


5-17-2008

Ilya Repin and the Zaporozhe Cossacks

Kristina Pavlov-Leiching
Skidmore College

Follow this and additional works at: https://creativematter.skidmore.edu/mals_stu_schol

 Part of the [European History Commons](#), and the [Other History of Art, Architecture, and Archaeology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Pavlov-Leiching, Kristina, "Ilya Repin and the Zaporozhe Cossacks" (2008). *Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) Student Scholarship*. 50.

https://creativematter.skidmore.edu/mals_stu_schol/50

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Academic Departments and Programs at Creative Matter. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) Student Scholarship by an authorized administrator of Creative Matter. For more information, please contact jluo@skidmore.edu.

Ilya Repin and the *Zaporozhe Cossacks*

by

Kristina Pavlov-Leiching

FINAL PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN LIBERAL STUDIES

SKIDMORE COLLEGE

May 2008

Advisors: Kate Graney, Ken Klotz

**THE MASTER OF ARTS PROGRAM IN LIBERAL STUDIES
SKIDMORE COLLEGE**

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iv
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	v
Chapter	
INTRODUCTION	1.
Goals of the Study	
1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	3.
Repin and the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg	
Repin's Experiences Abroad	
Repin and the Wanderers Association	
Repin as a Teacher and Reformer	
Repin's Final Years	
2. REPIN'S AESTHETIC BELIEFS AS AN ARTIST AND TEACHER	15.
An Artist Driven by Social Obligation	
A Painter of the Peasantry and Revolutionary	
A Devout Nationalist	
An Advocate of Art for Art's Sake(1873-1876 & 1890s)	
Impressionist Influence	
An Encounter with Tolstoy's Aesthetics	
Repin as a Teacher and Reformer of the Academy	
The Importance of the Creative Process	
A Return to National Realism	

3. ZAPOROZHE COSSACKS	33.
Influences from Repin’s Training Revealed in the <i>Zaporozhe Cossacks</i>	
The Influence of Icon Painting as Seen in the <i>Zaporozhe Cossacks</i>	
The Influence of Impressionism as Seen in the <i>Zaporozhe Cossacks</i>	
The Influence of Neoclassicism as Seen in the <i>Zaporozhe Cossacks</i>	
The Story Behind the <i>Zaporozhe Cossacks</i>	
Cossack Origins and Structure	
The Zaporozhe Cossacks as seen in Repin’s Painting And Described in Gogol’s <i>Taras Bulba</i>	
The Zaporozhe Cossack’s Transition from Freedom to Loss of Independence (1676-1775)	
The Inspiration for the Painting of the Zaporozhe Cossacks	
Criticism of Repin’s Painting	
Art Historical Conclusions	
4. Conclusion	60.
Notes	61.
Bibliography	67.

Abstract

Standing above other nineteenth-century Russian painters, Ilya Repin has proven himself through his technical mastery and unrelenting quest for artistic exploration. This has placed him among Russia's most influential artists. This study examines Repin's life and prolific career. The objective of this research is to explore the unique marriage between art and politics in nineteenth-century Russia. This project focuses on Repin's 1880 painting of the *Zaporozhe Cossacks* as a basis to explore the conflicting forces that befell Repin, and also as a means to better understand the tempestuous atmosphere of the time. This painting reflects the opposing aesthetic, moral and philosophical ideas that marked this period in Russia history. Through both academic and artistic research methods, this study will give a comprehensive and intimate analysis of Ilya Repin's painting in the context of nineteenth-century Russian art and politics.

ILLUSTRATIONS

- Plate 1. Ilya Repin, *Volga Barge Haulers*, 1873.
- Plate 2. Ilya Repin, *They Did Not Expect Him*, 1884-1888.
- Plate 3. Ilya Repin, *Procession in the Kursk Province*, 1881-1883.
- Plate 4. Ilya Repin, *Zaporozhe Cossacks Composing a Mocking Letter to the Turkish Sultan*, 1880.
- Plate 5. Ilya Repin, *Portrait of Verunia Repin*, 1874.
- Plate 6. Ilya Repin, *Preparation for the Exam*, 1864.
- Plate 7. Ilya Repin, *Praying Jew*, 1875.
- Plate 8. Ilya Repin, *Lev Tolstoy Barefoot*, 1901.
- Plate 9. Ilya Repin, *Formal Session of the State Council on May 7th 1901, the Day of the Centenary of its Establishment*, 1903.
- Plate 10. Kristina Pavlov-Leiching, *Study of Ilya Repin's Zaporozhe Cossacks*, 2006.
- Plate 11. *S.S Boris and Gleb with Scenes from Their Lives*, second half of the 14th century.
- Plate 12. Edouard Manet, *Marguerite de Conflans Wearing a Hood*, 1873.
- Plate 13. Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784.
- Plate 14. Dean Conger, *The Many Faces of the Soviet Union*, 1970s.
- Plate 15. Ilya Repin, *Studies for the Zaporozhe Cossacks*, mid-1880's.
- Plate 16. Ilya Repin, *Studies for the Zaporozhe Cossacks*, 1880.
- Plate 17. Ilya Repin, *Studies for the Zaporozhe Cossacks*, 1880.



Plate 1. Ilya Repin. *Volga Barge Haulers*, 1873. 131.5 x 281. Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



Plate 2. Ilya Repin. *They Did Not Expect Him*, 1884-1888. 160.5 x 167.5. Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



Plate 3. Ilya Repin. *Procession in the Kursk Province*, 1881-1883. 175 x 280. Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



Plate 4. Ilya Repin. *Zaporozhe Cossacks Composing a Mocking Letter to the Turkish Sultan*, 1880. 67 x 87.
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



Plate 5. Ilya Repin. *Portrait of Verunia Repina*, 1874. 73 x 60. Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



Plate 6. Ilya Repin. *Preparation for the Exam*, 1864. 38 x 44.8. Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



Plate 7. Ilya Repin. *Praying Jew*, 1875. 80 x 64.5. Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



Plate 8. Ilya Repin. *Lev Tolstoy Barefoot*, 1901. 207 x 73. Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



Plate 9. Ilya Repin. *Formal Session of the State Council on May 7th, 1901, the Day of the Centenary of its Establishment, 1903.* 400 x 877. Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.



Plate 10. Kristina Pavlov-Leiching. *Study of Ilya Repin's Zaporozhe Cossacks*, 2006. 36 x 48



ate 11. SS. Boris and Gleb with Scenes from Their Lives, Second Half of the 14th Century. Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



Plate 12. Edouard Manet. *Marguerite de Conflans Wearing a Hood*, 1873. Oscar Reinhart Collection, Switzerland.



Plate 13. Jacques-Louis David. *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784. 132 x 168. Louvre, Paris.



Plate 14. Dean Conger. *The Many Faces of the Soviet Union, 1970s*. National Geographic Society.



Plate 15. Ilya Repin. *Studies for the Zaporozhe Cossacks*, mid-1880s. 25 x 34.8. Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

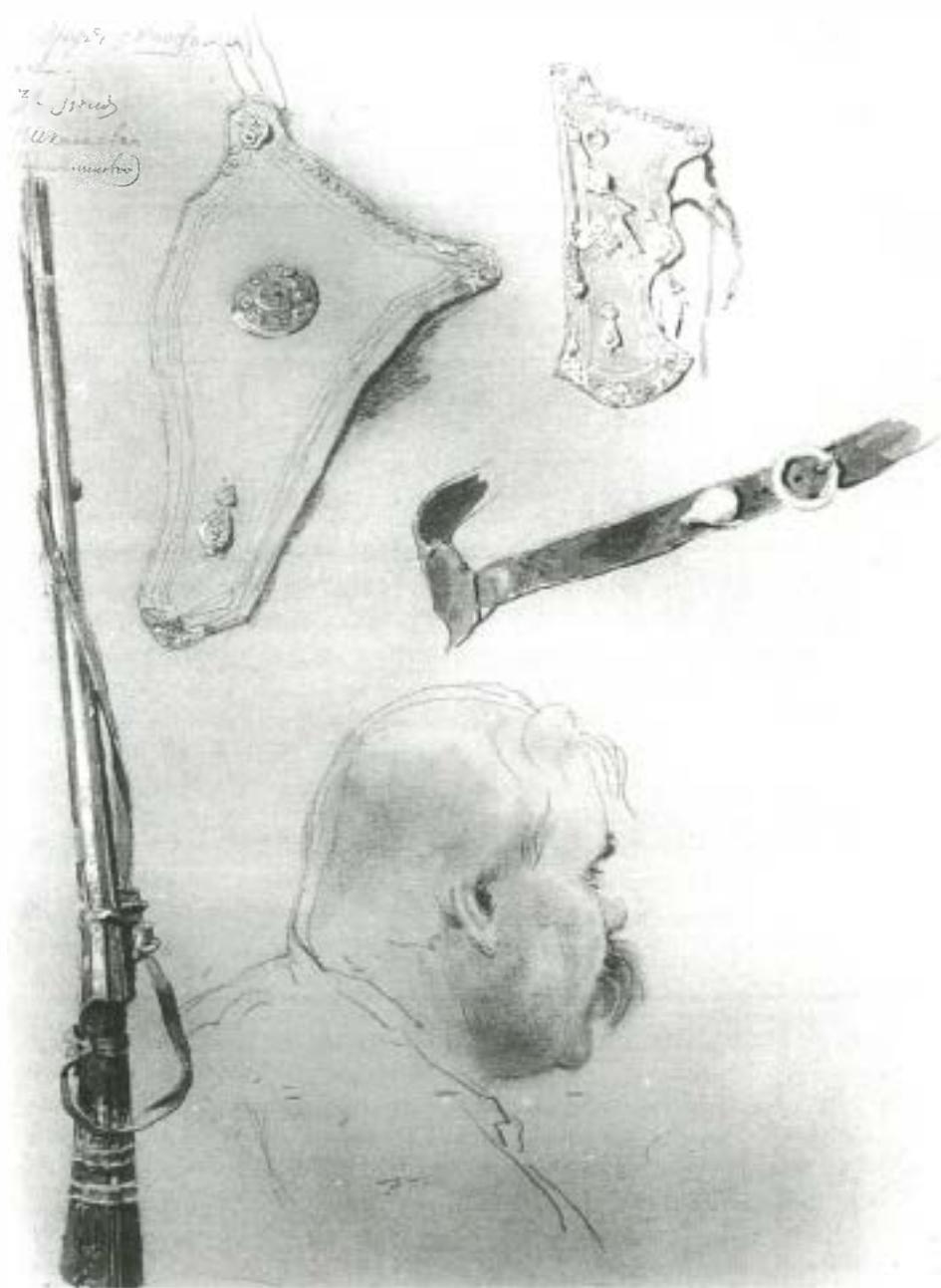


Plate 16. Ilya Repin. *Studies for the Zaporozhe Cossacks*, 1880. 24.6 x 18.8. Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



Plate 17. Ilya Repin. *Studies for the Zaporozhe Cossacks*, 1880. 33 x 24. Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

Introduction

Tchaikovsky. Tolstoy. Dostoevsky. All names familiar to most westerners, and all products of a seminal era in Russian culture, which was marked by enormous accomplishments in music and literature. But less well-known to the West is the abundance of monumental paintings produced during the nineteenth century in Russia. Ilya Repin was of the most famous and prolific painters of his time. His artistic career, which spanned from the 1850s until 1921, was marked by a number of dynamic changes in artistic style and philosophy. The combination of Repin's drive to explore different painting techniques and aesthetic views, set in the volatile political atmosphere of late nineteenth-century Russia resulted in the creation of numerous masterpieces depicting historical and social content that brought new levels of recognition to the visual arts in Russia. Repin's ability to capture the Russian character while documenting the country's glorious past as well as his desire to bring to light Russia's social problems both inspired nationalism in Russia's people and awakened them to the need for social change. Through careful analysis of Repin's artistic career, focusing specifically on his painting, *Zaporozhe Cossacks Composing a Mocking Letter to the Turkish Sultan*, completed in 1880, one is able to better understand the social and political role that art played in Russia during the nineteenth century. Through extensive research and by painting a study of this masterpiece myself, I hope to attain a comprehensive understanding of the political and social constraints that befell this artist, and in addition to gain a more intimate understanding of the political, social and artistic events that shaped this period in Russian history. I will begin by giving a brief history of Repin's life, pinpointing the different

artistic philosophies and techniques that he explored through his career. I will then focus more exclusively on Repin's masterpiece of the *Zaporozhe Cossacks*, evaluating his use of opposing painting techniques and his choice of subject matter. By focusing on these aspects of Repin's painting I hope to reveal what it was about the Cossacks that inspired him to create this work and why he chose to portray them using such a unique combination of techniques. Finally, I want to show what these choices tell us about his past artistic experiences, the social and political pressures that may have influenced his decisions, as well as his perception of Russia's political situation during the late nineteenth century.

