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## Scenes from the Apocalypse in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*: The Lion of Judah

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And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. And I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."

REVELATIONS 3: 2-5

### I The Witness

"I know your works; you have a name of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death, for I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God. Remember then what you received and heard; obey it, and repent. If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you. Yet you have still a few persons in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes; they will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy.

REVELATIONS 3: 1-4<sup>1</sup>

The Sokolniki field was deserted. Only at the end of it, in front of the almshouse and the lunatic asylum, could be seen some people in white, and others like them walking singly across the field shouting and gesticulating.

One of these was running cross the path of Count Rastopchin's carriage, and the count himself, his coachman and his dragoons, looked with vague horror and curiosity at these released luna-

tics and especially at the one running towards them.

Swaying from side to side on his long thin legs in his fluttering dressing-gown, this lunatic was running impetuously, his gaze fixed on Rastopchin, shouting something in a hoarse voice and making signs to him to stop. The lunatic's solemn, gloomy face was thin and yellow, with its beard growing in uneven tufts. His black, agate pupils with saffron-yellow whites moved restlessly near the lower eyelids.

"Stop! Pull up, I tell you!" he cried in a piercing voice, and again shouted something breathlessly with emphatic intonations and gestures. Coming abreast of the carriage he ran beside it. "Thrice have they slain me, thrice have I risen from the dead. They stoned me, crucified me... I 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.

Count Rastopchin suddenly grew pale, as he had done when the crowd closed in on Vereshchagin. He turned away. "Go fas... faster!" he cried in a trembling voice to his coachman. The calèche flew over the ground as fast as the horses could draw it, but for a long time Count Rastopchin still heard the insane despairing screams growing fainter in the distance, while his eyes saw nothing but the astonished, frightened, bloodstained face of the 'traitor' [Vereshchagin] in the fur-lined coat. . . . He seemed still to hear the sound of his own words "Cut him down! I command it! . . . But I did not do it for my own sake. I was bound to act that way . . . the mob, the traitor . . . the public welfare" ["La plèbe, le traître . . . le bien publiques"] thought he." (Bk Eleven, ch. 12: 994-95; *Voina i mir*; Bk III, Part 3: ch. 25)<sup>2</sup>

In some recollections of Tolstoy published in 1909, Nikolai Pavlovich Peterson (1844-1919),<sup>3</sup> writing about his meetings with Leo Tolstoy in the early 1860s, recalled this exchange with the novelist:

I happened to read the proofs of the first volume of *War and Peace*. At the time this work was being published [serially], Lev Nikolaevich used to visit the Chertkov Library. Once he asked me to look up everything that had been written about Vereshchagin, a person whom Rastopchin had handed over to the people in 1812 to be torn to pieces as a traitor. I remember that I gathered together from journals and other sources a multi-

tude of stories about this event. I even set up a special table for all this literature. Lev Nikolaevich didn't turn up for quite a while, for some reason. When he did come and I pointed out to him the literature on Vereshchagin, he said that he wouldn't be needing it, because he had met some old man in an insane asylum—a witness to this event—and this man had told him what had taken place.<sup>4</sup>

Tolstoy, obviously, did inform himself in one way or another about the historical circumstances of the lynching of Vereshchagin and of the role of Count Fedor Vasilevich Rastopchin in that event. He had other aims, however, than that of striving to reproduce real events in all their historical accuracy. In the final analysis, the “literature on Vereshchagin,” like much of his historical research, yielded to his imaginative interests.

We cannot absolutely exclude the possibility that an aging inmate of an asylum may have conveyed to Tolstoy an eyewitness account of events surrounding Vereshchagin's execution. Russian insane asylums have harboured all sorts of “witnesses”—balanced and unbalanced—to important events and happenings. Tolstoy's remark to Peterson, however, about meeting a “witness” to the murder of Vereshchagin in all probability was nothing but short-hand for his artistic decision to introduce a witness to the event and to furnish him with utterances laden with the prophetic symbolism of Revelations and apocalyptic books of the Old Testament, such as the Book of Daniel 7-12. In his excellent discussion of the Vereshchagin-Rastopchin episode in *War and Peace*, David J. Galloway discusses the presence in drafts of the novel of a character called “Ivan Makarych”; the latter's role as observer and commentator on the execution is exchanged in the final version of *War and Peace* for his role as the escaped lunatic who encounters Rastopchin on the Sokolniki field. “Ivan's appearance and his words are a direct moralistic and religious call for an accounting of Rastopchin's actions.”<sup>5</sup>

