Animals and Moral Consideration in the Works of I. Turgenev, F. Dostoevskii, L. Tolstoi and A. Chekhov

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Abstract

As the human protagonists in the works of Russia's masters of psychological prose I.S. Turgenev, F.M. Dostoevskii, L.N. Tolstoi, and A.P. Chekhov face ethical dilemmas, there are often animal characters accompanying them on their moral and spiritual journeys. Yet, whether literary scholars understand Vronskii's horse Frou-Frou as the eponymous heroine of *Anna Karenina*, or interpret the wounded eagle as a symbol of freedom in Dostoevskii's *Notes from the House of the Dead*, predominantly symbolic and metaphoric interpretations of literary animals tend to obscure the animal's subjectivity. Along with the disappearing animal, certain layers of the texts' meaning and the authors' message may additionally be lost. In an attempt to counteract the strong anthropocentric focus of literary studies and to recover the disappearing animal, this dissertation examines textual animals and human-animal relationships from an animal studies perspective in the works of these Russian authors. As Turgenev, Dostoevskii, Tolstoi and Chekhov explore the ethical impact of the human encounter with the animal, they affirm animal subjectivity, call for compassion for suffering animals and reveal acute awareness of the interconnectedness of human and animal fates. While they recognize differences between humans and animals, they do not set these differences as criteria that determine animals' moral considerability. Acknowledging human limitations in fully understanding and conveying the animal other's experience, they go beyond strictly scientific explanations of animal behavior and instincts, and try to imagine a non-human other's inner life. Despite their differences in style, methods, socio-political and religious views, all four authors seem to strive for essentially the same vision of universal harmony of human and

non-human worlds, including humans and animals as equals in their circle of moral consideration.

Lorsque les protagonistes humains font face à des dilemmes éthiques dans les œuvres des maîtres russes de la prose psychologique, I.S. Tourgueniev, F.M. Dostoevskii, L.N. Tolstoï, et A.P. Tchékhov, il y a souvent des caractères animaux qui les accompagnent dans leurs voyages moraux et spirituels. Pourtant, quand les critiques littéraires analysent le cheval Frou-Frou de Vronskii comme l'héroïne éponyme *d'Anna Karénine*, ou l'aigle blessé comme un symbole de liberté dans les *Souvenirs de la maison des morts* de Dostoïevskii, les interprétations symboliques et métaphoriques des animaux littéraires tendent à obscurcir la subjectivité de l'animal. Par ailleurs, de telles approches peuvent effacer certains éléments importants des textes et le message des auteurs. Afin de contrecarrer l'anthropocentrisme fort des études littéraires et de récupérer l'animal en voie de disparition, cette thèse examine les animaux littéraires et les relations homme-animal dans les œuvres des quatre auteurs russes selon la perspective des études animales. Tourgueniev, Dostoïevski, Tolstoï et Tchékhov explorent l'impact éthique de la rencontre humaine avec l'animal, affirment la subjectivité animale, appellent à la compassion pour les animaux souffrants et révèlent une conscience aiguë de l'interdépendance des destins humains et animaux. Bien qu'ils reconnaissent les différences entre les humains et les animaux, ils ne définissent pas ces différences comme des critères qui déterminent la considération morale des animaux. Reconnaissant les limites de l'humain qui tente de comprendre et transmettre pleinement l'expérience de l'animal, ils vont au-delà des explications strictement scientifiques du comportement animal et des instincts, et essayent d'imaginer la vie intérieure d'un animal non-humain. Malgré leurs différences de style, de méthodes, de conceptions sociopolitiques et religieuses, les quatre auteurs semblent développer essentiellement la même vision de l'harmonie universelle des mondes humains et non-humains, y compris les humains et les animaux en tant qu'égaux dans leur cercle de considération morale.

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Also, I would like to offer my special, heartfelt thanks to Graduate Coordinator Lynda Bastien for her always efficient support with all technical and administrative aspects of the thesis submission process. In addition, I would like to thank our liaison librarian Tatiana Bedjanian for her knowledgeable help in my bibliographical search.

Note on Translation and Transliteration

I have used the Library of Congress system with such spellings as Dostoevskii and Tolstoi. I have used translated sources of the examined works, as well as utilized my own translations – each translation source is indicated. When I use translated sources, I preserve the transliteration of the source.