Chapter I

Historical Background

Repin's early years 1844-1861

Ilya Repin was born on July 24th, 1844 in Chuguev, a small town in the Ukrainian countryside. He was born into a lineage of military servitude inherited through his father. Under Tsar Alexander I, 1801-1825, the patrimony status of military servitude was established in order to maintain an enormous army comparable to that which was used during the War of 1812.¹ The main concept behind these 'military settlements' was to "... combine military service with farming and thus reduce drastically the cost of the army and enable its men to lead a normal family life."² This project, which was devised in 1810 by Alexander's minister of war, General Alexis Arakcheev, still existed during the reign of Nicholas I, 1825-1855.³ For one born into this sanctioned status, there were few freedoms or career alternatives, other than military servitude. "Through a notch above the private serf, who were really the chattels of the landlords, military settlers nevertheless belonged to that vast mass of rural and urban Russians who were legally bound to reside in tax-paying or labor-or recruit-supply communities."⁴ Unlike people of the gentry and middle class, who had 'special' civil and political rights, people belonging to the working class, which included military servants, had much less freedom.⁵ "Only the gentry, the clergy, and the wealthy middle class enjoyed the privileges of full citizenship, such as they were in mid-nineteenth-century Russia- namely, freedom of movement and exemption of the poll tax, military service, public labor, and corporal punishment."⁶ Although the future for children born into this class was bleak, there was a loophole in this legal decree which offered some hope of a better life. Children who

managed to achieve an education were able to transcend the rigid class system and attain a more privileged social rank. Ilya Repin was fortunate enough to be one of these select few.⁷

At a young age Repin's artistic ability became apparent. He entered the School of Military Topography at the age of eleven and soon after began to work as an icon painter under the supervision of Ivan Bunakov, a well known local icon painter.⁸ Under Bunakov's tutelage, Repin not only learned the fundamental ideas of color theory, but also acquired a meticulous precision in interpreting the human form. Repin finished his schooling in less than a year, and by 1861, joined a group of traveling icon painters and craftsmen, commonly known as an *artel*.⁹

At this point in his life Repin's future seemed quite bright, not only due to his personal achievements at such a young age, but also due to the dynamic changes in the political scene in Russia that occurred after the death of Nicholas I in March 1855 and with the accession of his son, Alexander II to the throne.¹⁰ For the first decade of Repin's life Nicholas I had ruled Russia. His reign was marked by a state of dormancy that stifled Russia, inhibiting cultural, military, and social growth. "In a sense Nicholas I and his associates accomplished just that: they froze Russia as best they could for thirty- although not fifty-years, while the rest of Europe was changing."¹¹ With Russia's terrible defeat in the Crimean war, 1853-1855, Alexander II realized the need for military and political change. He began to initiate many new reforms that changed the political, social and cultural scene in Russia.¹² These changes became especially apparent to Repin, who at the time was preparing to enter the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg, which was also undergoing a simultaneous transformation.¹³

Repin and The Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg

The Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg sustained many crucial reforms as an effect of the transfer of power from Tsar Nicholas I to Alexander II. During the reign of Nicholas I the Academy was the only institution at which an artist could earn a professional title. For many, like Ilya Repin, this was the only way to achieve the freedoms that were strictly limited to gentry, clergy and the middle class.¹⁴ Under Nicholas I, the Academy controlled all other art institutions, including the privately owned schools such as The Moscow School of Art, Sculpture, and Architecture.¹⁵ Nicholas I had the reputation of being insanely controlling and found it necessary to assert his power in nearly all aspects of Russian life, including the arts. “He interfered at every level, even to the point of finding time to assign new recruits to the various household regiments”¹⁶ Supervisions of the Academy of Arts in St Petersburg were directly controlled by the Tsar and wealthy patrons. The artists of the Academy were thus forced to paint specifically religious and classical paintings executed using the neoclassical style of painting.¹⁷ They were not allowed to choose their subjects, but instead were given specific events to interpret. The “best” paintings earned medals. The Academy traditionally granted a number of awards, enhancing the lives of the mostly provincial students that made up the majority of the student population. Each medal that an artist attained afforded him or her different freedoms. For example, the Silver Medal earned one the freedom as an artist, in other words he would be relieved of his inherited servitude if that was his social origin. It is important to note that artists born as free citizens were not obligated to follow the political system that the Academy prescribed in order to attain freedom, hence they were not under the same pressures to achieve such

rewards as the Silver Medal as those whose social ranking was at stake.¹⁸ With a Gold Medal one could attain the title of professor and thus be entitled to a stipend to travel abroad. Although artists training at the Academy during this period in the late 1850s and 1860s were allowed to experiment with new subject matter and technique, they were not encouraged to do so. Artists whose works strayed from the guidelines of Neo-Classicism set in place by Nicholas I were not rewarded.¹⁹ “Devoted to perpetuating the principles of neoclassical art, the Academy inculcated exact draftsmanship and thorough mastery of the idealized human form.”²⁰ This rigid system was maintained through the course of Nicholas I’s reign. It was only after the accession of Alexander II that the world of art in Russia would shift away from these stifling formats imposed on artists by the previous hegemony.

Under Alexander II a number of crucial reforms were enacted. With the new Tsar, often referred to as the ‘Tsar Liberator’, came a period of enormous reforms and liberation.²¹ For a brief period in the 1860s it seemed like all of society was liberated. The Russian public began to openly voice its opinions about art, philosophy, and politics.²² In 1861 Alexander II signed his most famous reform emancipating the serfs.²³ The reform period of the 1860s also spawned a new rise in national spirit, which was to be captured pictorially by the Wanderers movement.

As previously stated, in 1864 Repin enrolled as a student at the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg. Although reforms were beginning to spread throughout Russia, the Academy had still not sufficiently changed in the eyes of many of the students. In 1859 a new statute was introduced to the Academy. A mandatory course was created to raise the levels of the Academy’s artists. Although this was a step in a progressive direction, the

basic rigid training and controlling power of the Academy was still strictly maintained.²⁴ As a student, Repin thus endured the rigorous training of the Academy. This entailed creating numerous copies of classical statues at the beginning drawing level. Within one year of entering the Academy, Repin had passed all the necessary exams in the general subjects (geography, algebra, history) and was accepted into the Academy as a full-time student. By 1865 Repin had earned his Small Silver Medal with a sketch entitled *Angel of Death Exterminating the Egyptian First Born*.²⁵ With this award he earned the title of “free artist”. In 1871 Repin won the Gold Medal with an assigned historical painting of *The Raising of Jairus’ Daughter*.²⁶ This not only entitled him to a stipend of 927 rubles, but also allowed him the opportunity to travel abroad.²⁷

Repin’s Experiences Abroad

By the time Repin had left the Academy he had not only transcended his previous dismal future of servitude but was now able to experience the art world outside of Russia. In 1873 he made his first trip to Europe. During his trip Repin traveled to Rome, where he was introduced to Savva Mamantov, a member of the new non-gentry wealthy Russian tycoons who had become a patron of the arts in Russia.²⁸ Upon leaving Rome Repin spent several months in Normandy and a few weeks in London, but for the most part he spent the majority of his time in Paris, where he was strongly influenced by the Impressionists’ works.²⁹ After becoming proficient in the language, Repin set out to immerse himself in the new artistic environment. Under the influence of the Impressionists, Repin began to paint “a la Manet,” using quick brush strokes and bright colors. He produced a painting of his oldest daughter entitled *Verunia Repina* (1874) using this technique. Although slightly critical of the Impressionists’ lack of content in

their work- “At first he was seriously disturbed by the lack of content-something that had been instilled in him first as an icon painter, then reinforced by Stasov and Kramskoy”³⁰- he decided to attempt painting using the new subject matter which focused on technique, color theory, light and other visual experiences over pictorial content. Repin’s 1874 painting *Horse at Veules* exemplifies the Impressionist technique and subject matter.³¹ The horse, which stands on the beach, is painted using loose brushstrokes and brilliant lighting. The subject of this work is the *style* of painting rather than the *object* that is being depicted. By 1876, Repin had returned to Russia with a new perspective on art that greatly contradicted the styles and techniques in Russia.³²

Repin and the Wanderers Association

Upon his return, Repin spent one year in his hometown of Chuguev, where he reintroduced himself to the beauty of his native country. After one year there Repin moved to Moscow, where in 1878 he joined the Wanderers Association.³³ This association began in 1862 when a group of fourteen dissatisfied artists walked out of the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg.³⁴ These artists, led by Ivan Kramskoy, were infuriated with the Academy because they were not allowed to choose their own subject matter for the final Gold Medal competition.³⁵ Upon seceding from the Academy, the artists formed an organization called the Artel, in which artists would meet to discuss philosophical, political and artistic ideas freely.³⁶ Repin frequented many of these meetings, and the Artel became a second center of training for him.³⁷ By 1870 the Artel combined with a group of artists from the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture to form the Wanderers (Peredvizhniki) Association. The organization was headed by Ivan

Kramskoy from the St. Petersburg Academy and Vasilii Perov from the Moscow Academy.³⁸

By the time Repin had formally joined the Wanderers, they were already moving into their second phase of development. As Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, a Russian art historian states, in the first phase, which began in 1870, the Association focused on imminent social problems facing Russia.³⁹ Many of the ideas embodied in the Populist movement of the 1860s and 70s became incorporated into the Wanderers mission. “Nurtured on the civic and Populist ideals of the 1860s, they toured the provinces with their exhibitions, usually financed out of their own pockets, to raise the public’s consciousness of art. Sometimes they taught in country schools or set up their own art schools and museums, usually with the support of liberal noblemen in local government (the zemstvos) and the Populists.”⁴⁰ The main focus of their art work was the Russian peasantry. The second phase, which began around 1880, was inspired by a sense of national spirit.⁴¹ During this period the Wanderers’ exhibitions began to focus on subjects which exemplified the cultural and historical events that made Russia so unique from other countries. Many of these painting portray great events in Russian history as well as the Russian landscape and its people.⁴² Although Repin did not formally join the Wanderers until this second phase, his painting nonetheless exhibits subject matter from both periods. Repin’s painting of the *Volga Barge Haulers* (1873) shows a strong influence of the first phase of the Wanderers movement, in which Repin found it his moral obligation to depict the peasantry in an honorable manner, while the *Zaporozha Cossacks*, painted by Repin in 1880, exemplifies the later phase focusing on honoring Russia’s rich past.

Repin spent the next thirteen years of his career painting and exhibiting with the Wanderers Association. Yet, by 1890, the organization whose desire for artistic freedom had been the basis for its inception began to narrow its theories on art. Instead of fostering new ideas and techniques, the group rejected and opposed any style other than realism. Disgusted with the new rigid direction that the Association was headed, Repin decided to leave.⁴³

Repin as a Teacher and Reformer

After the assassination of Alexander II in 1881, his son, Alexander III, ascended the throne. Under the reign of Alexander III Russia once again fell into a period of autocratic suppression in which many of the progressive reforms and movements that had been established under Alexander II were hindered or abolished. Focused in maintaining an autocratic state, Alexander III, “used every opportunity to help the gentry and to stress their leading position in Russia, as, for example, by the creation in 1855 of the State Gentry Land Bank.”⁴⁴ He further encouraged Russification, which resulted in, among other things, the establishment of a national school of painting.⁴⁵

In order to promote the national school, Alexander III recruited many of the Wanderers’ top artists, including Repin, to reorganize the Imperial Academy.⁴⁶ Repin took the task of reforming the Academy very seriously and immediately began changing its teaching methods. He allowed his students to roam freely around the studios. He encouraged them to select their own subject matter, and most of all, challenged them to explore new techniques in painting.⁴⁷ Repin had in essence set up a new haven for young artists at the Academy. The new talent, who had been rejected by the Wanderers due to

their sketchy, unfinished, Impressionist style of painting, now found refuge at the Academy.⁴⁸

It was also during this period in the early 1890s that Repin found himself spending quite a bit of time with one of Russia's most famous and controversial writers, Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy (1828-1910).⁴⁹ Tolstoy, whose career and influence on Repin will be further discussed later in this paper, was a prolific writer whose short stories, critical essays and epic novels made him renowned throughout the world. Besides his two famous novels *War and Peace* (1869) and *Anna Karenina* (1877) and numerous short stories, Tolstoy also devoted a large part of his life examining moral, social, religious and cultural issues. In the late 1870s, after having denounced the Russian Orthodox religion for its hypocrisy and absurd mystical beliefs and rituals, Tolstoy founded his own version of Christianity based on the teachings of the Gospels. He drafted several books dealing the ideas of his new religion and criticism of the State and Church including: *Confession*, *Criticism of Dogmatic Theology*, *Translation of the Four Gospels* and *What I Believe*. These publications not only gave great concern to the Church and State, but also inspired a number of people to begin following the Tolstoyan faith.⁵⁰

By the 1880s Tolstoy, who had volunteered to survey routes for the 1882 census, began to publish some highly critical essays dealing with the horrible social injustices in Russia. He began writing *On the Moscow Census* and *What Then Must We Do?*⁵¹ In the later half of the 1880s Tolstoy also wrote *The Death of Ivan Ilich*, *Nicholas Stick* and a play called *The First Distiller*, another play entitled *The Power of Darkness* and a comedy, *The Fruits of Enlightenment*.⁵² He also wrote more "moralizing" works including *What Men Live By* and *Three Old Men*.⁵³ By 1889 Tolstoy had finished writing

another story, which was based on the evils of sensuality, entitled *The Kreutzer Sonata* and wrote three articles dealing with Christianity: *Walking in the Light*, *The Devil* and *On Life*.⁵⁴

Throughout the 1890s Tolstoy not only remained relentless in his criticism of society, religion and government, publishing works such as *Resurrection*, (1899) but also continued his pursuit to find the true meaning of art.⁵⁵ *What is Art?*, one of Tolstoy's more controversial essays dealing with his theories on art was published in 1898.⁵⁶ It was during this period in the 1880s and 1890 that Tolstoy and Repin became acquainted.

Although the two had met nearly a decade earlier it, was not until 1891 that Repin fell deeply under the influence of the famous novelist. While staying with the Tolstoys, Repin followed all the rules of Tolstoyism, becoming a vegetarian and refraining from sexual activities. "Repin succumbed to Tolstoy's spell, and also fell half-in-love with his daughter Tatiana, whom he courted for awhile. He became a vegetarian, yet some months later he had to admit to Tatiana that life without meat was impossible."⁵⁷ For a brief period Tolstoy had even convinced Repin to accept his theories regarding the ethical and moral role of art.⁵⁸ The details of these theories and their effect on Repin will be discussed in chapter II. Although Tolstoy and Repin continued corresponding, Repin left the Tolstoy's estate in order to explore new artistic venues.

As a spokesman for change and new artistic exploration, Repin found himself in the grip of the new art movements that began to take shape in Russia as early as 1890. These new art circles, namely one called The World of Art, not only rejected the moral and socially responsible work of the Wanderers, but these artists also turned outward for their artistic inspiration. Rather than focusing on Russia's people, history, and culture as

the Wanderers had, the members of The World of Art group instead prided themselves on their internationalism and individualism. “*The World of Art* gloried in its internationalism, printing articles on Beardsley, Moreau, Burne-Jones and an essay by Nietzsche on Wagner as well as the writings of Russian symbolists.”⁵⁹ Repin supported The World of Art group, who quickly aligned themselves with the famous artist and teacher, in order to use his administrative pull at the Academy to help the organization publish articles and choose commissions.⁶⁰ Yet, by 1899, in response to a less than flattering article published by the World of Art group, in which Repin was labeled as an outdated, conservative painter from the past, Repin left the organization and subsequently rejected the new Cubo- Futurist art movements of the 1900s.⁶¹

Repin’s Final Years

Upon leaving the World of Art group, Repin reverted back to the old prescripts of the Wanderers. In 1903 he finished his last official commissioned work, an enormous painting (400 x 877cm), entitled *Formal Session of the State Council on May 7th, 1901, the Day of the Centenary of its Establishment*. Yet, upon completion of this painting, Repin’s art work, according to Elizabeth Valkenier, began to decline. Unable to find inspirational subject matter accompanied with the physical debilitation of his right hand, the quality of Repin’s work began to deteriorate.⁶² By 1907 he had resigned from the Academy of Arts and after having rejected the new art movements of the 1890s and 1900s, continued to paint and promote the artistic style established by the Wanderers. “In the 1900s he defended aesthetic views and values he had hitherto deplored. Following the break with Diaghilev, Repin became not only reconciled with Stasov but also, after the critic’s death in 1906, the chief defender of national realism.”⁶³ From 1917-1930 Repin

found himself living in Finland, as an effect of WWI boundary changes which left his residence of Kuokkala outside of Russian proper. ⁶⁴ Here he continued to paint until his death in 1930, producing, according to Valkenier, “some very impressive canvases, surpassing in depth of vision many of the better- known earlier works.”⁶⁵

Chapter II

Repin's Aesthetic Beliefs as an Artist and Teacher

I love variety. Having spent some time under the influence of one idea, of one set of circumstances, in one social mood, I am no longer capable, I can no longer continue in that fashion.