In the final text of *War and Peace*, the lunatic is a nameless figure with moral and religious resonance that goes far beyond immediate circumstances. In him secular and eschatological time

momentarily intersect. The disappearance of Ivan Makarych's name in the final text is important in that it sharpens the reader's focus on the lunatic as a symbolic character-image. It is worth bearing in mind, however, that the etymological roots of the name and patronymic “Ivan Makarych” point ahead, as it were, to the mythic-religious character of the lunatic. “Ivan” derives from the ancient Hebrew word for “God,” and “Makar”—from the Greek “makarios,” meaning “blessed.”

The person who affronts Rastopchin in his carriage is both an anonymous resident of a lunatic asylum and an avenger from Revelations and earlier apocalyptic writings of the Old Testament. His kinship with the Russian “holy fool” type is clear, as well. In Tolstoy's rendition, the fictional lunatic may indeed have been an actual witness of Vereshchagin's execution, but he is most certainly a symbolic Witness of human iniquities. This witness, unlike the pathetic and banal figure Vereshchagin, bears no resemblance to the meek Christ, except in the sense that He once declared “I came not to send peace, but a sword” (Mt 10: 34). Rather, the lunatic recalls the militant Christ who is “one like the Son of Man,” the Lion of Judah, the avenging Christ of Revelations, a white figure whose “eyes were as a flame of fire” and out of whose mouth “went a sharp two-edged sword” (Rev 1: 14, 16).

The voice of Tolstoy's menacing lunatic is stentorian: “‘Stop! Pull up, I tell you! . . .’ he cries in a piercing voice.” The lunatic's peremptory and admonitory tone, his strange and distorted face, his intonations and gestures, his “insane despairing screams,” the eschatological content of his utterances, his unsettling visions of violence, and his references to the destruction of kingdoms bring to mind certain imagery from Revelations. Tolstoy's menacing “people in white, and others like them walking singly across the field shouting and gesticulating,” people who descend on Rastopchin and fill him with fear, bear some comparison to the “souls of them that were slaughtered for the word of God, and for the testimony they had given;” souls who “cried out with a loud voice, ‘Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will it be before You judge and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?’/-

They were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number would be complete both of their fellow servants and of their brothers and sisters, who were soon to be killed as they themselves had been killed" (Rev 6: 9-11).

That "season" of rest seems to have been broken for Tolstoy's white robed lunatic-avengers (as is the case in Revelations); they are moving threateningly across the field, "shouting and gesticulating," led by an inflamed and enraged lunatic. Here is the embodiment of Rastopchin's fears and prejudices: "La voilà la populace, la lie du peuple," thinks Rastopchin at the time of the execution, "La plèbe qu'ils ont soulevée par leur sottise." ["Here is that mob, the dregs of the people ( . . . ) this rabble they have raised by their own folly!"] "La populace est terrible, elle est hideuse. . . . Ils sont comme les loups qu'on ne peut apaiser qu'avec de la chair" ["The mob is terrible—disgusting. . . . They are like wolves whom nothing but flesh can appease"] (Bk Eleven, ch. 12: 989, 993; III: III: xxv). The lunatics who move on Rastopchin's carriage seem like emissaries of anarchic revolt from the French Revolution.<sup>6</sup> Tolstoy's allusions to the Last Judgment provide a subtle and frightening subtext to Tolstoy's explicit hints at social tensions in the Rastopchin-Vereshchagin episode.