Introduction

> The dog sits in front of me – and looks me straight in the face.
> And I, too, look into her eyes. […]
> No, it is not an animal and a human exchanging gazes…
> These are the eyes of equals riveted on each other.
> And in each of these eyes, in the animal and the human – the same life fearfully huddles up close to the other.
>
> I. S. Turgenev. "The Dog," *Senilia*, 1878.

Renowned for their psychological depth and insight, Russia's literary giants of the second half of the nineteenth century – I.S. Turgenev, L.N. Tolstoi, F.M. Dostoevskii and A.P. Chekhov – all ponder the Russian "accursed questions" about the meaning of life and death, faith and doubt, moral choices and responsibility, suffering and redemption. As their human protagonists and readers together face ethical dilemmas and mortality, there are often non-human characters accompanying them on their moral and spiritual journeys. Yet, as the animal studies scholar John Simons has noted, even when there are animals in a text, "the human experience bulks too large and is so important to us that it tends to blot out all other concerns whenever we encounter them" (59). Whether literary scholars see Dostoevskii's axed pawnbroker in the bludgeoned horse in Raskolnikov's dream (*Crime and Punishment*), or understand Vronskii's horse Frou-Frou as the eponymous heroine of *Anna Karenina*, predominantly symbolic and metaphoric interpretations of literary animals tend to obscure the animal's subjectivity. Along with the disappearing animal, additional layers of a text's meaning and the author's message may be lost.

In an attempt to counteract the strong anthropocentric focus of literary studies and to recover the disappearing animal, this dissertation will examine animal representations and human-animal relationships from a literary animal studies perspective in the works of Russia's four greatest realist authors: Turgenev, Dostoevskii, Tolstoi, and Chekhov. Aiming to gain a clearer understanding of their portrayal of animals, I will rely not only on their literary works, but also on their essays, diaries, and letters. All four authors reflect and/or respond to the prevailing cultural attitudes towards animals in nineteenth-century Russia. At the same time, each expresses a personal concern about animals and human-animal relationships. Despite different rationales, they share a vision of the unity of humans and nature, whether on spiritual/religious grounds (Tolstoi and Dostoevskii), or out of personal concern for the non-human world (Turgenev and Chekhov). As the rich gallery of human characters in their works testifies, all four writers sought to depict the Other's experience, whether it was "other" religious beliefs, or political positions, or social class, or ethnicity. In the same vein, the emphasis they placed on animal characters strongly suggests that they saw a possibility—something in the animal-"otherly" experience—that they considered important to be recognized and respected.

Although such interest in animals as part of human habitat might have stemmed from the emphasis on the environment in the Russian realist tradition,[1] the specificity, individuality, and depth of many of their animal representations artistically reflect a lifelong, genuine interest in the animal on the part of these authors. The texts selected for analysis in this dissertation reveal a concern with individual animal lives, i.e., a specific dog, or a specific horse, rather than an abstract philosophical concept of "dog" or

[1] Dmitry Chizhevksy 6.

"horse." Thus, an examination of animals in the works of these authors casts light on an unacknowledged facet of both Russian realism and of each authors' worldview.

Animals abound in literature, but most interpretative works consider them from the point of view of their metaphoric, symbolic and/or mythological meaning. Such interpretations expose the dominant anthropocentric focus of the humanities in general, and literary studies in particular. In addition, they reveal the influence of the modern Cartesian view of animals as soulless automatons. Descartes' animal-machine notion denied animals the status of sentient beings and placed them in the same category as clocks and other mechanisms.[2] Such a viewpoint reduces animals to objects to be owned, controlled, and produced by humans. In addition, it overlooks animals' subjectivity and value beyond what they can signify for humans. As a result, the animal's unique experience and perception of the world often completely disappears behind its symbolic interpretation.

Although a number of literary scholars have begun to reconsider the traditional approach to animal representations in literature, such re-readings of canonical texts have been done mostly in Anglophone literature.[3] Research in Russian literary scholarship still tends to focus on the symbolic meaning of animals in Russian literature. For example, Victor Shkolvsky famously examined the narrative perspective in *Kholstomer,* a first-person account from a horse's point of view, as exemplifying Tolstoi's device of defamiliarization or estrangement. V.V Maroshi explores the topoi of the menagerie and zoo as metaphors for oppression. L.F Mironiuk, while briefly acknowledging animals' place among other objects of Chekhov's artistic imagination, focuses on his animalistic