Ilya Repin, *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art* (p. 103)

Throughout his life Ilya Repin encountered and was influenced by numerous different artistic movements and styles. From formal academic painting at the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg to Impressionism in Paris, Repin moved from one artistic circle to another throughout his career. Although he often joined, exhibited and was influenced by these different schools of thought, Repin never became exclusively involved with any one group or idea to the point of losing his individuality as an artist. Due to his unique ability to incorporate different external influences without compromising his individual style, Repin's paintings provide an intriguing, autobiographic display of art in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Russia.

An Artist Driven by Social Obligation

A Painter of the Peasantry and Revolutionary

One of the most interesting phases of Repin's development as an artist occurred during the 1870s and the early 1880s. It was during this period that Repin found himself enamored of the Russian peasantry and the struggle of the revolutionaries to reform the social injustices plaguing Russia at the time. At this point in his career, during the 1870s, Repin was just finishing his studies at the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg and was

becoming more and more influenced by Ivan Kramskoy, who headed the Artel. Kramskoy, along with the other artists seceding from the Academy, believed that each artist had a moral obligation to society and that all works of art should impart some type of moral lesson to the viewer. “Kramskoy frowned upon an art concerned solely with beauty or with mere verisimilitude, demanded instead that it convey an idea, a message to help improve mankind.”⁶⁶ Along with Kramskoy, Vladimir Stasov, a well known art critic and supporter of Kramskoy and other members of the Artel, also echoed the same artistic and political views to Repin. Both Kramskoy and Stasov befriended Repin and encouraged him to paint genre scenes depicting Russian life. To Repin this point of view and style of painting came naturally. He admired the way the artists at the Artel had executed genre themes with as much intensity as the religious paintings that were being produced at the Academy.⁶⁷ He was also inspired by the different political views that he was exposed to at the Artel. Works by Chernyshevsky and Proudhon, often read during meetings, further reinforced some of the activist views told to him by Kramskoy and Stasov.⁶⁸ Given Repin’s lowly background, he naturally had a hatred for the oppression of the lower classes and a deep belief in dignity for all mankind. He also strongly held that art should be accessible to all people.⁶⁹

Repin first experienced the social importance of art as a young icon painter. From parishioners excitedly peeking at his renovations to peasants offering food in gratitude for the images he had brought to the countryside, Repin learned the importance of bringing art to the people. “These anecdotes offered more than touching vignettes of a teenage icon painter enjoying his first success. They convey another formative influence: the sense of common purpose between painter and society, based on the shared faith in the

transforming power of the image.”⁷⁰ These early influences are what allowed Repin to fall into Russian genre painting (paintings portraying ordinary, everyday life activities) with such grace and ease. This natural tendency towards genre painting with a moral mission is demonstrated by his 1873 painting entitled *Volga Barge Haulers*. (Plate 1) In this painting Repin portrays a group of men towing a barge. In his shocking rendition of this lowly job Repin manages to capture both the suffering and pain that these men were forced to endure, while at the same time presenting them as honorable men who have labored on the banks of the Volga for generations. Repin’s goal was to portray the plight of these men, but to do so in an honorable fashion rather than showing them as a stereotypical group of drunken, timid and uneducated peasants being used as beasts.⁷¹ One reason Repin may have been so keen on presenting these men in such a positive light was that while working on this painting Repin got to know the haulers personally. To his surprise they were not uneducated mules, but instead had been priests, soldiers and icon painters. “...these men were not mere beasts of burden, but highly original and interesting personalities whom he came to admire as personifications of ancient wisdom and fortitude. He compared the haulers, strapped into their riggings, to Greek philosophers sold on the slave market to some barbarian conquerors.”⁷²

By the early 1880s Repin had begun to focus less on depicting the peasantry and more on the struggle of the revolutionary movement in Russia. In 1878 he had officially joined the Wanderers organization and within a few years had begun creating paintings and sketches in response to the political events that were unfolding in Russia. During this tumultuous period in Russian history the intelligentsia, who during the 1870s had focused primarily on peacefully educating the peasant population, were now employing more

violent methods to attain change in Russia. These tactics ultimately resulted in numerous terrorist activities that culminated with the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in March 1881. Although Repin did not condone this violent behavior, he could not help but empathize with the radicals' cause and admire their determination to achieve social justice for all Russians.⁷³ Being of peasant descent himself, he knew first-hand the struggle that the idealistic intelligentsia were up against. He knew that it would be an arduous and almost impossible task to educate the timid and downtrodden peasant population that was weary of any change and whose core beliefs were deeply rooted in mysticism.⁷⁴ Like Repin, much of the Russian intelligentsia was comprised of young men and women who had come from the lower classes of Russian society, yet had managed in some way or another to attain an education and career. Having come from these lowly backgrounds and having endured a struggle to become successful in a country that maintained a very rigid class structure, these people naturally had a strong devotion to the lower class and were militant in their quest to pursue justice for the poor masses.⁷⁵ Given this state of affairs it is no wonder that Repin became inspired by the politically energized atmosphere. Some of his most famous paintings were created during this period. *They Did Not Expect Him* (1883-1884) (Plate 2), is one of many paintings, also including *The Secret Meeting*, (1883) and *The Propagandist's Arrest* (1880-1891), which depict the pro-revolutionary theme that marked Repin's paintings and sketches during the early 1880s. In *They Did Not Expect Him*, Repin captures a family's feeling of surprise as an unknown man enters unexpectedly through the door. Although there has been much debate over who the young man in this painting is, most art historians believe that the unexpected guest is a revolutionary who has just returned from prison or exile.⁷⁶ The

scene may have been inspired by the 1881 pardon that Tsar Alexander III had granted to a group of imprisoned revolutionaries after the assassination of his father, Tsar Alexander II.⁷⁷ Given that the man entering the room is a revolutionary, this painting provides further evidence of the close relationship between art and politics during this period in Russian history. Repin directly connects the events of the day to the theme of his painting. Furthermore, some such as Henk van Os, coauthor of *Ilya Repin Russia's Secret*, believed Repin's depiction of "the revolutionary" demonstrated his empathy towards the radical group. The man entering the room is thin, stark, with sunken eyes and an almost timid demeanor. He appears to have suffered during his period away from home. Van Os points out that Repin used the author Vsevolod Garshin, a Russian writer who viewed the revolutionary as a somewhat tragic hero who had the right social intentions, yet went about making changes in the wrong way, as his model for the central figure.⁷⁸ This gives further evidence of Repin's empathy towards the revolutionary. Yet, David Jackson, senior lecturer of Russian and Soviet art history at the University of Leeds, like van Os, agrees that Repin had no clear political agenda in creating this work. "Though his works consistently evinced a strong sympathy for the oppressed, the plight and suffering of the lower orders, or the failed idealism of the revolutionary cause as it slipped inexorably into terrorism, Repin was never an artist propagandist. The content of many canvases remain ambiguous, admitting of no narrowly defined political reading."⁷⁹

A Devout Nationalist

Repin's next phase of development was marked by his focus on Russia's national identity. During this period, which evolved out of his revolutionary phase, around the early 1880s, Repin shifted his energy from the revolutionary theme to focus on Russia's

great historical past.⁸⁰ It is important to mention that after Russia's devastating 1856 defeat in the Crimean War the Russian national spirit was in peril, yet in April 1877 when Russia declared war on their historic rival Turkey, there was an overwhelming rise in national spirit. "Pan-Slavism," the idea of uniting the Slavic people, erupted throughout Russia. The Russian public strongly backed Alexander III's declaration of War, and upon a successful victory against the Turks with the March 1878 signing of the Treaty of San Stefano the Russians spirits soared.⁸¹ Many of the art circles in Russia embraced the new wave of nationalism, "In the world of the Maecenas Savva Mamontov on his country estate in Abramtsevo near Moscow, all attention was devoted to Russia's glorious past. Anyone who drank from this source would have something to offer the future of the fatherland, was the opinion of the Moscow elite."⁸² Repin himself was set on exposing Russia's rich history to the Russian people and the world through his art. "Repin had become convinced of the value of Russian traditions and believed that the grandeur of Russia's own history ought to become common knowledge through his art."⁸³ He focused his work on two distinct themes, the first capturing the idea of the *Narod*, or popular masses, and the second involving historical painting.⁸⁴

After the emancipation of the serfs in 1865 by Tsar Alexander II, Russia was faced with a number of perplexing questions as to how this mass peasantry would fit into society and what role they would play. To answer some of these questions a group branching off from the intelligentsia formed; they were known as the Populists. This mainly student body, which formed during the 1870s, felt that it was their obligation to cure Russia's social problems by educating the peasantry.⁸⁵ They followed the teachings of Nicholas Chernyshevsky, Alexander Herzen, Michael Bakunin, Peter Lavrov and

Nicholas Mikhailovsky all of whom believed in the untapped value of the peasant population.⁸⁶ Chernyshevsky's theories, in particular, greatly influenced many of the populists. He believed that individual happiness and wellbeing among the greatest number of people would lead to "an economy and society based on equality and cooperation."⁸⁷ In 1873 and 1874 the movement reached its climax. The Populists took to the countryside in order to fulfill their idealistic mission. "And they went to the villages, some two and a half thousand of them, to become rural teachers, scribes, doctors, veterinarians, nurses, or storekeepers."⁸⁸ Although, as I have mentioned previously, they were unsuccessful in their attempts to change the backward peasantry, who viewed them with skepticism rather than accepting their genuine humility, the group did inspire many artists during this time to embrace the *Narod* ("the masses") as a subject matter. Artists of all mediums adopted the idea of depicting the great Russian *Narod* as a means not only to highlight Russia's social problems but in doing so, hopefully to arouse a solution for eventually bettering Russia. "There was the idea that the artist who succeeded in depicting the *Narod* would find a kind of holy grail that would show art and eventually the people the way to a better future."⁸⁹ Ilya Repin was among the artists who became almost obsessed with this theme and in 1881 set out to create one of his most epic and controversial paintings entitled *Procession in the Kursk Province*, 1881-1883 (Plate 3). In this painting Repin managed to encompass all of Russian society and everything that made Russia unique in a single canvas. We see all walks of Russian life, from the clergyman to the soldier and the beggar as they are thrust forward in the uniquely Russian religious procession. Repin managed to collectively represent the Russian people as a whole rather than portray them as a generic, stereotypical Russians, and in doing so, he

created an epic painting that exemplified the concept of the Narod. “The issue did not concern the portrayal of a typical individual, the archetypical ‘Russian’, but the totality, the collective community, the specific mass identity of the people, which promised to be more than the sum of its parts.”⁹⁰ This painting allows the viewer a momentary glimpse into Russian life in all its grandeur and despair. Repin “... encapsulates the entire nation – its history, its political system, its religions and ideologies, its successes and failures – in a single canvas.”⁹¹

Repin also focused on various famous historical events in order to arouse a sense of national spirit in the Russian people. By creating images of these famous Russian stories drawn from the nation’s colorful history, Repin sought to stimulate a sense of national pride. One of the most famous historical paintings that Repin created during this period was entitled *Zaporozhe Cossacks Composing a Mocking Letter to the Turkish Sultan*, 1880-1891 (Plate 4). This painting, which will be discussed in further detail in chapter three, demonstrates Repin’s genuine passion for Russian history. This narrative painting tells the story of the Zaporozhe Cossacks in 1676 drafting a letter to the Turkish Sultan. As the story goes, these Cossacks, who had repeatedly ravaged the Turkish forces, were sent a proposal by the Turkish Sultan, who offered them protection under his rule. The Cossacks, who were a free people, balked at the proposal, responding with a condescending letter stating that “‘freebooters’ don’t need a Sultan.”⁹² Like other artists who created historical works, such as Leo Tolstoy, Repin immersed himself in an extensive research project about the Zaporozhe Cossacks before beginning the painting. He compiled a complete ethnographical study on the group, including details about their attire, mannerisms, and culture, in order to create as accurate a portrayal of the event as

possible.⁹³ The end result was a historically accurate painting, along with many sketches and studies that capture the zeal and boisterousness of these people and this uniquely Russian story.

An Advocate of Art for Art's Sake (1873-1876 & 1890s)

Impressionist Influence

During a brief period in the 1870s, Repin explored an entirely new style of painting. Upon his graduation from the Imperial Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg, Repin traveled abroad to Paris in order to study some of the new western trends in painting. These years abroad proved to be quite influential ones for the young artist. Paris offered a break from the traditional realist style of painting Repin had become accustomed to. Repin's artistic training at the Imperial Academy of Arts and at the Artel, and for that matter, any of the art he had been exposed to throughout his artistic career, was primarily derived from Classical painting techniques. Despite the different preferences of subject matter, the Academy preferring religious and classical themes, the Artel focusing on more utilitarian subjects, both schools of painting that Repin attended found realism to be the most effective style. In turn, Repin, and all other Russian artists, were required, at least by the Academy, to replicate old Renaissance and Classical paintings until this traditional style became second nature to them.⁹⁴ Hence, when Repin first saw the different techniques that were being explored in Paris, his curiosity was immediately piqued. The Impressionists' technique represented something new and innovative to Repin, and canvases also were a breath of fresh air after his immersion in the old Renaissance style. This new technique inspired Repin to reevaluate his own paintings and seek out his own individual style. His attempts experimenting with some of

the Impressionists techniques proved to be quite interesting for him and were different from anything he had previously produced.

In the portrait of his daughter, entitled *Verunia Repina*, 1874, (Plate 5) we are able to see how much of the impressionist technique Repin actually absorbed. The painting, which is executed using quick broad brush strokes and vibrant colors, was painted according to Repin “à la Manet,”⁹⁵ and demonstrates Repin’s ability to incorporate the impressionist brushwork into his own style. The impact of the impressionist style can also be seen in many of the paintings that he produced throughout the rest of his artistic career. Upon returning to Russia, Repin’s paintings contain a certain looseness and freedom that they had lacked prior to his Parisian experience. This change becomes acutely apparent in comparing his painting entitled, *Preparations for the Exam*, (Plate 6) which was completed in 1864, to his portrait entitled *Praying Jew*, (Plate 7) of 1875. In the latter, Repin’s interpretation of the praying man is more gestural than in *Preparation for the Exam*. The use of broad brushstrokes and heavily applied blocks of paint create a dramatic light that emphasizes the cloak covering the feeble man’s body. We are furthermore led into an indiscernible area of mystery as the praying man’s hat becomes faded into the ominous dark background. This, in turn, further emphasizes the dramatic lighting present in the foreground. The 1864 painting of the examination is much tighter and restricted in comparison to the 1875 portrait. The brushstrokes are smaller and less visible adding to a stiffness to the young man in the foreground. This 1864 painting has a certain technical and rigid feeling to it that is not present in the 1875 portrait.