Rastopchin had good reason to pale, as "his eyes saw nothing but the astonished, frightened, bloodstained face of the 'traitor' Vereshchagin." He links the admonitory words of the lunatic not to old biblical events, crimes, and prophecies, however, but to a new offence, a new crime. Fedor Vasilevich Rastopchin has presided over the lynching of Vereshchagin. "Count! One God is above us both!" exclaims Vereshchagin as he is about to be sabred, trampled, and beaten to death at the order of Count Rastopchin. The latter pays no heed. Vereshchagin is struck down and killed. Rastopchin, in Tolstoy's depiction, places himself above God. This is symbolized in his repetition of his full name three times: Fedor Vasilevich Rastopchin. Tolstoy makes full use of the etymological references of Rastopchin's name: "Fedor" derives from the Greek "theos"—*god*, while "Vasily" derives from the Greek "basileus"—*Tsar*, or *emperor*. Rastopchin's own emphasis on his name has the

effect of suggesting that he himself attributes awesome significance to his name and person.

In any case, his words, "Beat him! . . . Cut him down, I command it!" bespeak his usurpation of divine authority (Book Eleven, ch. 12: 991; Bk III, Pt. III, ch. 25). Equally commanding, threatening, and frightening—and constituting the clear counterpoint to Rastopchin's authoritarian command—is the later command of the divinely-inspired lunatic: "Stop! Pull up, I tell you." God indeed seems to be witness to the Vereshchagin execution, but not the God that Vereshchagin invokes, but a wrathful Old Testament one from Revelations, a God who comes in the guise of a raging lunatic-holy fool. If in the symbolism of execution scene Vereshchagin has the bizarre features of a Christ in modern dress (the image of Vereshchagin is not entirely flattering), we may also recognize in the lunatic and his wild apocalyptic ravings an echo, albeit a distorted one, of the Christ of Revelations. Here above all is the "Lion of the tribe of Judah," the "wrath of the Lamb" (Rev. 5: 6; 6: 16). That wrath is felt in the episode depicting Prince Andrei's fatal wounding at the battle of Borodino.

## II

### Prince Andrei's Last Stand

#### "Something from the Mysterious Domain of Smoke"

and

#### "The Difficult Meaning of the Spectacle"<sup>7</sup>

When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and there came a great earthquake; the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree drops its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll rolling itself up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

REVELATIONS 6: 12-14

"Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth."

REVELATIONS 8: 13

And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Harmagedon.

REVELATIONS 16: 16

On that bright evening of August 25, Prince Andrei lay leaning on his elbow in a broken-down shed [*v razlomannom sarae*] in the village of Knyazkovo at the further end of his regiment's encampment. Through a gap in the broken wall [*V otverstie slomannom steny*] he could see, beside the wood fence, a row of thirty-year-old birches with their lower branches lopped off [*s obrublennymi nizhnimi such'iami*], a field on which shocks of oats were standing [*s razbitymi na nei kopnami ovtsa*], and some bushes near which rose the smoke of campfires [*dymy kostrov*]*—the soldiers' kitchens.* (Bk Ten: ch. 24: 857-58; III:II:24)

What Prince Andrei sees as he looks out through a gap in the wall is not a mysterious romantic fog such as he saw before the battle of Austerlitz, but the black smoke of burning fires. "Razlomannyi," "slomannyi," "obrublennyi," "razbityi" (alternately, "smashed"), describe not only the general condition of Knyaz'kovo but the state of Prince Andrei's own inner kingdom: not merely his estate, but the entire inner structure of his life.

The man who had sought to shape his life according to the principles of duty and honour, reason, and will; who had sought to build a rational state, live a useful life, fight a war rationally, now—though not for the first time—discovers a world governed by irrationality and chance. Disillusioned, overcome by destructive and self-destructive impulses, he exclaims to Pierre:

"Ah, my dear friend, it has of late become hard for me to live [*poslednee vremia mne stalo tiazhele zhit'*], I see that I have begun to understand too much. And it doesn't do for man to taste of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.... Ah, well, it's not for long!" he added. . . . However, you're sleepy, and it's time for me to sleep. Go back to Gorki!" said Prince Andrei suddenly. (Bk Ten: 25: 865; III:II:25)

Andrei, of course, echoes Genesis on man's disobedience and his fall: "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden;/ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die" (Gen. 2: 16-17). Andrei, indeed, has tasted of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and become embittered. His suggestion that Pierre go back to "Gorki" may have more than ordinary meaning to him. The place name "Gorki" derives from "gorka," "hill," yet in pronunciation "Gorki" is close to the word "gor'kii," "bitter." "Bitter conveys the mood of Prince Andrei; it also defines the taste of "wormwood" [*polyn'*], a plant that will attract Prince Andrei's attention several times on the battlefield of Borodino. Wormwood will not only become an important symbol to Prince Andrei, but something that he almost literally tastes as he crushes its flower and savours its scent.