[2] See Descartes, René. "Discourse on Method," Part V, in *Descartes Selections*, ed. Ralph Eaton, 1927.
[3] See for example, Susan McHugh, Erica Fudge, Joyce Salisbury.

lexicon, distinguishing ornitosemisms and ornitomorphisms, insectosemisms and insectomorphisms, and so on. Scholars such as R.P. Blackmur and Priscilla Meyer consider Vronskii's horse Frou Frou as a metaphor for Anna Karenina. More recently, K.A. Nagina examined how Tolstoi's *The Cossacks*, and its protagonist Olenin in particular, reflect hunting myths. Another Russian scholar, E.Yu. Poltavets, too, explores how Tolstoi's works allude to various Ancient Greek and Indian hunting myths. Catriona Kelly is interested in the analogy between animals and slaves in her comparative analysis of *Kholstomer* and Anne Sewell's *Black Stallion*. In his analysis of Tolstoi's *Kholstomer*, Ronald LeBlanc examines the themes of sex, love and motherhood, instead of the protagonist's animality.

There are a growing number of scholars, however, who take the animal seriously in Russian literature. Robin Feuer Miller, for example, explores the ways in which Tolstoi's fictional animals participate in his philosophical questions because "they contribute to his framing of these questions and to his attempts to answer them" (*Tolstoi's Peaceable Kingdom* 52). Jane Costlow and Amy Nelson have edited a collection of essays ranging from interpretations of literary animals to socio-cultural surveys of veterinary and animal training practices in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russia. Henrietta Mondry examines dogs as "political animals" in modern Russian culture. Josephine Donovan, analyzes Tolstoi's *The First Step* and such stories as *Kholstomer*, *The Snowstorm* (1856) and *Master and Man* (1895) as examples of "sensitive, perceptive and empathetic treatment of animals" (42). And Anastassiya Andrianova approaches Tolstoi's *Kholstomer* and Bulgakov's *Heart of a Dog* from the point of view of animal studies and trauma theory.

This dissertation adds to this growing interest in literary animals by analyzing animal representations in the famous and lesser known works of these four Russian authors from a literary animal studies perspective. Animal studies incorporates a variety of fields ranging from humanities and social sciences to biological sciences and ethology, positioning questions concerning animals as one of the central issues in contemporary scholarly discourse.[4] There is no one accepted definition of the field and terminology: the names "human-animal studies" or "animality studies" are sometimes used interchangeably, and the way questions concerning animals are framed and discussed depends on a given field. For example, besides such animal liberationists as Peter Singer and Tom Regan, there are scholars such as Cary Wolfe and Matthew Calarco who call for a radical re-thinking of animal ethics terms. Pointing to the limitations of pro-animal discourse, they seek to challenge and complicate the structuring of questions about animals based on such categories of human ethics as moral agency, reciprocity and so on, because, as they claim, such an approach "sustains the very humanism and anthropocentrism that animal studies sets out to question" (Wolfe 124, Calarco1-13).

Literary animal studies contributes to this "animal turn," using Harriet Ritvo's term, by "intentionally questioning what has hitherto been taken for granted" in interpretation of literary texts (Borgards).[5] The field considers the ethics of human-animal interactions and concentrates on issues related to the humanity/animality opposition,

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[4] Scholars often distinguish between critical animal studies and literary animal studies. "The field of Critical Animal Studies (CAS) formed to investigate and challenge the complex structural, institutional and discursive dynamics surrounding human-animal relationships. CAS exists to facilitate the end of both human and nonhuman exploitation, oppression and domination based on this intersectional analysis of human and animal oppression" (http://cstms.berkeley.edu/current-events/one-struggle-intersectionality-and-critical-animal-studies/). Literary animal scholars explore how such issues have been reflected, reinforced, and deconstructed in literary texts. But due to the interdisciplinarity of animal studies, such distinctions within the field itself are not always clear-cut.

[5] Harriet Ritvo uses the expression "the animal turn" to describe the increased focus on animals in humanities and social sciences during the last several decades (119).

human-animal relations in the past and present, and literary animal representations. Among many possible approaches of an animal-based interpretive theory, Marion Copeland and Kenneth Shapiro include deconstructing reductive depictions of animals, evaluating to what extent the author portrays the animal as a species-specific individual and analyzing human-animal relationships in a given work (345). Regarding human-animal relationships, Shapiro and Copeland suggest considering critically whether it is exploitative, or "a more or less equal" partnership oriented towards a shared experience (ibid.).