Besides altering his painting technique, Repin also experienced a much freer social and artistic environment while abroad. Repin sensed that the Europeans lived a much less stressful and more tolerant life than Russians. It was in this relaxed atmosphere that artists were able to explore new techniques and styles at their whim. They were not burdened with the same moral and social obligations that Russian artists identified themselves with. “On the contrary, he found that the Europeans’ application and immersion in the here and now enabled them to work to good effect and relax with an easy consciousness. Not pre-occupied with improving the world, they were tolerant of one another, and each person was able to pursue his goals in a let-live atmosphere.”⁹⁶ While experiencing this new environment Repin realized that the value of art and the artist’s role in society could be viewed in many different ways. Repin was enthralled with the sense of freedom encompassed by the aesthetics of art for art’s sake and idea of seeking pleasure from art rather than being limited to the heavy social burden that Russian art carried. “He felt happy, productive, and liberated from the ideological purposefulness his Russian mentors required of art.”⁹⁷

The spontaneity and appreciation of the process of painting that accompanied this new aesthetic also proved to have a lasting effect on Repin. This is apparent in his teaching techniques during the 1890s at the Imperial Academy. As a teacher and reformer, Repin primarily focused on changing the teaching techniques used at the Academy. He emphasized the importance of artistic freedom and experimentation and believed that the students should be trained in an open studio, as in Paris, rather than in the confines of a classroom. “For Repin the crucial aspect of the reform was the shift

from classroom to studio, which would guarantee freedom of teaching and nurturing the students' creativity."⁹⁸

An Encounter with Tolstoy's Aesthetics

Repin and Tolstoy first met in the early 1880s in Moscow. Tolstoy immediately developed a fondness for Repin and the two began a relationship that lasted over a decade, during which Repin created some of the most intimate portraits of Russia's most famous writer. Among the most well known of these portraits of Tolstoy is *Lev Tolstoy Barefoot* (Plate 8). In this painting Repin depicts Tolstoy meditating barefoot in the woods. In portraying the great author engaged in his typical routine and dressed in his everyday peasant attire, Repin allows the viewer an intimate view into Tolstoy's life. Only a select few artists besides Repin, mainly Ge and Kramskoy, were allowed to paint Tolstoy. Yet, only Repin seems to capture Tolstoy during his most private times at his estate, Yasnaya Polyana.⁹⁹

At this point in Repin's career he was deeply immersed in the Russian social and political scene, and as such was immediately impressed by the famous writer's theories on art. He soon adopted Tolstoy's ideas as a guideline for his career as an artist. In order to clearly understand Tolstoy's influence on Repin, it is necessary to entertain a brief synopsis of his main theories on art. Tolstoy, who had battled with questions of aesthetics for most of his life, was beginning to formulate his theories regarding the true meaning and value of art to both Russia and civilization as a whole. While he had not yet written his famous aesthetic treatise entitled, *What Is Art?*, Tolstoy, using his novels as a platform to express his theories on art, had already begun to voice his opinion on the subject. We see this clearly demonstrated in his novel *Anna Karenina* (1877), in which he

creates a scene where the main characters Anna and Vronsky, visit the artist Mihailov. Through these characters Tolstoy directs us to consider the sincerity of the artist and his role in society.¹⁰⁰ Tolstoy eventually organized his theories on art and compiled his famous aesthetic essay, *What Is Art?*, where in Tolstoy states that art is based on the communication of emotion in order to raise consciousness about the meaning of life, ultimately uniting all of mankind. “Art is that human activity which consists in one man’s consciously conveying to others, by means of certain external signs, the feelings he has experienced, and in others being infected by those feelings and also experiencing them.”¹⁰¹ Therefore, the role of the artist, according to Tolstoy, was to create “... a canvas around a central ‘elevating’ thought.”¹⁰²

Tolstoy further believed that art should not be defined as it had been in the past by such philosophers as Hegel or Baumgarten. They, along with many others, used beauty as the basis of their definition of art, thereby making the ultimate aim of art pleasure. Tolstoy refuted this definition stating that art can not be defined in terms of beauty, because the main aim of beauty is that of pleasure, and pleasure acts as a distraction to the real meaning of art.¹⁰³ Rather than focusing on the basis of art as a means of pleasure, Tolstoy believed that the communication of emotion, which is a necessary aspect of human life, must be the basis for defining art. “In order to define art precisely, one must first of all cease looking at it as a means of pleasure and consider it as one of the conditions of human life. Considering art this way, we cannot fail to see that art is a means of communion among people.”¹⁰⁴

Tolstoy further states that “good” art should fall into one of two categories, “Religious art” or “universal art.” Religious art, religion being used by Tolstoy in the

broad sense of the word, is art that represents the “highest understanding of the meaning of life” of a group of people from a certain period in time.¹⁰⁵ This type of art should not only serve to unite man, but should also result in an “evolution of feeling” in which the content of the artwork is such that people of the current time are able to share the feelings of people from the past. As each generation grows, they learn from the feelings of the past and replace them with new, higher, more moral and humanitarian feelings resulting in an “evolution of feelings.”¹⁰⁶ The second type of art is “universal art” which Tolstoy describes as one “which conveys the simplest everyday feelings of life, such as are accessible to everyone in the world.”¹⁰⁷

After Repin’s first meeting with Tolstoy he became convinced of the truth of Tolstoy’s theories and began to correspond with the novelist. His early letters to Tolstoy, from Elizabeth Valkenier’s selections in *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art*, demonstrate the great influence that he had on him. ‘Now at leisure, as I ponder your every word, the genuine path of a painter is becoming clearer to me; I begin to sense an interesting and broad perspective ahead.’¹⁰⁸ In another letter Repin further demonstrates the depth of Tolstoy’s influence on his art: ‘How happy your letters make me, Lev Nikolaevich!... Your comments on my *Seeing Off the Recruit* are absolutely correct: I felt when I was finishing the picture, that it had come out cold, and I did not know how to deal with this problem....Oh, you can’t even imagine how I suffered from a lack of character, from haste and misdirected enthusiasm. I have no success in coming across some profound idea that could be plastically rendered in images.’¹⁰⁹ Yet, by 1887, Repin began to question the validity of Tolstoy’s theories on art. During this period Repin went back and forth debating whether the extreme rejection of beauty’s centrality to art was

correct. From Valkenier, ‘Yet, thinking it all through, many objections arise and I keep vacillating: at times it seems that I am right; then again that his opinions are definitely more deep and eternal.’¹¹⁰ Eventually, by the mid 1890s Repin began publicly refuting Tolstoy’s theories on art. Besides writing an essay entitled ‘Letters on Art,’ which aimed to contradict Tolstoy’s aesthetics, Repin also expressed his disapproval of the famous novelist’s theories in the 1894 obituary of his fellow artist Nikolai Ge.¹¹¹ Here Repin points out the negative effect that people like Tolstoy had on artists. He states that their criticism not only inhibited the ability of artists to freely create their artwork without being pressured to promote their ‘liberal ideas,’ but that these critics and theorist also had no business dictating to artists what they should create, since they had so little understanding of painting and sculpture. “Interspersed throughout Ge’s obituary were observations on the deleterious effect of various nonaesthetic theories on art. Only in Russia, Repin held, did ‘literary figures’ (literatory) monopolize art criticism, even though they did not understand the plastic arts. In consequence, Russian painters did not ‘dare to be themselves,...did not dare to perfect themselves in the forms and harmonies of nature. They [were] being forced into the realm of journalism, to be illustrators of liberal ideas.’”¹¹² Upon his rejection of Tolstoy’s ‘crusade against beauty,’¹¹³ Repin began to search for a new artistic endeavor. Ironically, it was at the same Academy that he had once rejected as too restrictive that he would begin the next phase in his career.

Repin as a Teacher and Reformer of the Academy

The Importance of the Creative Process

By 1893, Repin, who had broken his ties to Stasov and many of the members of the Wanderers organization and who had freed himself from the weightiness of

Tolstoyanism, was beginning a new stage in his career as a reformer and teacher at the St. Petersburg Academy. Still unsettled by some of the aesthetic questions of the day, Repin decided it was best to travel abroad once again in order to seek more clarity about the meaning of art and the artist's role and place in society. He also intended to observe some alternative teaching techniques that he thought might be useful in reforming the Academy. Over the course of several months from late 1893 to 1894 Repin traveled to Munich, Paris, Vienna and several other cities, observing the artistic environments of each. Munich seemed to him to have the best artistic environment, promoting a free artistic atmosphere with large open studios in which students were encouraged to explore new creative outlets.¹¹⁴ Upon returning from his trip abroad, Repin had found increased clarity in his views on art. He was now convinced that both the ideas of the Wanderers and those of Tolstoy were misguided and that an artist should create his work without any other aim than for the sake of art. The social responsibilities dictated by the Wanderers had become passé in Repin's eyes. He felt the process of creating art had superseded in value above the social and moral pictorial role. 'I confess that for me now art is interesting only for itself. No noble intentions of the author will make me stop before a poor canvas.'¹¹⁵ In refuting Tolstoy's theories, Repin also called for a 'free art' created without the aim of 'uplifting mankind.'¹¹⁶ Based on this new aesthetic Repin organized an exhibition of sketches. The show, entitled "Creative Sketches," was hung in December 1896 at the Society for the Promotion of Art and, like his solo show of sketches in 1891, contained numerous studies and sketches created by his students at the Academy.¹¹⁷ By organizing this groundbreaking exhibit, Repin aimed to show the importance of the process of painting and also to encourage his students to look at painting in a less

conventional manner.¹¹⁸ It was this new appreciation of the importance of freedom in the creative process that had a great influence on many of Repin's students, as seen in the case of Valentin Serov. "Most important, studying with Repin exposed young Serov to the intense application and creative excitement that typified the older artist's deportment before the easel. Regularly observing the creative process up close surely guided and sustained Serov in his own unremitting efforts."¹¹⁹

A Return to National Realism

By the turn of the century, Repin, in keeping with his unsettled history, had once again dramatically changed his aesthetic views. Overwhelmed by the wave of new art movements, from Futurism to Cubism, and after a short affiliation with the progressive World of Art group, Repin once again found comfort in the traditional style of the Wanderers, which he upheld until his death in 1930. "In this atmosphere Repin's role and convictions turned 180 degrees: he became the spokesman for the camp of tradition and its epigones."¹²⁰ His subject matter once again focused on Russian nationalism as seen in his last epic painting entitled *Formal Session of the State Council on May 7th, 1901, the Day of the Centenary of its Establishment*, 1903. (Plate 9). In this last monumental work, Repin painstakingly painted eighty individual portraits which culminated in this enormous 400x877cm work.¹²¹ Here we see that both the subject matter and style in which Repin portrays these statesmen harkens back to his nationalist period of the 1880s. His attention to detail as well as his grand portrayal of the event are reminiscent of his earlier period and are evidence of his shift in aesthetics.

This constant transition from one artistic style or philosophy to another is not only indicative of Repin's adventurous personality, but also of his strong desire to explore the

meaning of art in terms of its independent value or its social role.¹²² As mentioned earlier, Repin was not an artist who painted with a political agenda in mind. He created works that were often inspired by current events, or that captured his interest, historically or aesthetically. Repin's tendency to fluctuate from one aesthetic to another can be looked at as a positive attribute. It shows Repin's ability to grow as an artist, finding new artist challenges and exploring different venues. As David Jackson states, Repin's "heterogeneous" career was defined by "artistic searching, testing lines of consistency, both theoretical and practical, and the investigative and enquiring approach."¹²³ As an artist this ability to change is essential for growth. Without it one often becomes stuck in a certain style or painting a particular theme that although is comfortable and consistent, does not lead to personal artistic growth.

Chapter III

Zaporazhe Cossacks

I worked on the general harmony of the picture. What labor! Each color, spot, each line had not only to express the general mood of the subject; they had to harmonize with each other and at the same time to characterize the depicted personage....

Ilya Repin, *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art* (p.131)

Upon viewing *Zaporozhe Cossacks Composing a Mocking Letter to the Turkish Sultan*, I was immediately taken aback by the bravado with which this painting was executed. Repin's use of color and bold brushwork along with his meticulous attention to detail and to historical accuracy combined to create a painting that is not only a testament to his artistic genius, but one that also demonstrates Repin's internal artistic struggle and the often paradoxical nature of his art work. By attempting to recreate this masterpiece, (Plate 10) I was able to attain a first hand understanding of the enormous labor that Repin must have expended in creating this work. I will use this experience as a guide in my art historical critique of *Zaporozhe Cossacks Composing a Mocking Letter to the Turkish Sultan*.

Influences from Repin's Training Revealed in *Zaporazhe Cossacks*

Repin's depiction of the *Zaporazhe Cossacks* was painted during the 1880s and early 1890s. By this point in his career Repin had been exposed to a variety of different artistic styles and techniques. From these different influences, Repin was able to acquire a variety of skills that he used to create his own unique style. Upon viewing *Zaporozhe*

Cossacks Composing a Mocking Letter to the Turkish Sultan, one is able to detect elements of art that are characteristic of traditional Russian icon painting, Impressionism and Neoclassicism.

The Influence of Icon Painting as seen in the *Zaporazhe Cossacks*

As mentioned earlier in this paper, some of the most formative years in Repin's artistic career came during the period that he was employed as an icon painter. One of the most dynamic examples demonstrating the influence of icon painting on Repin's art can be seen in the dramatic color scheme in his painting of the *Zaporazhe Cossacks*. Here we see how Repin, nearly twenty years after mastering the craft, was still inclined to utilize the same traditional color scheme that epitomized Russian icon painting. This palette, which was inspired by the Byzantine artists then enhanced by the Russians,¹²⁴ consists of the three primary colors, blue, yellow, and red, with a strong predominance of the latter throughout the work.¹²⁵ These intense primary earthen hues were often placed side by side with opposing colors in order to accentuate the brilliant attire worn by worshipped individuals. "Effective colour harmonies were created by the contrast of complementaries in the modeling of garments, such as red or reddish-brown against green, set off by white highlights."¹²⁶ An example of the type of icon that Repin probably replicated and repaired during his youth is *SS. Boris and Gleb With Scenes From Their Lives*, (Plate 11). The dramatic placement of these complementary colors can be seen in both the fourteenth-century icon of *SS. Boris and Gleb With Scenes From Their Lives* and in Repin's painting of the *Zaporozhe Cossacks*. In the icon painting, as in Repin's depiction of the Cossacks, we not only see the same earthen tones used, but we also see

the similar placement of the modeled green and blue hues that form the undergarments of the fated brothers against the complementary red and orange colors that form their cloaks.¹²⁷ Similarly, in Repin's painting the garments of the unruly clan are defined by the juxtaposition of red and orange against deep blue and green hues.