Andrei's sense of personal bitterness and general doom verges on the apocalyptic—and suicidal. "It has of late become hard for me to live" [*Poslednee vremia mne stalo tiazhele zhit'*]. "Ah, well, it's not for long." The phrase "poslednee vremia," [lately, "recently"], is the same used in John (I: 2: 18) for the "last hour": "Children, it is the last hour [*poslednee vremia!*] As you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. From this we know it is the last hour."

Words and images with eschatological implications permeate Tolstoy's description of the Borodino battlefield on which Prince Andrei is mortally wounded (Book Ten: 902-906; III: 2: xxxvi). Indeed, one may say that the essential significance of that scene—Tolstoy's deeper judgment of war and of the moral and spiritual corruption that it signifies—is conveyed in this chapter chiefly through allusions to Revelations and, by extension, to the apocalyptic parts of the Old Testament.

Smoke, carnage, blood, destruction, and death dominate the descriptions of the battlefield scene in which Prince Andrei and his regiment find themselves. Prince Andrei's regiment was among the reserves that were under heavy artillery fire; it was being systematically annihilated.

Thousands of men perished that day. . . Without moving from that spot or firing a single shot the regiment here lost another third of its men [polk poterial zdes' eshche tret'iu chast' svoikh liudei]. From in front and especially from the right, in the unlifting smoke the guns boomed, and out of the mysterious domain of smoke [iz tainstvennoi oblasti dyma] that overlay the whole space in front, quick hissing cannon balls and slow whistling shells flew unceasingly. . . "Here it comes. . . this one is coming our way again!" [Andrei] thought, listening to an approaching whistle of something from the hidden domain of smoke [iz zakrytoi oblasti dyma]. (Bk Ten, ch. 36: 902, 904; III: II: xxxvi: 264, 266)

The "mysterious domain of smoke" on the battlefield—alternately referred to by Tolstoy as the "hidden domain of smoke"—points not only to the smoke-covered battlefield of Borodino, but to the smoke-filled and ravaged world spaces of Harnagedon. The battlefield scene in which Prince Andrei is mortally wounded previews payback time of the Last Judgment.

The description of the battlefield recalls apocalyptic scenes of destruction in Revelations, a time marked by blazing stars falling to earth, enveloping smoke and darkness, plagues, "hail and fire mixed with blood," and catastrophic losses (Rev. 87).<sup>8</sup> In noting that Prince Andrei's regiment had lost "another third of its men" [eshche tret'iu chast' svoikh liudei], Tolstoy echoes Revelations with its note that "a third of humankind" were killed ["i umerla tretia chast' liudei] in fire and smoke (Rev. 915,18).

It is in his use of bird imagery, however, and in his references to "wormwood" [polyn'], that Tolstoy's allusions to Revelations become most apparent. In his first reference to Prince Andrei's paralysis in the face of a whistling shell that fell by his side, we read:

"Look out!" came a frightened cry from a soldier and, like a bird whistling down in rapid flight and alighting on the ground [i, kak svistiashchaia na bystrom polete, prisedaiushchaia na zemliu ptichka], a shell [granata] dropped with little noise within two steps of Prince Andrei, and close to the battalion commander's horse. (Bk Ten, ch. 36: 904; III: II: xxxvi)

Tolstoy's comparison of destructive artillery shells with "a bird whistling down in rapid flight and alighting on the ground" may seem strange and out of place only to readers unfamiliar with the frequent appearance of rapacious "birds of the air" in the Old Testament and—in a final and dramatic reappearance in the New Testament—in Revelations. At the call of the God of Israel, birds of prey come whistling down with a vengeance. "I will give you to birds of prey of every kind and to the wild animals to be devoured./You shall fall in the open field; for I have spoken, says the Lord God"—addressing the enemies of Israel, while referring to the drinking of blood and devouring of flesh by "birds of all kind and . . . all the wild animals" as a "sacrificial feast" (Ezek. 39: 4-5, 17-20).