Identifying some of the goals of literary animal studies, Copeland emphasizes the re-reading of "canonical literature with an eye to the roles animals were playing" (*Literary Animal Studies in 2012* s92). She adds that "another goal is to provide a place in the literary canon for works in which nonhuman animals are not only significant but are in fact foregrounded as important characters, even the protagonists or narrators of the work in question" (ibid.). Similarly, referring to "animal-standpoint criticism," Josephine Donovan emphasizes the importance of "tak[ing] note of past critical impercipience" to the lives and suffering of animals in literature (99). Drawing attention to the wide range of methodological differences in reading animals, McHugh concludes that they are "far from mutually exclusive" and demonstrate a "considerable achievement" for the field that tended to overlook animals in texts (*One or Many Literary Animal Studies*).

Following this "animal turn" in literary studies, I am re-reading the selected works of Turgenev, Dostoevskii, Tolstoi and Chekhov "with an eye to the roles animals are playing" (Copeland ibid.). In addition to exploring the connections between depictions of animals and each author's moral universe, I will draw on Emmanuel Levinas' and

Jacques Derrida's concepts of the other's face in addressing the ethical impact of the human encounter with the animal. An appeal to philosophy in the interpretation of literary texts often proves productive and is particularly relevant for recovering animal characters in literature. First of all, a number of philosophers, such as Stanley Cavell and Martha Nussbaum, point to the overlap between philosophy and literature, especially in regard to considering ethical concerns. Nussbaum even argues that "conventional distinctions between philosophy and literature will have to be abolished," pointing to an insufficient philosophical attention to various moral questions (14).[6] While moral philosophy deals with ethical dilemmas analytically, "literature […] educates the reader's moral awareness by presenting situations of moral conflict and choice in all their complexity and with all their emotional implications" (Lamarque and Olsen 387).

Moreover, both philosophy and literary scholarship have tended "to consider animals as irrelevant to literature and other traditional 'humanistic' subjects." For example, Calarco observes that in philosophy animal issues are "typically relegated by Anglo-American philosophers to a subspecialization within the field of environmental ethics, which is itself considered a minor area of applied ethics" (2). In turn, the field of applied ethics "is often viewed as a minor field in philosophy and (more pejoratively) as a distraction from more serious and substantial philosophical pursuits" (ibid.). Regarding literary scholarship, McHugh notes that "a systematic approach to reading animals in literature necessarily involves coming to terms with a discipline that in many ways appears organized by studied avoidance of just such questioning" (ibid.). And now within

[6] She writes: "I was finding in the Greek tragic poets a recognition of the ethical importance of contingency, a deep sense of the problem of conflicting obligations, and a cognition of the ethical significance of passions, that I found more rarely, if at all, in the thought of the admitted philosopher, whether ancient or modern" (14).

the context of animal studies, philosophy and literary criticism have begun to collaborate in exploring various issues of animals and animality.

The inclusion of philosophical inquiry in the examination of Russian literary texts is especially pertinent given the role of literature as a platform for socio-political and philosophical discussions in nineteenth-century Russia. Referring to Dostoevskii's (supposed) claim that all Russian authors of his time "came out from Gogol's 'Overcoat,'" Edith W. Clowes writes that Russian philosophy emerged out from under the "overcoat" of Russian literature.[7]

The relationship between Levinas and nineteenth-century Russian literature is particularly relevant because he often acknowledged the influence of the Russian authors on his ethics, especially Zosima's teaching about "each of us [being] guilty before everyone for everyone, and I more than the others" in *The Brothers Karamazov*.[8] According to Levinas' ethical discourse, a face-to-face encounter with someone very different – the other – interrupts our complacency, disrupts our egoism and prompts us to act ethically, for example with compassion. He writes: "The face with which the other turns to me is not reabsorbed in a representation of the face. To hear his destitution which cries out for justice […] is to posit oneself as responsible […]. […] the face summons me to my obligation and judges me" (215). Levinas points out that to the "insular sufficiency of the egoism" of the "I" the "face teaches the infinity from which this insular sufficiency is separated" (ibid. 216). Levinas places special emphasis on the ethical force of the encounter with the other's destitution or of facing the other's finitude. "The facing

[7] See Edith W. Clowes, *Fiction's Overcoat. Russian Literary Culture and the Question of Philosophy*, 2004.
[8] On Levinas and Dostoevskii see Toumayan.

position […] can be only as moral summons," and "no face can be approached with empty hands and a closed home" (172,186).