While recreating Repin's palette, I found myself drawn to the intensity of the pure pigment that defined the forms in his painting of the Cossacks. Although I did not realize it while I was painting this study, in retrospect I now see that, as in Repin's painting, I also used a red hue as the base color for all the various garments and flesh tones in the painting. As mentioned previously, this color choice is very characteristic of Russian icon painting. Besides the pure red pigment found on some of the garments, I also used varying amounts of cadmium red to create almost all of the other colors found in the painting. For example, in order to attain the correct hue of olive green that forms the coat of the Cossack who is holding the pipe, as well as on the lavish garment of the Cossack on the far right, I used a mixture of sap green, payne's gray and cadmium red. The same color red is also used to create the shadow on the white shirt of the Cossack in the immediate foreground. In this case, a combination of cadmium red, flesh tint, juane brilliance, zinc white, along with the olive green mixture, combine to create the dark folds in the foreshortened back of the Cossacks who appears to be falling off his chair and into the viewer's space. Furthermore, in order to attain the necessary level of darkness found in the navy blue garments of the four Cossacks located in the middle ground of the painting, I used pure cadmium red placed directly on top of payne's gray. The same red hue, mixed with varying amounts of juane brilliance and flesh tint, was also used to create the pigment for the Cossacks' skin. In the background of the painting we

see red used to accentuate the shadows in the ominous sky and sea. Looking back at my experience attempting to recreate this painting, I realize the historical significance of this predominantly red color scheme, once used in icon painting and adopted by Repin in his painting of the Cossacks. By reviving this traditional color scheme, Repin illuminates the glory of Russia's rich cultural heritage.

The Influence of Impressionism as seen in the *Zaporozhe Cossacks*

In addition to the brilliant color scheme in Repin's painting of the *Zaporozhe Cossacks*, one is also drawn to his dramatic use of broad brushwork, which he derived from the Impressionists while studying in Paris. As mentioned earlier, Repin spent some time in Paris, where he was inspired to paint "à la Manet," using loose brush work and rich hues as seen in the portrait of his daughter, *Verunia Repina* (plate 5).¹²⁸ As previously stated, this painting exemplifies Repin's encounter with the Impressionist style. Although the Impressionist influence is not as transparent in Repin's painting of the Cossacks as in the portrait of his daughter, there is, nonetheless, evidence of this technique throughout the work. By comparing Edouard Manet's painting, *Marguerite de Conflans Wearing a Hood*, c. 1873 (Plate 12) to Repin's portrait of his daughter, and finally to my study of the *Cossacks*, one is able to see the progression of the Impressionist influence on Repin's work.

One of the most striking elements of Manet's painting *Marguerite de Conflans Wearing a Hood* is his use of broad brushwork. Manet and other Impressionist artist moved away from depicting objects and forms with line and instead tended to concentrate on color theory, optics and brushwork. "Objects are not so much things in themselves as are agents for the absorption and refraction of light. Hard outlines, indeed lines

themselves, do not exist in nature. Shadows, they maintained, are not gray or black but tend to take on a color complimentary to that of the objects that cast them. The concern of the painter, they concluded, should therefore be with light and color more than with objects and substances.”¹²⁹ By using a series of broadly painted strokes thickly and loosely applied to the canvas, Manet created an optical experience in which the focus of the painting became a series of lighted shapes of color rather than of line.¹³⁰ The effect of this technique, which became characteristic of Impressionist painting, is that the forms in the painting become more flattened. “...Manet forced the viewer to look at the painted surface and to recognize it once more as a flat plane covered with patches of pigment.”¹³¹ We see this technique employed very clearly in both the white garment of Marguerite de Conflans and especially in her left hand. The white dress and hood that cloak the young woman are painted using quick, gestural brushstrokes that give the form an almost fuzzy, unfocused appearance in which the garment, without any distinct contours, seems to flow into the background. The absence of an enclosed form gives the women’s outfit a light, almost airy, feeling. The brushstrokes seem to disappear into the background, creating an area of mystery in which both artist and viewer connect in the unknown space.

We see this same method of painting used in Repin’s *Verunia Repina*. Here Repin uses the same quick, sketchy brushwork on “Little Vera’s” dress and hat as Manet had on the garment of Marguerite de Conflans. The focus, once again, turns away from the line and structure of the figure to the light and dark forms created by dabs of color. There are no rigid contours that define the forms in this portrait. “Little Vera’s” hat, like her dress, hair and figure, flow openly in and out of one another and the background creating an airiness, flatness and feeling of spontaneity typical of the Impressionist style.

An example of this blending of shapes is most apparent in the left hand of “Little Vera.” Her hand and arm flow into the same form of the toy horse that she holds. There is no distinct line that separates one from the other, only patches of color and light that combine to create the impression of the two forms.

In Repin’s painting of the Cossacks, this same technique can be seen in the garments of the three men in the foreground. Here, quick gestural brushstrokes are used to create the colored shadows and folds in the attire. The olive green shadow on the right sleeve of the man in the center bleeds into the vest of the Cossack on the far right. This creates an area of openness in which the plane becomes flattened and the forms merge. While copying this painting, I found that this flattening occurred in several areas throughout the work. The garments of men in the middle ground seemed to become especially hard to delineate. The deep green and blue of their garments blend into one another, rendering an area of mystery.

Another area in this painting that I found to be derivative of the Impressionist style can be seen in the hands of the Cossack scribe in the center of the painting and also in the Cossack who is pointing to the distant background. Here, as in the painting of *Marguerite de Conflans* and *Verunia Repina*, Repin employs the same method of brushwork using two broadly painted planes, one highlighted and the other in shadow, to create the fingers of his subjects. While painting the study of the Cossacks, I noticed the rather vague quality in Repin’s depiction of the Cossack’s hands. I recall the dramatic change in technique from the meticulously detailed painting, using a fine brush, used to create the closed volume of the fountain pen held by the scribe, to the broad and more open brushwork used to create the hand which holds the pen. The juxtaposition of these

two opposing techniques creates not only a sense of tension that is apparent throughout the work, and which will be discussed later in this paper, but also which demonstrates Repin's incorporation of numerous techniques into one work. By recognizing the Impressionist technique that Repin used to break down the form of the hand into a series of light and dark planes along with his use of broad brushwork, one is able to retrace the progression of the Impressionist's influence in his paintings.

The Influence of Neoclassicism as seen in the *Zaporozhe Cossacks*

Contrary to the airy characteristics of Impressionism, elements of the strict academic tradition of Neoclassicism are also present in Repin's painting of the *Zaporozhe Cossacks*. As mentioned earlier in this paper, Repin spent most of his formal training mastering the neoclassical techniques of painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg. The Neoclassical style of painting that became popular in Europe and America during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries spread to Russia by the early and mid 1800s under the reigns of Alexander I and Nicholas I. "Catherine II preferred a soberer style which became increasingly severe with time and prepared the final triumph of Russian Neoclassicism in the reigns of her grandsons Alexander I (1801-25) and Nicholas I (1825-55)."¹³² This movement was inspired by the art of ancients (Greek and Romans) and the Renaissance masters. Often characteristic in this style of painting is a set program consisting of a series of rules of art derived from ancient Greece and Rome.¹³³ This style, unlike Impressionism, is based on balance, harmony, symmetry and clarity of form. "For subsequent classical movements as those of the Renaissance and nineteenth-century neoclassicism, the guiding principles were symmetry, proportion, and unity based on the interrelationship of parts with one another and with the whole."¹³⁴ The

artist is expected to show restraint in forming an ordered composition. In painting Neoclassicism usually manifests itself in the form of a closed composition with a central focus in which execution of forms is usually highly detailed with an emphasis on contours. Occasionally the subject matter is even inspired by Greek and Roman events or legends.¹³⁵ This style of painting is best illustrated by Jean Jacques David in his *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784 (Plate 13). Here David depicts a well known Roman inspired theme of the three Horatii brothers taking an oath from their father to go to war.¹³⁶ Also evident is a symmetrical and centrally focused composition that is established by employing a one point perspective scheme. Furthermore, David's attention to detail and clarity of form seen on the garments and on the limbs of the figures, harkens back to the academic traditions of Greek and Roman art in which an extreme emphasis was placed on replicating with exactitude the idealized human form.¹³⁷ Although Repin's painting of the *Cossacks* is not considered a neoclassical painting, like David's, nonetheless, there are still several elements of Neoclassicism that are evident in this work.

The most apparent element derived from Repin's neoclassical training is the centralized composition seen in the *Zaporozhe Cossacks*. By using a centered, one point perspective, Repin draws the viewer directly into the center of the painting where the scribe is located. Although the perspective is more subtle than in *The Oath of the Horatii*, in which the lines on the tiled floor intersect directly at the father's hands in the center of the painting, there is still a very strong central focus. This is apparent in the angle of the table and the diagonal angles of the Cossack's shoulders, which all recede to a central intersection located just above the head of the scribe. While painting the study of this work, it was necessary to spend an ample amount of time on preliminary sketches in

order to precisely replicate this centralized composition. In doing so, I became aware of the intense precision with which Repin executed this well planned composition. Every individual in this painting is strategically positioned in order to create this dynamic focal point.

Another element of this painting that has a neoclassical quality is Repin's attention to detail. As mentioned early in this paper, a large part of this painting is broadly painted, yet at the same time, there is a significant presence of technicality that is derivative of Neoclassicism. The most striking examples of this style of painting are evident in the faces of the Cossacks located in the foreground. While painting these figures, I realized the intense detail of their faces. Only with a fine paintbrush and steady hand was I able to recreate the rotten teeth seen in the Cossack located in the middle left wearing a blue and gold hat, or on the silver earring that adorns the Cossack located in the center left hand side of the painting. Furthermore, in order to replicate the fine detail in the hair and wrinkles of the Cossacks' faces, it took numerous hours and up to fourteen layers of paint for each face. Other areas that required the more technical, detailed neoclassical style were the objects held by the Cossacks, such as the fountain pen, pipes and stringed instrument. These areas also required the same meticulous execution using a fine paintbrush and many layers of paint.

Due to his lengthy training at the Academy of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg, it is no wonder that the academic elements of Neoclassicism are evident throughout most of Repin's paintings and specifically in the *Zaporozhe Cossacks*. Despite Repin's intentions to veer from the strict traditions of Neoclassicism, elements of this style are dominant in both the centrally focused composition and linearism found in this painting.

The Story Behind the *Zaporozhe Cossacks*

Of all the possible subjects that Repin could have chosen to portray Russia's glorious past, it was the legend of the Cossacks that he found captured the essence of Russia's national glory and best lent itself to his bold and diverse style of painting. With their dramatic stories of raids, piracy and acts of astonishing courage, accompanied with the rich history of Russia's infamous "freebooters," the Cossacks have been the inspiration for some of Russia's most famous authors and artists, namely Gogol, Tolstoy, and Repin. In creating his epic painting of the *Zaporozhe Cossacks*, Repin immersed himself in extensive ethno-historical research of the Cossacks in order to produce a historically accurate rendition of the famous anecdotal tale which inspires the *Zaporozhe Cossacks Composing a Mocking Letter to the Turkish Sultan*. In addition to discussing Repin's research process, inspiration and motivation for creating this painting, in this section I will also discuss the historical background of the Zaporozhe Cossacks focusing on the characteristics of their culture that are present in Repin's painting. In order to provide a more accurate and in depth analysis I will not only use a number of historical texts as references, but I will also refer to Nikolai Gogol's account of Cossack life as described in his novel *Taras Bulba*.

Historical Background of Russia's Infamous Cossacks

Cossack Origins and Structure

Repin's painting of the *Zaporozhe Cossacks Composing a Mocking Letter to the Turkish Sultan* harkens back to seventeenth-century Ukraine, when the Cossacks residing

along the banks of the various tributaries and steppes around the Black and Caspian Seas roamed freely throughout the countryside.¹³⁸ These Cossacks differed greatly from the subsequent nineteenth-century Cossacks who lived when Repin began his studies for this painting.¹³⁹ Unlike the Cossacks of the nineteenth century, who by that time had assimilated into the Russian military, the seventeenth-century Zaporozhe Cossacks, whom Repin chose as the focus of his painting, enjoyed a life of uninhibited freedom and independence.¹⁴⁰ “They owed allegiance to no ruler for their debatable land between many kingdoms; but the Sultan of Turkey, the King of Poland, and the Tzar of Muscovy alternately sought and betrayed their friendship, while the kazaks, in turn, as blithely changed their loyalty, according to circumstances and booty.”¹⁴¹ The Zaporozhe Cossacks were the second largest Cossack host, only to the Don Cossacks who were greater in size.¹⁴² Like the Don Cossacks, they had an organized democratic military community. “The Cossacks developed a peculiar society, both military and democratic, for their offices were elective and a general gathering of all cossacks made the most important decisions.”¹⁴³ Within their community they had a general assembly, the *rada*, and an elected leader called the *ataman*.¹⁴⁴ Much of the structure, procedures and lifestyles, along with the terminology, used by both the Zaporozhe and other Cossacks, had actually been adopted from their rivals, the Turkic Tatars, who during the thirteenth century had inhabited the steppe and established a highly organized military society. “Tatar military structure was based on tens: ten men to a section, ten sections to a squadron, ten squadrons to a regiment, and ten regiments to a division. A leader was called an *ataman*, and his deputy an *esaul*; leaders at the lower levels were chosen by election.”¹⁴⁵

Although the origins of the Cossacks are rather vague, Philip Longworth, author of *The Cossacks: Five Centuries of Turbulant Life on the Russian Steppes*, states that as early as the fourteenth century groups of renegade Tatars who were known for their acts of piracy on the Black Sea were referred to as ‘Cossacks’ by both the Greeks and Genoses.¹⁴⁶ By the mid-fifteenth century, groups of peasants seeking autonomy from Polish and Lithuanian rule began to flee to the desolate and feared area of the steppe where these infamous Tatars lived. In order to survive against the Tatars, these individuals established military settlements and began calling themselves Cossacks. “From the mid –fifteenth century on, Slavic peasants from Little and Great Russia began to migrate to this land, preferring to brave the dangers of the open steppe to facing their debts or oppression of the Poles and Lithuanians.”¹⁴⁷ It was not long before these Cossacks adopted the Tatars’ love of piracy and soon themselves began raiding the infamous looters.¹⁴⁸ Due to their rather unsettled way of life, the Cossacks avoided agriculture and instead relied upon the spoils that they acquired from various raids, along with hunting and fishing, as a means of survival.¹⁴⁹