"How does God above look at them and hear them," Prince Andrei asks Pierre in a piercing voice, referring to the kings and military castes whose armies at Borodino will cripple and murder tens of thousands of people and then follow these butcheries with religious services. Revelations provides an answer to Andrei's question.

Then I saw an angel . . . [who] called to all the birds that fly in midheaven, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of the mighty, the flesh of horses and their riders—flesh of all, both free and slave, both small and great." (Rev 19: 17)

The Antichrist and the false prophet are captured and thrown into the lake of fire, Gehenna, while the rest were killed, "and all the birds were gorged with their flesh" (Rev. 19: 19-21).

Tolstoy's allusions to Revelations make it clear that he is not invoking a God that is partial to Russian kings. Revelations perfectly embodies Tolstoy's point of view of war as a universal disaster: not just for the unseen "enemy" across the field, but for masses of people on all sides; not just for the military caste and the lords and kings of the world, but for "all men, both free and slave, both small and great." Indeed, the God whose opinions Prince Andrei invokes does not spare the prince himself—a tragic figure who, in spite of his sense of the madness and sinfulness of war, is himself

carried away by the vicious passions of war. He, too, has not grasped the values of the "small" people around him. Indeed, his contempt for the ordinary soldier and his adherence to aristocratic notions of duty and honour is one of the direct causes of his downfall.

"Lie down!" cried the adjutant, throwing himself flat on the ground. Prince Andrei stood in indecision [stoial v nereshitel'nosti]. The smoking shell spun like a top [volchok] between him and the prostrate adjutant, near a wormwood plant [polyn'] at the edge of a ploughed field and meadow. (Bk Ten, ch. 36: 904; III: II: xxxvi)

The first reference to the birds of prey of Revelations is overt. The second, in the passage just cited, is covert. The smoking shell spun like a top (volchok). "Volchok," however, apart from its primary meaning as a "top," is also the name for a species of bird—a small bittern (also known in Russian as vyp') that is widespread in European and Asian Russia. The shell spins not only like a top (volchok), but like the bittern (volchok) in moments of danger. In their discussion of the behavioural habits of the bittern, the ornithologists Campbell and Lack note that when in danger the bittern becomes rigid with its bill and neck pointed stiffly skywards; "it keeps its underside towards the source of danger, watching with unwinking yellow eyes swiveled downwards, and revolves slowly (or whirls with great rapidity) if the observer or other threat moves around."<sup>9</sup> In alluding to the whirling of the bittern, Tolstoy not only re-states the bird-shell image he had established earlier in the text, but also, in pointing to the different ways Prince Andrei and the bittern face danger, compares them to the disadvantage of Andrei. Both stand upright; but while this posture is natural to the whirling bittern as it instinctively protects itself from danger, the same upright posture is quite unnatural for a soldier faced with a whirling shell about to explode. Prince Andrei, paralyzed by thought, does not respond to danger instinctively; he does not throw himself on the ground to protect himself from the shell; this is a failure that only partly derives from false notions of honour. Tolstoy's

juxtaposition in the subtext of Prince Andrei and the bittern, points once again to Prince Andrei's peculiar tragedy of consciousness.

