

Lyubov Loza

Professor Walker

WRI 10-19

19 March 2012

## Twelve

When the public thinks that the government is not the best has is not listening to the public's voice they start to believe that the government that is supposed to work for them is turning their heads to benefit those of the higher class. This causes a political group to start and develop that is made to help the people of the lower class with the ideals that there should be an equal society. The perspective of the people can be seen through an author's eye of any type of artwork such as poetry. A revolution that has not taken much interest in the United States is the Bolsheviks Revolution that happened in 1917. Bolshevik Revolution is the historical framework that is depicted in the poem "Двенадцать" or "Twelve."

Symbolism in the words that Aleksander Blok uses in his poem reveals an underlying meaning to what is happening during the time of the Bolsheviks Revolution. The Bolsheviks Revolution had happened in October of 1917 due to the way the Czar Nicolas II had taken millions of peasants to World War I ("The Bolshevik Revolution"). Due to the way that the war had turned out "...Russia was in ruins" and led many of the citizens want to revolt against the horrible government to lead to change and let the voices of the people be overheard, not just hearing the suggestions to not worry about later ("The Bolshevik Revolution"). They wanted to have their own to take over and have power to listen to them. The poem starts with "Ветер, ветер!" (Wind, wind) there is an image that arises in the mind of wind that has taken control and the wind is so powerful that knocks down anything in its way (Blok). It can describe the how the

people were able to take down the government and were able to get the obstacles out of their way to have the ability to get power for them. The wind can be characterized by the people who had gone through many hardships due to the revolutions that had gone before then. The way that the author uses to give us vivid imagery of the chaos during the time and yet further on is able to give us more in depth symbolism in the individuals that come into the picture.

Religion had come to be an importance for many of the people during the time. The soldiers walking through the war zone, they are Red Army men, twelve to be exact. These men are twelve apostles but before that they were believed to be the twelve disciples which follow “Jesus in the Gospels” that are read about in the Bible (Garrard 45). The Red Army soldiers were actually men that forced their entry to the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. At the beginning we learn that the soldiers are not walking with a cross and at the end these men are walking with Jesus Christ. Many of the revolutionaries during this time were atheist, but before they took over Russia had Orthodox Churches and many people were very religious and had their views (“The Russian Revolution”). The revolutionaries were not big on religion and when they took over they were able to oppress the religion (“The Russian Revolution”). The analysis of the poem then gives the audience an image of how the Russian people begin their “national spiritual awakening” (PONOMAREFF 466). To have the ability to become one with God and using religion to get a better handle on the public and belief of the people to pull them into what can be used as an influence. To have this understanding of following God and having belief in Jesus was important, but after the poem was written and after the death of Alexander Blok many never got the answer to an important question; “Why did the poem end with Jesus Christ?” (Garrard 45). Yet with the “religio-morals” and the laws that they had they were able to have

certain aspects of religion that could also lead to have some kind of compromise with the society (PONOMAREFF 466).

Freedom of love was spread during this time, as women would sleep with other men as their boyfriends or husbands would leave for war. The girl, “Катъка”(Katy), who has her boyfriend, “Ванъка”(Ivan) leaving off to the war to fight for the right of the people, has her moments when she would have the freedom to have another lover, “Петъка” (Peter), as her boyfriend is fighting (Blok). When her boyfriend comes back, he finds out that she has having intercourse with another man; out of anger he kills her. It comes to a point that he is starts to feel guilty about what he has done to her because he loved her, yet now he has lost her. During this time many women would be objects to the men, so when they would have other relationships outside of theirs the men would be angry and try to show they who they belong. This is shown in the way that Ivan kills his love, Katy, because he believed that he is hers and that no one would be able to take her away from him, yet Peter was able to prove him wrong.

Alexander Blok in the poem “Двенадцать” or “Twelve” is able to give us an understanding of what happened during the time of the Bolshevik Revolution with his description and symbolism about the people. Life during revolution has different ways that it can be viewed. The ability to see what is going on through an author’s eyes is the best way to put it when there is no way for us to be there and see what is going on. It gives us also how the aftermath of the revolution helped the people because the people were able to take down the higher class and have equal rights, which became known as socialism or communism. We can never understand or have the same experiences that Alexander Blok had during this time but we are able to feel it in his writing.

## Works Cited

- Blok, Alexander. "ДВЕНАДЦАТЬ." *Http://az.lib.ru/b/blok\_a\_a/text\_0020.shtml*. Web. 04 Mar. 2012.
- "The Bolshevik Revolution." *Bolshevik Revolution: 1917*. Web. 04 Mar. 2012.
- Garrard, John. "'The Twelve': Blok's Apocalypse." *Religion & Literature* 35.1 (2003): pp. 45-72. Web.
- PONOMAREFF, C. V. "Aleksandr Blok's the Twelve: A New Interpretation." *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne des Slavistes* 14.3 (1972): pp. 465-488. Web.
- "The Russian Revolution." *Http://rationalrevolution.net/war/russian\_revolution.htm*. Web. 7 Mar. 2012.