The Zaporozhe Cossacks

As Seen in Repin’s Painting and Described in Gogol’s *Taras Bulba*

In the mid-sixteenth century the Zaporozhe Cossacks had a well established settlement located on the desolate island of Khortytia, which was beyond the unnavigable area of the Dnieper River. Their name, Zaporozhe, denotes the location of their settlement which was “beyond the rapids.”¹⁵⁰ It was here that they established their hideaway, which they referred to as a *Sech*.¹⁵¹ The Zaporozhe distinguished themselves from other Cossacks by growing large mustaches and shaving their entire heads, with the

exception of one lock of hair which was left atop their bald scalp. Although their attire was often quite shabby during the lean early years of their development, by the seventeenth century the Zaporozhe tended to embellish themselves in decorative oriental garments and accessories. “In the seventeenth century, the Zaporozhes sported huge mustaches and shaved heads except for a top-knot. They wore colorful oriental clothing with baggy trousers, broad golden galloons (decorative braids), silk cummerbunds, and tall hats of sheepskin or turbans with ostrich feathers in them.”¹⁵²

An example of the Zaporozhe’s typical hairstyle is evident in the foremost Cossack in Repin’s painting. As he thrusts backwards into the viewers space his “top-knot” of hair swirls above his shaven head. The sculpted mustaches adorning the Cossacks weathered faces are also evident in the painting. As noted in Repin’s painting, every Cossack portrayed has some degree of facial hair. This not only distinguished the Zaporozhe Cossacks from other *hosts*, but also emphasized their rather jarring expressions which tended to be either deliriously boisterous or frighteningly serious. “The tales and yarns heard among the crowds of Cossacks lolling lazily on the ground were often so funny and breathed such a power of life, that one would have to have the cold blood of a Zaporozhian Cossack to keep a straight face, with mustaches not perturbed by a single twitch—a trait which to this day distinguishes the southern Russians.”¹⁵³ Furthermore, Repin’s painting illustrates the lavish and exotic attire that the Zaporozhes wore, which was described by Gogol thus: “Their scarlet Cossack jackets, the cloth bright as fire, were girded with ornate belts in which richly carved Turkish pistols were stuck.”¹⁵⁴ In creating the Zaporozhe’s outfits Repin was able to demonstrate both his artistic genius and historical knowledge of the Cossacks. He paid special

attention to the precise detail of each historic piece of clothing, focusing meticulously on the design while still being able to capture the texture with broad, gestural brushwork. Repin accentuated the ornate and sensuous quality of the Cossacks clothing by using a dramatic light source to reflect the flowing silk and shimmering gold. An example of Repin's use of chiaroscuro to emphasize the different Cossacks attire is seen in the Cossack seated in the far right foreground. While the speckles of gold on his coat glitter as they reflect the light, his decorative and rather rigid coat turns a dark olive green as it folds into the shadow created by his waist. The juxtaposition of his typical red silk Cossack pants, which smoothly flow in and out of the folds created by his waist against the olive green coat, creates a dramatic distinction and reveal Repin's exceptional ability to capture the feel of the different textiles while still maintaining historical accuracy. He used the Zaporozhe Cossacks striking appearance in this narrative as a platform to exercise and demonstrate his various artistic techniques and knowledge of the subject matter.

Another aspect of the Zaporozhe Cossacks that added to their distinct character was their ethnic diversity. Within the Zaporozhe Sech there existed a rather assorted gang of immigrant men (women were banned from the Sech) of varying ethnic backgrounds.¹⁵⁵ It was not uncommon to find an individual of Polish or German decent within the Sech. "Until the eighteenth century the growth of communities depended on immigration rather than on natural increase, and the Cossacks tended to welcome any friendly able-bodied foreigner in order to maintain their strength. Once the initial Tatar element had been absorbed, the Russian element predominated, but Poles, Wallachians, Germans and Spaniards found their way into the Sech."¹⁵⁶

In Repin's painting, his portrayal of the Cossacks' physical features illustrates an assortment of various ethnicities. Although the Zaporozhe Cossacks are uniform in their tenacity and spirit, their portraits demonstrate a wide range of different traits, evidence of their foreign backgrounds. While the Cossack located directly to the scribe's left appears to have features indicating an Asian background, his fellow warrior directly to his left could possibly be from the more southern regions of Russia bordering to Caspian Sea. As seen in the photographs entitled "The Many Faces of the Soviet Union," the Cossacks presented in Repin's painting have a number of similar physical features to many of the different ethnicities captured by photographer Dean Conger of the National Geographic Society in the 1970s (Plate 14).¹⁵⁷ In executing my study of Repin's painting, I used some of these photographs, mainly those of the men from Yakutia and Uzbekistan, to aid in my portrayal of the figures located behind and to the right and left of the scribe.

As mentioned earlier, the Zaporozhe Cossacks became well known for their acts of piracy along the Black Sea in the seventeenth century. In order to maneuver swiftly around the Turkish fleets, the Zaporozhe constructed versatile boats that had both sails and oars called *seagulls*. "They had traveled the Black Sea in double-ruddered Cossack skiffs, fifty skiffs in a row attacking the wealthiest and grandest ships; they had sunk quite a number of Turkish galleys and had fired a great amount of gunpowder."¹⁵⁸ We see examples of these boats looming along the horizon in Repin's painting. The *seagull* on the far right has its sails pulled, while the boats located along the far left shore appear to be propelled by both rowing and wind power. As we see in the painting, the small depth of these vessels allowed the Cossacks to travel and find protection in shallow waters, while their size still allowed for forty to sixty men to row plus room for weaponry.¹⁵⁹

With the use of these boats and with strategic planning, the Zaporozhe Cossacks wreaked havoc on the Turks, carrying out numerous successful raids. “Armed with fauchards, pistols, muskets, and sabers, thousands of Cossacks in hundreds of these boats would set out on pirating expeditions, typically approaching their targets under the cover of night and attacking at dawn. The Turks became so desperate to stop the Cossacks that they tried holding them back by stretching a great chain across the mouth of the Dnieper.”¹⁶⁰

After a successful raid or battle the Cossacks would then traditionally engage in a spree of drinking to celebrate their victory.¹⁶¹ These customary binges would often last a number of days and were representative of the Cossacks’ wild and reckless mentality. “The rest of the time was spent carousing, a sign of the raging sweep of the Cossacks’ free spirit. The whole Sech presented an unusual sight. It was a kind of uninterrupted feast that began noisily and had no end. Some Cossacks did busy themselves with handicrafts, or kept stalls and traded, but most caroused from morning to night as long as coins jingled in their pockets and the spoils of war had not yet passed into the hands of the traders and tavern keepers.”¹⁶² As Tolstoy points out in *The Cossacks*, which was published in 1863, this tradition of “carousing” was not viewed merely a habitual trend, but rather considered an important and defining aspect of Cossack life. “All Cossacks make their own wine, and drunkenness is not so much a general tendency as a ritual, neglecting which would be considered apostasy.”¹⁶³

The Zaporozhe Cossack’s Transition from Freedom to Loss of Independence

(1676-1775)

During the year 1676, when the event being commemorated in Repin’s painting is presumed to have taken place, the Zaporozhe Cossacks were under the leadership of

Ataman Ivan Dmiitritch Serko. Serko, who is said to be the figure located to the left of the scribe in Repin's painting, encompassed all the attributes of a Zaporozhe Ataman.¹⁶⁴ He was fearless, adaptable, a skilled warrior and most all he was willing to fight for anyone, but always remained loyal only to his fellow Zaporozhe. "Serko, Ataman of the Sech at the time, was an archetypal Zaporozhian war lord. He fought for the Polish King and the Russian Tsar in turn, was sent to Siberia, then suddenly bounced up again to lead a great raid on the Crimea at Muscovite behest."¹⁶⁵ In the years prior to Serko becoming Ataman of the Zaporozhe, the Zaporozhe, although still in the height of their power, had engaged in a few crucial acts that put them on the Muscovite government's radar. Beginning in the mid-seventeenth century, the Zaporozhe had followed the lead of Bogdan Khmelnyts'kyi, a registered Cossack who had already fought numerous battles with the king of Poland over the impeding Catholic Poles who had slaughtered his family.¹⁶⁶ Although the Cossacks, following Bogdan's lead, were victorious in the beginning of the dispute they eventually found themselves unable to sustain their independence without external help. In 1654 they turned to Russia for support in exchange for their loyalty to the tsar.¹⁶⁷

During this same period in the late 1660s and early 1670s, the rebellious young Don Cossack, Stenka Razin, had also begun his pirating crusade for the poor, which by 1670 escalated into a full out war with the Muscovite Army. While plundering numerous towns, Razin freed many peasants who in turn joined his revolt against the Muscovite government.¹⁶⁸ Although Razin's revolt had ended with his execution in June of 1671, his uprising had frightened the Tsar a great deal; so much so that in the summer of 1671 Tsar Alexis began taking steps in attempt to curb all the Cossacks' power and freedom. He

made the Don Cossacks take an oath of loyalty in exchange for pay. Within three years they had broke the oath by harboring a fugitive.¹⁶⁹ Despite the Tsar's dependence on the Cossacks for border defense, in 1673 he instituted an official law which made harboring a fugitive illegal. Had the Cossacks taken the Tsar's action seriously, it would have greatly weakened their recruitment, yet holding true to their rebellious ways, the Cossacks disregarded these laws and continued accepting runaways.¹⁷⁰ Tsar Alexis, finally began registering the Don and Yaik Cossacks and granting land and gentry status to a select few, this in turn allowed him to control the unruly clan. The Zaporozhe, unlike the other Cossacks, did not entirely accept the Tsar's ploys, yet they were dependent on the Muscovite government for weapons, which allowed the Tsar a means to control them. In order to occupy the restless Zaporozhes and also to maintain its borders, the Muscovite government encouraged the Cossacks to focus their energy on fighting the Turks, who had historically been a known enemy.¹⁷¹ During the reign of Peter the Great, 1682-1725, the Cossacks as a group had begun to further lose their independence to Russia. With *hetman* Ivan Mezepa's betrayal of the Tsar to the Swedes in 1709, came dire consequences. Peter the Great ordered his military to destroy the Zaporozhe's Sech by burning it to the ground.¹⁷² The Tsar had finally harnessed all the major Cossack groups under his power and by 1721 had taken the final measures to dismantle their independence from Russia. "With the Zaporozhe, Don and Yaik Cossacks all firmly under his control by 1721, the tsar ceased to deal with the Cossacks through the College of Foreign Affairs and placed their administration in the College of War, whereby doing away with even the symbolic notion that the Cossacks were independent of Russia."¹⁷³ Finally by 1775 under the reign of Catherine the Great, the Zaporozhe Sech had been

destroyed for the last time and all the Zaporozhe's land was now part of the 'new Russian' territory.¹⁷⁴

The Inspiration for the Painting of the Zaporozhe Cossacks

It was in this tumultuous atmosphere that the Zaporozhe Cossacks, with the backing of Tsar, relentlessly attacked the Turks. These attacks in turn spurred the event which Repin painted. As the story goes, the Turkish Sultan, Mohammed IV, had become so tired of the Zaporozhe Cossacks (led by their famous Ataman, Serko) pillaging his boats, that he petitioned them to join the Turks and live under his protection.¹⁷⁵ After this negotiation failed, he attempted to solve the problem with force. He sent in an army of troops at night to destroy the Sech. The Cossacks spotted the intruders and chased them off before they could carry out their mission.¹⁷⁶ Upon this victory the embolden Cossacks decided to respond to the Sultan's previous offer with an insulting letter which, as Philip Longworth quotes, begins by referring to the Sultan as 'Thou Turkish Devil,' and ends 'We Cossacks refuse every demand and petition you make us now, or which you may in future invent.'¹⁷⁷ Another version of the story is presented by Davis Jackson, author of *The Russian Vision The Art of Ilya Repin*, who states that after the Cossacks had killed fifteen thousand of the Sultan's troops, he had the audacity to threaten them with further force and to bring them under his rule. It was in response to this threat that the Cossacks drafted their letter.¹⁷⁸ As Longworth points out, this crude yet, witty and rather wild response to a man of royalty, was characteristic of the Cossack's unruly and socially inept manner of dealing with authority. "Though apocryphal, the letter embodied something of the Zaporozhe spirit-earthy, cruel and yet engaging- and Russians have enjoyed it ever since."¹⁷⁹

It was exactly this characteristic Cossack spirit, described in the above story that captured Repin's attention. He had first heard of the famous anecdote in 1878 while visiting the estate of Savva Mamontov. Mamontov was one of Russia's non-gentry, wealthy railroad tycoons and avid patron of the arts. The estate, Abramtsevo, was erected by Mamontov in order create an environment that fostered and supported creative expression.¹⁸⁰ It was here that Repin began his first sketches for his epic painting.¹⁸¹ Being of Ukrainian Cossack ancestry himself, Repin was drawn to the subject matter, which to him seemed to embody the very essence of Cossackdom.¹⁸² He loved the freedom and wildness that the Cossack life represented and became quite preoccupied with the subject matter, reading and teaching his children about the historical and ancestral importance of the Cossacks. "Repin's infectious preoccupation with Cossack literature was communicated to his children by reading aloud to them, instilling a sense of pride in their ancestry. This idolization of the Cossack way of life was grounded in a respect for what he regarded as their intrinsic qualities: a rumbustious love of freedom coupled with a fierce sense of independence, grounded in an autonomous, equitable political system."¹⁸³ As mentioned earlier in this essay, he did not merely paint his interpretation of the event, but rather he immersed himself in a thirteen-year project, creating countless sketches of the subject matter and numerous versions of the painting while becoming well-educated in the historical, cultural and social behaviors of the Zaporozhe Cossacks. (see Plates 15- 17) "Before completing the final version, Repin had taken four trips to the Zaporozhe district on the Dneiper River to sketch the Cossacks' descendants; he also read extensively in Cossack history and consulted with scholars and studied and copied relevant seventeenth century artifacts in various museums."¹⁸⁴

Historian Igor Emmanuilovich Grabar, also stated that “He was so engrossed in this work, which is evident by the fact of his special trip to the old ‘ Zaporozhia’ region.”¹⁸⁵ In order to attain the historical accuracy that we see present in the artifacts and figures in the painting, Repin also turned to Cossack historian Dmitry Yavornitsky who engaged Repin’s fascination and shared with him his knowledge and collection of Cossack artifacts.¹⁸⁶

In addition to his archeological and historical research, Repin also probably used Nikolai Vasil’evich Gogol’s account of the Zaporozhe Cossacks in *Taras Bulba*, as a reference for his epic painting. *Taras Bulba* was written between 1835-42, some forty years prior to Repin starting his painting and was the reference and inspiration for many works of art.¹⁸⁷ “The subject of the *Zaporozhian Cossacks* has been treated frequently by other artists, most of them borrowing heavily from Gogol’s popular account.”¹⁸⁸ Repin’s painting portrays several scenes and description that have a striking similarity to those described in Gogol’s story. Many of these scenes capture the same fierce, bold and dramatic appearance of the Cossacks as seen in Repin’s painting. Gogol described their appearance: “And it was a very bold picture indeed: the Cossack lay stretched out on the street like a lion. His long forelock lay a good foot across the dirt. His wide trousers, made of precious crimson material, were taspattered to show how little he cared for them.”¹⁸⁹ He further continued, “The whole field was filled with a colorful tangle of Cossacks....A bare-chested Zaporozhian was sitting on a large overturned keg.” In referring back to Repin’s painting, both works of art capture the dynamism and sensuousness of the Zaporozhe Cossacks through two different mediums, yet one can see that many aspects of Repin’s painting are derived from the descriptive language in