Birds might well be drawn to the edge of a ploughed field of oats or meadow where food might be found. In this case, the birds are participating in a repast that echoes "the great supper of God." Tolstoy calls attention to that supper in a third and final episode (one directly echoing Revelations 19: 17) in which birds—some hungry for grain and others craving for blood—descend on the fields surrounding the dressing station where Prince Andrei has been taken. In vivid lines Tolstoy lays out the great supper of God for all to see:

In the woods wagons and horses were standing. The horses were eating oats from their moveable troughs and sparrows [vorob'i] flew down and pecked the grain that fell. Some crows, scenting blood, flew among the birch trees cawing impatiently. Around the tents, over more than five acres, bloodstained men in various garbs stood, sat, or lay. (Bk. Ten, ch. 36: 905; III: II: xxxvi)

The presence of birds of prey impatiently hovering over *five acres of blood-stained men* conveys not only a sense of horror and stark human disaster, but—in the unmistakable context of Revelations—dread omens of the Last Judgment. The symbolic significance of this supper of God seems dimly apparent to the soldiers standing about. They "stood leaning against their stretchers, and intently, as if trying to understand the difficult significance of the spectacle [trudnoe znachenie zrelischa], looked at what was taking place before them." Tolstoy perhaps is alluding here to a lurking social discontent deep within the soldiers (it is noteworthy that the officers "keeping order tried in vain to drive [them] from the spot"), but there is also a suggestion that the larger issues of this human disaster are also stirring in their minds.

Another important sign or symbol appears in the scene under discussion. In an earlier conversation with Pierre, Prince Andrei was "suddenly checked in his speech by an unexpected cramp in his throat" (Bk Ten, ch. 25: 864-65; III: II: xxv). On the field of Borodino he stands paralyzed in the

face of the revolving shell on the field. Here his spasm extends not merely to his throat but to his entire body. The bird-shell spins like a top between him and the prostrate adjutant, near a wormwood plant [polyn']. Yet Andrei "stood in indecision" [stoial v nereshitel'nosti], unable to act. Literally and figuratively he is unable and unwilling to "lie down"—an inability that is linked, in part, with conflicting thoughts of life and death:

"Can this be death?" thought Prince Andrei, looking with a quite new, envious glance at the grass, the wormwood [polyn'], and the streamlet of smoke that curled up from the rotating black ball. "I cannot, I do not wish to die. I love life—I love this grass, this air . . ." He thought this, and at the same time remembered that people were looking at him. "It's shameful, sir! He said to the adjutant. "What kind of . . ." He did not finish speaking. (Bk Ten, ch. 36: 904; III: II: 36)

Prince Andrei's thoughts on life and death are associated with his envious glance at a clump of wormwood [polyn'], smoke, and grass. Four times in the course of the scene his attention is drawn to "wormwood." Earlier, as he walks back and forth during the bombardment, "he stripped flowers from the wormwood that grew along a boundary rut, rubbed them in his palms and smelled their pungent, sweetly bitter scent." The bittersweet scent of wormwood accords with Andrei's mood. Yet his obsession with wormwood points again to a subtext.

In Revelations, wormwood, a bitter plant or drug, symbolizes divine chastisement; it is used metaphorically of calamity or sorrow in the Old Testament, as well. In Jeremiah the God of Israel declares that because the Israelites have forsaken the law, "I am feeding this people with wormwood [polyn'], and giving them poisonous water to drink" (Jer. 9: 15). "He has filled me with bitterness, he has sated me with wormwood" (Lam. 3: 15). Wormwood returns in Revelations, where, significantly, it is linked with other signs and symbols of Revelations: a blazing falling star, the image of a bird.

The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch. . . . The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became Wormwood, and many died from the water, because it was made bitter. (Rev 8: 10-11). . . . Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew in midheaven, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!" (Rev. 8: 13)

Prince Andrei, instructed in the Christian religion as a boy by Princess Mary, and citing Matthew in his final days,<sup>10</sup> assuredly was familiar with the Book of Revelations. His almost obsessive, albeit unconscious, attention to "wormwood" suggests an awareness of the apocalyptic theme. In any case, his attention to wormwood and its bittersweet scent is appropriate to his mood and situation. His sudden "rush of passionate love for life" [strastnyi poryv liubvi k zhizni] coincides with bittersweet memories of Mary and Natasha, and a sense of personal calamity. Prince Andrei's painful and bitter awakening to life at a moment of apparently impending death recalls Lamentations: "The thought of my afflictions and my homelessness is wormwood and gall!" (Lam. 3: 19)

"Shame" is on Prince Andrei's mind as he looks at his adjutant who, lying on the ground, is only trying to protect himself from the explosion. Wounded, Andrei finally "falls." His physical fall, like Pierre's at the battle of Borodino,<sup>11</sup> may be viewed as symbolic in his pride, he has been thrown down. The prince who chastised the adjutant is himself chastised. As "the stars of the sky fell to earth," we read in Revelations, everybody seeks refuge "For the great day of their wrath [the day of the Lord, when God judges his enemies] has come, and who is able to stand?" (Rev. 6: 17).