As he writes about the ethical response elicited in us by the face of the other, Levinas emphasizes that the special ethical force of the other's destitution and finitude compels us to place the needs of the other ahead of ours to ameliorate the latter's suffering. That is, when I encounter or come face to face with someone else's – the other's – destitution and even death, such an encounter disrupts my contentment and awakens in me compassion, altruism, and generosity, prompting me to share my last piece of bread and even sacrifice my own well-being if necessary.

Levinas, however, believes that only a human can be the other and have a face, while animals cannot. He tells a story about the dog Bobby whom he encountered as a prisoner of war during World War II. While he and his fellow prisoners of war were being treated as "subhumans," a wandering dog acknowledged their humanity: "He would appear in the morning […] and be waiting for us as we returned, jumping up and down and barking in delight. For him, there was no doubt that we were men." But then Levinas does not acknowledge Bobby as a face that requires an ethical response on his part because the dog "lacks the brains to universalize maxims" (ibid.). Analyzing Levinas' ethics, Calarco points out that Levinas is missing the fact that "Bobby's life is also at stake at the camp. […] But he does pause in his struggle for existence to be with the prisoners and to offer them what he can: his vitality, excitement and affection" (58-59).

While Levinas privileges humans as the only possible other, Derrida contests this anthropocentrism and extends ethical consideration to animals. Taking Levinas' ideas

about the ethical force of an encounter with the other's destitution even further, Derrida suggests that one's encounter with the animal's inability to avoid suffering, its "fleshly vulnerability," has a much more profound ethical impact than simply its destitution. As Calarco notes, "Derrida sees the embodied vulnerability of animals as the site where one's egoism is called into question and where compassion is called for" (ibid). Derrida calls the ability to suffer a "nonpower" that humans and animals share:

> Being able to suffer is no longer a power, it is a possibility without power, a possibility of the impossible. Mortality resides there, as the most radical means of thinking the finitude that we share with animals, the mortality that belongs to the very finitude of life, to the experience of compassion, to the possibility of sharing the possibility of this nonpower, the possibility of this impossibility, the anguish of the vulnerability and the vulnerability of this anguish (28)

It is in this fleshly vulnerability, this inability to avoid pain and powerlessness over unavoidable finitude that Derrida finds one of the points of human-animal kinship.

Anthropomorphism and Literary Animals

Literary representations of animals as sentient beings who feel, think and suffer inevitably raise the question of anthropomorphism. As many animal studies scholars note, rejecting any degree of anthropomorphism "only assumes in advance what ought to be an issue, an absolute and impermeable difference between the human and the rest" (Clark 193). This "issue" reveals the traditional anthropocentric position that all emotions and psychological states experienced by humans are exclusive to them, and that posits certain assumptions about what human nature is (ibid.). Such a view, frequently referred to as speciesism, implies that animals' moral worth is inferior to that of humans and reinforces the essential human-animal divide that underlines humanities in general and literary studies in particular, and which animal studies tries to challenge (Weitzenfeld and Joy 3-

27). Applied, for example, to the mother wolf in *Kholstomer*, who ensures even the weakest cub gets his share of food, or the mother wolf from Chekhov's story, *The Whitebrow*, who is worried about her cubs' safety, such anthropocentrism would imply that only human mothers can feel concern for the safety of their children, and to suggest that a mother wolf feels the same about her cubs would be simply "anthropomorphic." Yet, recent research in the fields of animal psychology and ethology undermines such humanist anthropocentrism.[9] In Thomas Nagel's words: "the fact that we cannot expect to accommodate in our language a detailed description of [a non-human animal's] phenomenology should not lead us to dismiss as meaningless the claim that non-human animals have experiences fully comparable in richness of detail to our own" (440). The descriptions commonly referred to as "anthropomorphic" are an artistic way to work around the limitations of the human language, to which Nagel is referring, in depicting "rich details" of animals' experiences.

