités publiques. On m'a fait des avances, mais cela ne me donne pas le droit de negliger le bien publique. Il faut apaiser la populace. Il leur faut une victime. Une victime pour le bien publique. (Da, le bien publique, против силы этого аргумента—ничто не может устоять (386).

"There it is, the common people, the dregs of society, the rabble," he thought. "Great means in great circumstances, in great public calamities. It has advanced me, but that does not give me the right to neglect the public good. It is necessary to appease the rabble. They require a victim. A victim for the public good. (Yes, the public good: nothing can resist the strength of this argument.)

. . . когда известно то, что составляет le bien publique (386).

. . . when it is known what consitutes the public good.

Граф Растопчин в своей служебной карьере не такие жертвы, как этот купчик в лисьем тулупе, видел приносимые на алтарь du bien pulique (386-87).

Count Rastopchin in his own career in the civil service had seen much greater victims than the merchant in the fox fur coat brought to the altar of the public good.

Эти два лица преставлялись графу Растопчину олицетворением de la plèbe, de la lie du peuple (389).

To Count Rastopchin these two faces represented the personification of the common people, of the dregs of society.

Что же я позволю себе думать о таком ничтожестве. Le bien publique! (391).

Why do I permit myself to think of such a nonentity. The public good!

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Notes

1. Viktor Shklovskii is one of the few critics who has discussed the episode in any depth. In *Material' i stil' v romane L. Tolstogo "Voina i mir,"* 94-96, he discusses some of the historical accounts of Vereshchagin's death and the parallels between Tolstoi's eventual description of the execution and the eyewitness's evidence. The sum of this analysis is a note on the repetition that Tolstoi employs to heighten the resonance of words such as "Saber him!" (Руби!). For a general account of the treatment and appearance of Rastopchin in literature after 1812, see Ovchinnikov's article.

2. For a note on how the execution illustrated Tolstoi's preference for "fatal sevens," see Rowe 207.

3. For a brief history of the broadsheet and a listing of sources, see Borsuk 65-68.

4. Additional sources are listed in Shklovskii's monograph. Discussion of the parallels between Tolstoi and de Ségur may be found in the translation by J. David Townsend.

5. But, as Tolstoi points out in the novel, "Верещагин сенатом был только приговорен к каторжной работе" (SS 362) (the Senate had only condemned Vereshchagin to hard labor).

6. See the articles by Sheremetevskii and Zhukov; for Volkonskii, see Tartakovskii 152.

7. I will use the following abbreviations in the text: PSS indicates *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*; SS indicates *Sobranie sochinenii* (if no volume number is specified, the citation is from volume 6). English quotations from *War and Peace* are from the Maude translation. Translations from other sources are my own.

8. Variant No. 216: "Для Растопчина это было олицетворение de la plèbe, de la lie du peuple, и он к нему более обращался" (PSS 14: 293).

9. Morson provides a concise summary of critical objections in his chapter "Formal Peculiarites of War and Peace" in *Hidden in Plain View.*

10. The seminal article on Tolstoi's French is by Vinogradov, "O iazyke Tolstogo," which discusses the stylistics of Tolstoi's language variance. Jones also mentions the use of French in his article "A Man Speaking to Men," 159-160. His focus, however, is not the allusional implications of French phrases, but the "confusion" or "disturbing" nature of mixing French and Russian for the reader.

11. Galagan discusses the relationship of Tolstoi to Robespierre and the former's preoccupation with the issues of the Revolution in "L. Tolstoi i Robesp'er."

12. Part 3, book 3, chapter 20: "Она была пуста, как пуст бывает домирающий, обезматочивший улей" (SS: 340). This sentiment is also emphasized at the beginning of chapter 22.

13. Variants 214 and 216 (PSS 14: 290-94).

14. This is pointed out in PSS 15-16: 187.

15. Interestingly enough, from the draft we learn that Ivan "не был сумасшедший . . . хотя он и представлялся сумасшедшим смотрителям и докторам заведения" (PSS 14: 292) (he was not insane . . . although he acted insane to the overseers and doctors of the institution). This does not, of course, in any way indicate that his status was not changed for the final version.

16. Gustafson argues that the image of Vereshchagin in the count's mind, in conjunction with Rastopchin's final meeting with Kutuzov at the bridge, causes a "miraculous conversion" on the part of Rastopchin (287). I find this reading too strong–Rastopchin's final actions are not those of a convert per se, but of a man with nowhere else to turn. His thoughts and emotions, to my mind, are much too virulent and deep-seated to be instantly turned about in a "conversion" of the type Gustafson proposes.

17. In light of this scene, there is motivation to see Ivan Makarovich as a holy fool (юродивый). Certainly Ivan's actions fit the general mold: "According to the received ideas of Russian culture, holy fools were Christlike figures who courageously spoke the truth, and Russian tsars were motivated by piety in their dealings with them" (Thompson 128). Ivan's words to Rastopchin are both prophetic and revealing—at least, as we have seen, they strike the count to the core and return his thoughts to the implications of his actions. Ivan may not be the most Christlike figure, but this is more due to the lack of a true background for him in the completed novel (as opposed to the drafts) than any personal trait. This portrayal also seems likely given Tolstoi's appreciation for the holy fools (see *Detstvo*). I am indebted to Gavriel Shapiro and Patricia Carden for suggesting this interpretation of Ivan.

18. In Matthew 27:24, we see Pilate "wash his hands" of Jesus' blood. Though this does reflect doubt, there is less of a parallel with Rastopchin since Pilate was not the instigator of the charges or execution of Jesus. In Mark 15:15, there is clear sense of Pilate's appeasement: "So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas; and having sourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified."

19. For the majority of these quotations I have provided more than merely the French phrases to give context. As above, English translations from the final text of *Voina i mir* are from the Maude edition. Note that Variants 214, 215, and 218 contain no French.