Gogol's famous tale. This is quite apparent in Repin's depiction of the Cossacks precariously seated on the overturned keg. Furthermore, it is stated by Walther Lang that the Cossack located to the far right in the red coat may even be Taras Bulba. "Taras Bulba has been identified as the hefty figure to the right with the full-throated and wearing the red coat and white sheepskin hat."¹⁹⁰

Criticism of Repin's Painting

Nearly thirteen years after Repin had first heard of the famous anecdote he finally completed his masterpiece. Repin's finished work was first exhibited in November of 1891 in a one-man exhibit.¹⁹¹ Although the painting of the Zaporozhe Cossacks received admirable reviews, the exhibit itself became the subject of criticism in the Russian art world.¹⁹² Besides Repin's final 1891 painting, the exhibit included ten years worth of preliminary sketches for the Zaporozhe painting. Those studies accompanied over two hundred and sixty other sketches and preliminary works. In all, less than a dozen "completed" paintings graced the walls.¹⁹³ This progressive and scandalous exhibition of unfinished works did not sit well with the Russian audience. "The public was not ready for such an 'art' exhibit. Just as viewers in the past were shocked by Repin's 'unfinished,' 'sloppy' style, so now his placing on public view an 'incomplete' artistic statement was taken to be another gesture of mockery."¹⁹⁴ The younger generation of Russian artists enjoyed Repin's boldness in elevating the process of creating a work of art to an equal level as the finished product. "Among young painters, the response was positive. Igor Grabar, (1871-1960) who was to become a prominent member of the World of Art group, bought three sketches and raved to his brother about the whole experience."¹⁹⁵

Although the exhibit attracted a lot of negative criticism, Repin's finished painting of the Zaporozhe Cossacks received mostly positive attention and in fact was bought by Tsar Alexander III for 35,000 roubles, which at that point in time was the most money ever paid in Russia for a Russian painting.¹⁹⁶ Most of the Russian critics found that the execution of the painting was more dynamic and interesting than the subject matter. "Since Court, critics and public regarded the work as lacking the tendentiousness usually associated with Repin, the beneficial result was a closer investigation of the painting's technical and painterly aspects."¹⁹⁷ The portrayal of the famous anecdote seemed redundant and rather typical of Russian genre painting, focusing on Russia's glory days and evoking a national spirit. "Their reaction to the 1891 *Zaporozhe Cossacks* was pretty much the same as Vrubel's *Procession of the Cross in the Kursk Province* back in 1883: they saw it as a belabored narrative catering to popular applause."¹⁹⁸ The subject must have seemed especially trivial considering the fact that the painting's debut occurred while Russia had fallen victim to a terrible famine which was devastating Russia's peasant population. This plight had become the focus of artists such as Tolstoy, whose family having been recruited to his cause had already begun writing articles about the famine.¹⁹⁹

Art Historical Conclusions

While the importance of the subject matter in this painting was debatable, Repin's technical execution was undeniably masterful. His expertise and maturity as an artist are evident in his well contrived composition which includes nearly twenty central figures. Repin controlled the composition by allowing each individual to move freely within his own space, emphasizing each Cossack's sense of freedom and uniqueness. He

simultaneously stresses the importance of the Cossack's strong sense of brotherhood by placing the figures around a centrally located table where the Cossacks, united by Repin's traditional color scheme and gestural brushwork, have gathered in a harmonious huddle to draft their reply to the Turkish sultan.²⁰⁰ Repin's brilliant organization of the zealous troupe illustrates both their sense of untamed freedom and individuality, while still stressing the Cossacks unity and unyielding loyalty to their brotherhood. Furthermore, Repin's ability to project the emotional state of the Cossacks through his bravado brushwork, while at the same time focusing on the meticulous and historically accurate detail of the Cossack culture, is further evidence of Repin's ability to communicate, through art, the feelings and atmosphere represented in this narrative.

It is precisely the "investigation of the technical and painterly aspects" of Repin's painting that allows the viewer to fully understand the hidden significance of this work of art. Although, as stated earlier, the content of this painting was criticized for its triteness and triviality, it is the combination of the historically nationalist subject matter, along with the rather diverse choice of techniques, which makes this painting so interesting and significant in communicating the atmosphere of nineteenth-century Russia. The juxtaposition of Repin's painterly and rather emotional application of brushwork in some aspects of the painting and his technical restraint in other parts coincides with the paradoxical nature of the narrative in this painting. We see, in essence, a group of lawless, unrestricted and free men, being portrayed by Repin in an attempt to raise the national spirit in an authoritative tsarist regime. The democratic ideas that are embodied in the spirit of this painting contradict the despotic rule that, at the time, guided Russia. The Cossacks, in and of themselves, also represent a duality that is prevalent in the

Russian culture. As Walter Lang notes in his essay, *The Legendary Cossacks*, the Cossacks maintained a democratic system of government while protecting and helping to build an autocratic state.²⁰¹

A further contradiction that is evident in this work can be seen in Repin's painting technique. By combining numerous painting techniques derived from opposing schools of art, Repin was able to successfully capture both the paradoxical nature of Russian culture while also reflecting the tension, both artistically and politically, that existed in 19th century Russia. Artistically, Repin was torn between the new aesthetic embodied in the impressionist movement, which focused on the ideas of art for arts sake, and the traditional techniques and artistic philosophy of the Wanderers, that focused on technical restraint as well as social obligation. His varying techniques, derived from both western and native styles, reflect the transient artistic atmosphere that existed in the later part of the eighteenth hundreds in Russia. The Wanderers Association vehemently rejected the western impressionist style, while the more pro-western Russians engaged it.²⁰² This split is evident in Repin's transitional painting techniques. He moves from the bold brushwork of the impressionist, to the meticulous realism preferred by the Russian academy and realist school of art. We see different aspects of both these schools of thought in various areas of Repin's masterpiece.

Politically, Repin was torn between his obligation as an artist to promote ideas of social change and his creative impulse of self expression and exploration through art. On the one hand Repin's painting of the Cossacks can be seen as a tool used to transmit feelings of pride and national spirit to the Russian public, while on the other hand the work can be viewed in a very western context, focusing not only on the progressive

technique, but also the democratic ideas embodied in the portrayal of the notorious “freedom-loving” rebels.²⁰³ The dichotomy that existed in this painting was reflected in the opposing interpretation that the critics voiced upon viewing it. “. . .the critics were preoccupied with Repin’s power to communicate in support of either some conservative or liberal cause. Thus, some expressed satisfaction that Repin had finally given up his ‘democratic catechism’ to devote his inexhaustible talent to rendering Russian life in its genuine garb. Others held that Repin had painted an excellent portrait of a free and freedom-loving people.”²⁰⁴

By recreating this painting I was able to experience first hand the tension that exists while executing a painting using two very opposing techniques. Through this analysis I was able to more fully understand the complexity of Repin’s work, which on the surface seems almost chaotic in its application, but when further examined echoes on numerous levels the spirit of the time. While physically recreating this work, it was necessary to constantly switch brushes, changing from large to small to accommodate the various details, as well as change back and forth from a bold, loose brushstroke to a very tight precise one. Although this this constant transition proved to be quite awkward, the result was a rather harmonious weaving of color and shapes. This is most evident in the contrast between the detailed hands and faces of the Cossacks against the loose flowing brushstrokes of their clothing. The viewer’s eye is immediately directed to the detailed, shaven head of the Cossack and the scribe in the foreground. The eye then travels across the dark and boldly painted clothing of the Cossacks to each of their distinctive faces. The viewer is able to rest his eye in the soft, gestural brushwork of the Cossack’s clothing, before once again being redirected to the abrasive detail of their faces,

weaponry and accessories. Repin's ability to transmit the spirit of the Cossacks with such totality in one work of art reinforces his artistic genius.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

Ilya Repin was not only a prolific artist, but his work speaks of a period in Russian history that was so complex and dynamic that it is necessary to examine it through a number of different resources. By analyzing Ilya Repin's life and career as an artist in nineteenth-century Russia, I was able to attain a full understanding not only of the artistic constraints that befell Repin, but also gain a clearer sense of the social and political spirit of this time. By using historical, political, art historical and aesthetic resources, I gained a comprehensive and intimate understanding of nineteenth-century Russian art history and politics. I can now understand how as an artist Repin grappled with the political pressures, social obligations and the creative process. It was Repin's epic painting of the Zaporozhe Cossacks that spoke most clearly of the artistic constraints and paradoxical atmosphere that engulfed Russian society at this time. By recreating this work of art I had the privilege to experience for myself the tension that exists while trying to paint using two opposing styles. Not only did this exercise allow a more intimate understanding of Repin's work, but it has further added to my artistic appreciation and respect of Repin not only as a talented artist, but also as a man of great social insight, who through his work influenced, exposed and inspired the Russian population and the world artistic community.

Notes Chapter I

-
- ¹ Elizabeth Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 4.
- ² Nicholas V. Riasanovsky & Mark D. Steinberg, *A History of Russia To 1855 Seventh Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 297.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Ibid., 4; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.
- ⁵ Ibid., 285; idem, *A History of Russia To 1855 Seventh Edition*.
- ⁶ Ibid., 4; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ Ibid., 12.
- ⁹ Ibid., 12, 13.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., 316; idem, *A History of Russia To 1855 Seventh Edition*.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Ibid., 14, 15; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., 14.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Edward Cranshaw, *The Shadow of the Winter Palace* (New York: The Viking Press, 1976) 46.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., 22-27; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., 33.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., 22.
- ²⁰ Ibid., 15.
- ²¹ Ibid., 152; idem, *The Shadow of the Winter Palace*.
- ²² Ibid., 21; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.
- ²³ Nicholas V. Riasanovsky & Mark D. Steinberg, *A History of Russia Since 1855 Seventh Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 345.
- ²⁴ Elizabeth Valkenier, ed. , *The Wanderers Masters of 19th-Century Russian Painting. , The Art of the Wanderers in the Culture of Their Time*, by Elizabeth Valkenier (Dallas: University of Texas Press, 1990), 1.
- ²⁵ Ibid., 24; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 36.
- ²⁷ Ibid., 41.
- ²⁸ Camilla Gray, *The Russian Experiment in Art 1863-1922* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1986), 11.
- ²⁹ Ibid., 49; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.
- ³⁰ Ibid., 55.
- ³¹ Ibid., 53-56.
- ³² David Jackson, "Western Art and Russian Ethics: Repin in Paris, 1873-76" *Russian Review* 57, no. 3, (July 1998): 409.
Stable URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0036-0341%28199807%2957%3A3%3C394%3AWAARER%3E2.0.CO%3B2-A>
- ³³ Ibid., 71; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.
- ³⁴ It is important to note that these seceding artists were not of the same social status as Ilya Repin. Born as free citizens they were not obligated to follow the political system that the Academy prescribed in order to attain freedom. The majority of students, like Repin, were forced to comply with the Academy's regulations or face servitude. Elizabeth Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 33.
- ³⁵ Ibid., 2-3; idem, *The Wanderers Masters of 19th-Century Russian Painting. , The Art of the Wanderers in the Culture of Their Time*.
- ³⁶ Ibid., 4.
- ³⁷ Ibid. , 34-36; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.

- ³⁸ Ibid. , 26-27 ; idem, *The Wanderers Masters of 19th-Century Painting*.
³⁹ Ibid., 7-8.
⁴⁰ Orlando Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia* (New York: Picador, 2002), 197-198.
⁴¹ Ibid., 7-8; idem, *The Wanderers Masters of 19th-Century Painting*.
⁴² Ibid.
⁴³ Ibid., 8-9.
⁴⁴ Ibid.,364; idem, *A History of Russia Since 1855 Seventh Edition*.
⁴⁵ Ibid., 127; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.
⁴⁶ Ibid., 127.
⁴⁷ Ibid. , 134-136.
⁴⁸ Ibid., 130,131,135.
⁴⁹ Ibid., 139.
⁵⁰ Henri Troyat, *Tolstoy*, trans. Nancy Amphoux (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 392-396.
⁵¹ Ibid., 420,423.
⁵² Ibid., 450,455,457-458.
⁵³ Ibid., 462.
⁵⁴ Ibid., 475,485.
⁵⁵ Ibid., 513.
⁵⁶ Ibid.,527-530.
⁵⁷ Ibid.,139-140; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.
⁵⁸ Ibid.
⁵⁹ Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press,1998), 22.
⁶⁰ Ibid., 142-143; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.
⁶¹ Ibid., 144.
⁶² Ibid., 170-172.
⁶³ Ibid., 160.
⁶⁴ Ibid., 185.
⁶⁵ Ibid.

Notes Chapter II

- ⁶⁶ Ibid., 32.
⁶⁷ Ibid., 34.
⁶⁸ Ibid., 35.
⁶⁹ Henk van Os, Sjeng Scheijen, *Ilya Repin Russia's Secret* (Zwolle: Wanderers Publishers), 19.
⁷⁰ Ibid., 14. idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.
⁷¹ Ibid.,39.
⁷² Ibid.
⁷³ Ibid., 117.
⁷⁴ Ibid., 103.
⁷⁵ Ibid.,19. idem, *Ilya Repin Russia's Secret*.
⁷⁶ Ibid., 118-119. idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.
⁷⁷ Ibid.,13. . idem, *Ilya Repin Russia's Secret*.
⁷⁸ Ibid.
⁷⁹ David Jackson, " The Golgotha of Ilya Repin in Context," Record of the Art Museum, Princeton University 50, no. 1 (1991): 4
 Stable URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0032-843X%281991%2950%3A1%3C2%3AT%22OIRI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-3>
⁸⁰ Ibid., 47-48; idem, *Ilya Repin Russia's Secret*.

⁸¹ Ibid., 358-359; idem, *A History of Russia Since 1855 Seventh Edition*.

⁸² Ibid., 46. idem, *Ilya Repin Russia's Secret*.

⁸³ Ibid., 47.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 47-48.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 21.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 355. idem, *A History of Russia Since 1855 Seventh Edition*

⁸⁷ Ibid., 433.

⁸⁸ Ibid. 355.

⁸⁹ Ibid. 21. idem, *Ilya Repin Russia's Secret*

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., 59; idem, *The Wanderers Masters of 19th-Century Russian Painting*.

⁹² Ibid., 131; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.

⁹³ Ibid., 131-132.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 48.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 53.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 52.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 56.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 135.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 31. idem, *Ilya Repin Russia's Secret*.

¹⁰⁰ In this scene from *Anna Karenina*, Anna, Vronsky and Golenishtchev meet the artist Mihailov in his studio. Mihailov is attempting to make a living as a professional artist, yet struggles between creating art to sell to the wealthy Russians who he believes don't understand what real art is, or to freely create true works without the distraction of selling. Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, trans, Constance Garnett (New York: Random House, Inc.), 551-563.