It is not with the stern theme of divine judgment of Revelations, however, but with the gospel theme of love, pity, and compassion that Tolstoy concludes the trial of Prince Andrei at the battle of Borodino.

At the dressing station he opens his eyes: he "remembered the meadow, the wormwood, the field, the whirling black ball, and his sudden rush

of passionate love of life." He listens with a sense of comfort to the soldiers who are celebrating kicking "him out from there," but he is overcome with a feeling of indifference.

"But isn't it all the same now? . . . and what will be there, and what has there been here? . . . [A chto budet tam i chto takoe bylo zdes']? Why was I so sorry to part with life? There was something in this life I did not and do not understand. (Bk Ten, ch. 36: 906; III: II: xxxvi)

What Andrei did not "understand," however, was a matter having to do not with understanding or reason (his very formulation of his ache is symptomatic of his spiritual crisis), but with pity, compassion, and love and his inability to act instinctively upon these promptings; an inability to break through the rigidities of reason, aristocratic honour and duty. The revelation of love reaches Andrei's whole being, physical, emotional, and spiritual, not through the head but through an organic feelingful experience: this is his encounter with the severely wounded and weeping Anatole in a hospital tent; it is a moment that coincides with the awakening of memories of childhood and of Natasha:

He remembered everything, and ecstatic pity and love for that man overflowed his happy heart. Prince Andrei could no longer restrain himself and wept tender loving tears for his fellow men, for himself, and for his own and their errors. "Compassion, love of our brothers, for those who love us and or those who hate us, love of our enemies; yes, that love which God preached on earth and which Princess Mary taught me and I did not understand—that is what made me sorry to part with life, that is what remained for me had I lived. But now it is too late, I know it!" (Bk Ten, ch. 37: 908; III: II: xxxvii)

Everything in Revelations moves toward the hope, vision, and reward of "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21: 1). Yet the pathos of lateness also permeates the drama of the "last hour"—a drama, it is abundantly clear, affecting not only the "righteous" who see the hour of redemption at hand, but the "one third of mankind" who have

failed to follow the good purposes of God and who have rebelled against him. There is no indication that Prince Andrei is preoccupied with the paradoxes of Revelations, its message of destruction and promise of redemption. His question, "And what will be there, and what has there been here?" suggests a consciousness of botched human endeavour and certainly a failed personal life, but also the mind of a man who is hardly aroused by thoughts of a new heaven and a new earth. Prince Andrei is mourning a lost paradise.

Tolstoy's attraction to the gospel of love of a meek and loving Christ is great. As a moralist and psychologist his affinity with, and attraction to, the wrathful Lamb, the implacable Christ of Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*, is equally great. Above all, Tolstoy was not sentimental. "God is love" (1 John 48); yes, but actions have consequences, Tolstoy believed with his whole being and demonstrated in his art. There is a price to pay for violence, oppression, war. It is the messianic King, the Lion of Judah, Christ himself who opens the seven seals and releases a hail of destruction upon the world of wickedness. Yet it is mankind that has rebelled, brought this disaster upon itself, and has practised the violence and destruction that convulses the world at the end of time. Not accidentally does Revelations speak of the destruction of "those who destroy the earth" (Rev. 11: 18).

"Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht" (the history of the world is the judgment of the world), Friedrich Schiller wrote succinctly in his great poem "Resignation" (1784). Revelations advances that harsh truth; Tolstoy covertly but clearly alludes to it in the episode of the wounding of Prince Andrei at Borodino, at least in its first part before the truth of a wrathful God yields, in a hospital tent, to the Word of the meek Christ.