Moreover, the only frame of reference humans have is human. As Timothy Clark writes, "all human knowledge must be anthropomorphic in some way" (193). Clark suggests a distinction between an extreme anthropomorphism as in "accusing a garden snail of religious heresy," and a reasonable form that allows for the possibility of humans and animals sharing certain emotions and attributes. Furthermore, reasonable anthropomorphism helps to circumvent the risk of a reductionist approach that understands animals within biological constraints only. Discussing theoretical limitations faced by pro-animal critics, Calarco observes that that such positions have to frame their ideas about animals in "philosophically acceptable terms, which in today's philosophical climate amounts to 'scientific' and 'biological' terms" (127). He suggests that poetic,

[9] Ethology is a scientific study of animal behavior, usually in natural conditions.

literary, and artistic descriptions of animals, which would imply at least some form of Clark's "reasonable anthropomorphism," may help us see animals beyond biological explanations of animal behavior (ibid.). Reasonable anthropomorphism opens a space where authors can combine scientific knowledge about animals with personal observations that help them to transcend their human perspective and imagine what the animal other's point of view may be like. In this light, Chekhov's description of the she-wolf as concerned for the safety of her cubs is a "reasonable form of anthropomorphism."

The question of anthropomorphism is closely connected to another concern about depicting animals: how can humans speak for non-humans who do not share human language and cannot speak for themselves? How can humans interpret an animal's experience without running the risk of anthropocentrism? To paraphrase the point made above, the most easily and fully accessible frame of reference anyone can have is his/her own. Even portraying other humans necessarily runs into questions of authenticity and interpretation; how can Tolstoi write from a woman's perspective? Or Chekhov the doctor from the point of view of an uneducated peasant? The only language available to humans is human, so the critical lens needs to focus not so much on whether or not a pure, authentic portrayal of animal subjectivity is possible, but on the extent to which a given depiction of animals challenges "habitual ways of thinking about animals," especially as objects and symbols for human meaning (Scholtmeijer). Therefore, the focus should be not on anthropomorphism per se, but on the extent to which a given portrayal of an animal is anthropocentric, i.e., erases or does not erase the animal's individual subjectivity.

The notion of a certain continuity between humans and animals began to gain ground in nineteenth-century Russia due to Darwin's ideas of evolutionary biology. Most Russian intellectuals and scientists, including Sechenov, Timiriazev, Pavlov, and Mechnikov, accepted Darwin enthusiastically.[10] The Orthodox theologian S.S. Glagolev's remark that one could hardly dare mention Darwin's name without tipping one's hat, conveys the general atmosphere surrounding Darwin's ideas in the 1860s. Glagolev notes: "To express doubts as to Darwin's scientific competence on any of the questions investigated by him was to defy truth itself. Darwin was proclaimed the most competent, objective, and genius-like of investigators" (qtd. in Kline, 308). All four authors in this study reacted to Darwin's theories, with Dostoevskii and Tolstoi particularly concerned with the moral and socio-political implications of Darwinism. It did not matter to Dostoevskii whether God created man from clay or from apes, but he objected to Darwinism because it excluded the Godly essence in man. While originally Tolstoi accepted some of Darwin's ideas, later he referred to Darwinism as "great deception" and praised such critics of Darwin as Strakhov, Danilevskii, and Chernyshevskii for exposing his Malthusianism (Todes 44). Turgenev was well acquainted with Darwin's works (Waddinton 277). Donald Rayfield notes that Turgenev, "enamoured enough of Darwin," obtained his signed photograph from a London friend. Among the four, Chekhov was the most enthusiastic about Darwin, which was "entirely characteristic of his educational background and social and professional class" (Finke *Seeing Chekhov* 99). But, as Finke writes, even Chekhov's "personal engagement with

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[10] On Darwinism in Russia see Kline, "Darwinism and the Russian Orthodox Church;" Rogers, James Allen, "The Reception of Darwin's Origin of Species by Russian;" Vucinich, Alexander, *Darwin in Russian Thought*; Todes, Daniel P. *Darwin Without Malthus: The Struggle for Existence in Russian Evolutionary Thought;* Glick, Thomas F., ed. *The Comparative Reception of Darwinism*; Glick, Thomas F. and Elinor Shaffer, *The Literary and Cultural Reception of Charles Darwin in Europe*.

Darwinian thought became increasingly complicated and ambivalent" because of potential ethical issues (ibid.).