¹⁰¹ Leo Tolstoy, *What is Art?*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 40.

¹⁰² Ibid., 139; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.

¹⁰³ Tolstoy claims that the aim of art cannot be pleasure because if pleasure was the real aim of art, as with eating, people would not be able to realize the true reason behind the activity, nourishment, religious or universal communication, while focusing on the pleasurable aspect. Ibid., 34, 35; idem, Leo Tolstoy, *What is Art?*

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 37.

¹⁰⁵ Here Tolstoy uses the term religion in the broad sense of the word not meaning a religious "cult" but meaning "the understanding of the meaning of life which is the highest that has been reached by the people of that society and which defines the highest good for which that society strives." Ibid., 124-125, 42.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 123.

¹⁰⁷ Tolstoy points out that "universal art" is almost impossible to find in modern art and goes so far as to say that it does not exist in the verbal art of his day. Although some works are close to achieving this universal quality, they are ruined by the fact that they usually get caught up in realism. In true universal art there is no need for excessive detail, because the feeling that is being transmitted is so strong that unnecessary detail would only distract and make exclusive the work of art. Tolstoy states that in music, a melody, as long as it is independent of any harmony which would make it accessible only to select people who are familiar with the harmony, can be seen as "universal art." A melody alone can be understood and appreciated by all. Ibid., 132, 134.

¹⁰⁸ *I.E Repin I L.N Tolstoy*. Vol. 1:9 : *Perepiska s L.N. Tolstym I ego sem 'ei* (Repin and Tolstoy. Correspondence with L.N Tolstoy and his Family). V. A. Zhadanov and E.A Zailenshur, eds. Vol. 2 *Materialy* (Sources). S.A. Tolstoy-Esenina and T.V. Rozanova, eds. Moscow-Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1949. Quoted in Elizabeth Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 153.

¹⁰⁹ *I.E Repin I L.N Tolstoy*. Vol. 1:10 : *Perepiska s L.N. Tolstym I ego sem 'ei* (Repin and Tolstoy. Correspondence with L.N Tolstoy and his Family). V. A. Zhadanov and E.A Zailenshur, eds. Vol. 2 *Materialy* (Sources). S.A. Tolstoy-Esenina and T.V. Rozanova, eds. Moscow-Leningrad: Iskusstvo, quoted in Elizabeth Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 153.

- ¹¹⁰ *I.E. Repin I L.N. Tolstoy*. Vol. 2:36 : *Perepiska s L.N. Tolstym I ego sem'ei* (Repin and Tolstoy. Correspondence with L.N. Tolstoy and his Family). V. A. Zhadanov and E.A. Zailenshur, eds. Vol. 2 *Materialy* (Sources). S.A. Tolstoy-Esenina and T.V. Rozanova, eds. Moscow-Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1949. Quoted in Elizabeth Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 153.
- ¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 140; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.
- ¹¹² K. Chukovsky, ed *Dalekoe blizkoe* (The far and near) "N.N. Ge I nashi pretenzii k iskusstvu" (N. Ge and our claims on art) (1894),. (Moscow: Akademiya khudozhestv SSSR, 1961), 296-324. Quoted in Elizabeth Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 140.
- ¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 142; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*
- ¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.
- ¹¹⁵ K. Chukovsky *Dalekoe blizkoe* (The far and near), ed. (Moscow: Akademiya khudozhestv SSSR, 1961), 296-324. *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁶ A.L. Volynsky "Repin I Ge" (Repin and Ge). (*Severnyi vestnik*, 1895) 10(3) : 271-278. Quoted in Elizabeth Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 140, 142.
- ¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 135; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.
- ¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁹ Elizabeth Valkenier, *Valentin Serov Portraits of Russia's Silver Age* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 24.
- ¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 160; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.
- ¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 168-169.
- ¹²² *Ibid.*, 2. "The Golgotha of Ilya Repin in Context,"
- ¹²³ *Ibid.*, 409; idem, "Western Art and Russian Ethics: Repin in Paris, 1873-76."

Notes Chapter III

- ¹²⁴ Icons created in Byzantium often contained more muted colors as compared to the Russian icons whose palette contained more brilliant and intense hues. Richard G. Tansy and Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art Throughout The Ages Tenth Edition* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1996), 316.
- ¹²⁵ George Heard Hamilton, *The Art and Architecture of Russia* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1987), 65.
- ¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 104.
- ¹²⁷ Boris and Glebb were the two ill-fated sons of St Vladimir and St Olga who knowing that their older brother Izyaslan was going to kill them (in order to gain succession to Kiev) willingly accepted their fate. *Ibid.*, 103.
- ¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 53; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.
- ¹²⁹ William Flemming, *Arts and Ideas Eighth Edition* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1991), 504.
- ¹³⁰ H.H. Arnason & Marla F. Prather, *History of Modern Art Fourth Edition* (New York: Prentice Hall Inc. and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1998), 47, 48.
- ¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 983; idem, *Gardner's Art Throughout The Ages Tenth Edition*
- ¹³² *Ibid.*, 259-260; idem, *The Art and Architecture of Russia*.
- ¹³³ *Ibid.*, 912, 915-916; idem, *Gardner's Art Throughout The Ages Tenth Edition*.
- ¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 55; idem, *Arts and Ideas Eighth Edition*.
- ¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 915-918; idem, *Gardner's Art Throughout The Ages Tenth Edition*.
- ¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 448; idem, *Arts and Ideas Eighth Edition*.
- ¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 53, 54, 56.

¹³⁸ The Cossacks settled mainly along the banks of the Dniester, Volga, Don, Ural, Dnieper, and Donets Rivers all of which lead either to the Black or Caspian seas. James Olsen, *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of The Russian and Soviet Empires*

(Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), 173.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 131; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.

¹⁴⁰ By 1721 Peter The Great had taken control of the Cossacks and had placed them in the college of War. From this point on the Cossacks progressively lost more and more of their independence, becoming part of the Russian military. Under Alexander II a number of statutes were enacted, which transformed the Cossacks into a regular part of the Russian military. Ibid., 179-181; idem, *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of The Russian and Soviet Empires*.

¹⁴¹ Isabel F. Hapgood, "A Russian National Artist, with Pictures by Ilya Repin,"

The Century Magazine 45, November 1892, 4.

¹⁴² The Don Cossacks settled on the banks of the Don River in the mid sixteenth-century. In the late sixteenth century several new Cossacks groups emerged from the Don Cossacks. These included the Yaik, the Greben, the Terek the Transbaikal and the Amur-Ussuri Cossacks. The Zaporozhe Cossacks also establish their host around the mid sixteenth-century, but they were located on the Dnieper River. For more about the origins of the Don and Zaporozhe Cossacks see- Philip Longworth, *The Cossacks Five Centuries of Turbulent Life on the Russian Steppes*

(New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), 21-46.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 166; idem, *A History of Russia To 1855 Seventh Edition*.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 176, 177.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 172.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 13; idem, *The Cossacks Five Centuries of Turbulent Life on the Russian Steppes*.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 173.; idem, *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of The Russian and Soviet Empires*.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 24-25; idem, *The Cossacks Five Centuries of Turbulent Life on the Russian Steppes*

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 176, 678; idem, *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of The Russian and Soviet Empires*.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid., 177.

¹⁵³ Nikolai Gogol, *Taras Bulba*, trans. Peter Constantine

(New York: Random House, inc., 2003), 29.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 13-14.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 176, 177; idem, *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of The Russian and Soviet Empires*

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 41. Idem, *The Cossacks Five Centuries of Turbulent Life on the Russian Steppes*

¹⁵⁷ Bart McDowell, *Journey Across Russia The Soviet Union Today*

(Washington, D.C: National Geographic Society, 1977), 21.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 94. idem, *Taras Bulba*.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 176. idem, *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of The Russian and Soviet Empires*.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 177.

¹⁶² Ibid., 28; idem, *Taras Bulba*.

¹⁶³ Leo Tolstoy, *The Cossacks*, trans. Peter Constantine

(New York: Random House, inc., 2004), 17.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 7; idem, "A Russian National Artist, with Pictures by Ilya Repin,"

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 158; idem, *The Cossacks Five Centuries of Turbulent Life on the Russian Steppes*

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 178; idem, *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of The Russian and Soviet Empire*

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 178, 179.

¹⁶⁸ Razin's crusade for the poor began in 1667 with a long pirating expedition that included major raids not only on the Muscovite government but also on many Persian towns. By 1670 Razin became so upset with the injustice to the poor that he declared war on the Muscovite government. This enormous revolt led to the freeing of numerous peasants, unprecedented raids of Muscovite towns and attacks on the Muscovite military. Nearly a year after his revolt began Razin was captured and executed by the tsars military.

Ibid., 124-152. Idem, *The Cossacks Five Centuries of Turbulent Life on the Russian Steppes*

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 153-154.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 154.

-
- ¹⁷¹ Ibid., 156-157.
- ¹⁷² Ibid., 166-167.
- ¹⁷³ Ibid., 179; idem, *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of The Russian and Soviet Empires*
- ¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 180.
- ¹⁷⁵ Serko is described by Longworth as the “archetypal Zaporozhian warlord” He had fought n many battles and lead great raids. Ibid., 158.
- ¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 157-158.
- ¹⁷⁷ Ibid.,158.
- ¹⁷⁸ David Jackson, *The Russian Vision The Art of Ilya Repin* (BAI NV, 2006), 94.
- ¹⁷⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 9-14; idem, *The Russian Experiment in Art 1863-1922*.
- ¹⁸¹ Ibid.,131; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.
- ¹⁸² Ibid., 94; idem, *The Russian Vision The Art of Ilya Repin*
- ¹⁸³ Ibid., 96.
- ¹⁸⁴ Ibid . , 131.
- ¹⁸⁵ Igor Emmanuilovich Grabar, *Repin*, ed. V. Lazarev and O.Podobedova (Moscow: Akademiya nauk, SSSR, 1963-1964), 68.
- ¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 96; idem, *The Russian Vision The Art of Ilya Repin*
- ¹⁸⁷ Walter K.Lang, *The Legendary Cossacks: Anarchy and Nationalism in the Conceptions of Ilya Repin and Nikolia Gogo*
Nineteenth Century Art Worldwide:Sping 2002
http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/spring_02/article/lang_print.htm
 (16 March 2007)
- ¹⁸⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 24; idem, *Taras Bulba*.
- ¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 5; idem, *The Legendary Cossacks: Anarchy and Nationalism in the Conceptions of Ilya Repin and Nikolia Gogo*
- ¹⁹¹ Ibid., 96;idem *The Russian Vision The Art of Ilya Repin*
- ¹⁹² Ibid. 130; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.
- ¹⁹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁹⁵ Ibid.,131.
- ¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 97; idem, *The Russian Vision The Art of Ilya Repin*
- ¹⁹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 133; idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.
- ¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 493-496; idem, *Tolstoy*.
- ²⁰⁰ Ibid., 97-98; idem, *The Russian Vision The Art of Ilya Repin*
- ²⁰¹ Ibid., 1; idem, *The Legendary Cossacks: Anarchy and Nationalism in the Conceptions of Ilya Repin and Nikolia Gogo*
- ²⁰² Ibid., 59-64.
- ²⁰³ Ibid., 133;idem, *Ilya Repin and The World of Russian Art*.
- ²⁰⁴ Ibid.

 Bibliography

- Arnason, H.H. and Marla Prather. *History of Modern Art*, 4th ed. New York: Prentice Hall Inc., and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1998.
- Brown, Matthew C. *Socialist Realist Painting*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Crankshaw, Edward, *The Shadow of the Winter Palace*. New York: The Viking Press, 1976.
- Figs, Orlando, *Natasha's Dance A Cultural History of Russia*. New York: Picador Henry Holt and Company, 2002.
- Fleming, William. *Arts and Ideas*, 8th ed. Fort Worth: Hartcourt Brace College Publishers, 1991.
- Gogal, Nikolai. *Taras Bulba*. Trans. Peter Constantine New York: Random House, Inc., 2003.
- Grabar, Igor Emmanuilovich. *Repin*. ed. V. Lazarev and O. Podobedova. Moscow: Akademiya nauk, SSSR, 1963-1964.
- Gray, Camilla. *The Russian Experiment in Art 1863-1922*. New York, New York: Thames and Hudson, LTD., 1998.
- Hamilton, George. *The Art and Architecture of Russia*. Hardmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1983.
- Hapgood, Isabel F. "A Russian National Artist, with Pictures by Ilya Repin." *The Century Magazine* 45, (Nov 1892) : 3-12.
- Jackson, David. "The Golgotha of Ilya Repin in Context." *Record of the Art Museum, Princeton University* 50.1991.
 < <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0032-843X%281991%2950%3A1%3C2%3AT%22OIRI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-3>>.

----- . *The Russian Vision The Art of Ilya Repin*. BAI, 2006.

----- . “ Western Art and Russian Ethics: Repin in Paris, 1873-76.”

Russian Review 57 Online. JSTOR. July 1998. <<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0036-0341%28199807%2957%3A3%3C394%3AWAARER%3E2.0.CO%3B2-A>>.

Lang, Walter. “The Legendary Cossacks: Anarchy and Nationalism in the Conceptions of Ilya Repin and Nikolia Gogol.” *Nineteenth Century Art Worldwide* Spring 2002. 16 March 2007. < http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/spring_02/article/lang_print.htm>.

Longworth, Philip. *The Cossacks: Five Centuries of Turbulent Life on the Russian Steppes*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969.

McDowell, Bart. *Journey Across Russia: The Soviet Union Today*. Washington D.C: National Geographic Society, 1977.

Olsen, James. *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of the Russian and Soviet Empires*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994.

Os, Van Henk and Sjeng Scheijen. *Ilya Repin Russia's Secret* Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, n.d.

Riasanovsky, Nicholas v. & Mark Steinberg. *A History of Russia to 1855 Seventh Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

----- . *A History of Russia Since 1855 Seventh Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Tansey, Richard and Kleiner, Fred. *Gardner's art Throughout The Ages*, 10th ed.. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1996.

Tolstoy, Leo. *Anna Karenina*, Trans. Constance Garnett. New York: Random House, Inc., n.d.

----- . *The Cossacks*. Trans. Peter Constantine. New York: Random House, Inc., 2003.

----- . *What is Art?*. Trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky London: Penguin Books, 1995.

Troyat, Henri. *Tolstoy*. Trans. Nancy Amphoux New York: Grove Press, 1967.

Valkenier, Elizabeth K. *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art*.
New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.

-----, Valentin Serov : *Portraits of Russia's Silver Age (Studies in Russian Literature and Theory)*. n.p: Northwest University Press, 2001.

Valkenier, Elizabeth K., et al. *The Wanderers Masters of 19th-Century Russian Painting*. Dallas: University of Texas Press, 1990.