"How does God above look upon them and hear them?" Prince Andrei cries out in his conversation with Pierre before the battle of Borodino. The apocalyptic subtext of the chapter on Andrei's mortal wounding, as we have suggested, offers an answer. Yet Tolstoy is not finished with the question. He brings it back to earth, and turns it around: How do people look upon all this? This is the "difficult meaning of the spectacle" that not only



the soldiers but the reader as well intently ponders in the chapter on Prince Andrei's last stand.

### Notes

1. Citations from Revelations and other biblical texts are from the *New Oxford Annotated Bible. An Ecumenical Study Bible. New Revised Standard Version*.

2. The first reference after a quotation provides the book, chapter, and page number of the Inner Sanctum Edition of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude. The second indicates the book, part, and chapter of the standard Russian edition of *Voina i mir* in which the original Russian passage may be found. The page number of the Russian edition is not given. I make use of the Maudes' translation, text but alter it at times for purposes of analysis.

3. Peterson was a member of the student movement of the 1860s, a teacher whose views were strongly influenced by Tolstoy's ideas on education and his school at Iasnaia Poliana.

4. Peterson 125-126; see also N. P. Peterson, "Iz zapiskov byvshego uchitelia," *Mezhdunarodnyi tolstovskii al'manakh, sostavlennyi P. Sergeenko* (Moskva, 1909), pp. 261-62.

5. Galloway 20. My discussion in the first part of my paper devoted to the Vereshchagin-Rastopchin episode may be regarded as an extension of Galloway's discussion of the moral-religious dimensions of Tolstoy's treatment of the theme.

6. See Galloway's discussion (15-18) of the connection Tolstoy establishes between the historical drama of the Vereshchagin episode and "the last great manifestation of the mob—the French Revolution."

7. The following discussion constitutes an expanded version of a paper I read in Russian at a Tolstoy conference at Iasnaia Poliana, Russia, in fall 1998.

8. "And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit; he opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft. Then from the smoke came locusts on the

earth, and they were given authority like the authority of scorpions of the earth. They were told not to damage the grass of the earth . . . but only people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads" (Rev. 9: 1-4). "By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed" (Rev. 9: 18).

9. Cf. "Bittern," in Campbell and Lack, 58.

10. "The fowls of the air sow not, neither do they reap, yet your Father feedeth them," Prince Andrei says to himself and wished to say to Princess Mary, as he lay on his deathbed. (Bk Twelve, ch. 4: 1086; IV I::xv). The line comes from Matthew 6:26. In the *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, the line reads in full: "Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them."

11. Analogous to Prince Andrei's fall is Pierre Bezukhov's fall at the end of his tour on horseback of the Borodino battlefield. He had taken this tour to "have a look" [da vot khotelos' posmotret']. That leisurely inspection of the battlefield on horseback objectively was an act of hubris; it ends when he is thrown from his horse to the ground: "One cannon ball, another, and a third flew over him, falling in front, beside, and behind him. Pierre ran down the slope. 'Where am I going?' [Kuda ia?], he suddenly asked himself when he was already near the green ammunition wagons. He halted in indecision [on ostanovilsia v nereshitel'nosti], not knowing whether to return or go on. Suddenly a terrible concussion threw him backwards to the ground. At the same instant he was dazzled by a great flash of flame, and immediately a deafening roar, crackling and whistling made his ears tingle. When he came to himself he was sitting on the ground leaning on his hands, the ammunition wagons he had been approaching no longer existed, only charred green boards and rags littered the scorched grass . . ." (my italics - RLJ) (Bk. Ten, ch. 31: 889; III:II: xxxi). The massive blow that strikes Pierre is almost like thunder and lightning from Revelations. Pierre's question, "Where am I going?" and his indecisiveness as to whether to go backwards or forwards has its figurative as well as literal meaning; it echoes Prince Andrei's moment of indecisiveness and the latter's reflections on life and death, the past, present, and the future that is now called into question for him. Where *are* Pierre and Andrei going, one may ask, figuratively speaking? The blows that strike them have the effect of bringing them to their senses.

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