The ethical implications of hunting were another area where Russian realist writers were forced to challenge their ideas about animal-human relations and animal subjectivity. Following the suite of French and English writing, sporting literature "inundated the Russian literary scene" by the 1840s (Hodge 453). The "popularity of hunting among the landed gentry" contributed to the proliferation of the genre at the time (Langleben 125). Turgenev, Tolstoi and Chekhov were avid hunters themselves, but each author's attitude towards hunting grew increasingly conflicted. Although Turgenev never brought himself to renounce the practice completely, Tolstoi and Chekhov stopped hunting later in life. Tolstoi's and especially Chekhov's stories challenge the widespread cultural demonization of wolves that was shared by both hunters and the non-hunting public alike in late nineteenth-century Russia, where many viewed wolves as "a scourge to be combatted by any means possible" (Helfant 63). While hunting laws at the time sanctioned the eradication of wolves and other predators, Chekhov joined the voices that denounced vilification of wolves and the cruel practice of wolf baiting with his feuilleton *At the Wolf Baiting* (1862), One such defender of wolves was The Russian Society for Protection of Animals, to which Dostoevskii dedicated a chapter in his *Diary of a Writer*.

While they were influenced by contemporary scientific developments, including Darwin, and responded to urgent issues, such as the extermination of wolves and protection of animals from abuse, these authors did not simply transcribe their positions into their works. Instead, they used the fictional world as a place to explore multiple perspectives on contentious issues, including human-animal relations, and raise ethical

questions, sometimes leaving the solution to the reader. Contrasting Russian psychological realism with contemporary European naturalist realism, Donna Orwin observes that the latter "with its links to science tended […] to be reductive," thereby distorting a character's inner life, while the Russian authors' focus is broader than what was "allowed by science" because they "take what subjects feel seriously as what they think or do" (*Consequences of Consciousness* 10). Orwin's observation can be applied to Turgenev's, Dostoevskii's, Tolstoi's, and Chekhov's portrayals of animals that go beyond possible scientific understanding of animal behavior and instincts, and try to imagine a non-human being's inner life.

Chapter Breakdown

This dissertation consists of four chapters, each dedicated to one author. The first chapter examines Turgenev's views on Nature, hunting and animals in such well-known works as *Mumu*, *The Journey into the Woodland*, selected stories from *Sketches from a Hunter's Album*, and a few lesser known pieces. I have chosen these works because they help to trace Turgenev's increasingly conflicted view of Nature in relation to humans and animals, his treatment of the common Romantic trope of the Noble Savage, and his equally ambivalent attitude towards hunting. As Eva Kagan-Kans notes, Turgenev did not leave a "systematic exposition of his world view […] and we must look for his views in his fiction" ("The Metaphysics of an Artist" 382, 389).[11] Thus, drawing upon his review of S. Aksakov's *Memoirs of a Sportsman with a Gun in Orenburg Provence* (1852) and selected letters, I begin by pointing out the difference between his view of the law of

[11] For penetrating analyses of the influence of German philosophy on Turgenev's sensibilities see Eva Kagan-Kans, "Turgenev, The Metaphysics of an Artist" (1972), Leonard Shapiro, *Turgenev, His Life and Times* (1978), Donna Orwin, *Consequences of Consciousness* (2007).

Nature (Nature as an indifferent "mother") and what he calls "live manifestations of nature." Then, I explore how his inability to accept Nature's indifference informs his portrayal of Russian peasants, human-animal relationships and hunting.

In the second chapter I examine the role of animals in the moral and spiritual choices Dostoevskii's protagonists make. I begin with the prison animals in *Notes from a Dead House*, where Dostoevskii emphasizes the spiritually purifying and humanizing effect of human-animal relationships. Then, I examine the human-dog companionship in *The Insulted and Humiliated*, and Dostoevskii's thoughts on the interconnectedness of humans and animals in *Diary of a Writer*. I proceed to the analysis of the bludgeoned horse in Raskolnikov's dream in *Crime and Punishment* not as a symbol of the old pawnbroker, or any other character, but as an abused animal. The chapter concludes with an examination of the tortured dog Zhuchka and father Zosima's ideal of Christ-like active love in Dostoevskii's final novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*. The chosen works show the consistency and continuity of Dostoevskii's portrayal of animals as God's vulnerable beings – without animals his ideal of universal harmony is incomplete.

In my analysis of animal representations in Tolstoi's works in chapter three, I treat Tolstoi's oeuvre as one complete whole, tracing a gradual progression, rather than a radical break between his pre- and post-conversion thought on animals: his ideas only evolve and deepen as he comes to denounce hunting and the consumption of meat. I begin with three of his later works in which his views of animals are especially clear: "The First Step" – an article about vegetarianism, "The Tale of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria" – a story about a king's experiences as another human and an animal, and a children's story "The Wolf" that emphasize animals' subjectivity and moral worth.

Having introduced Tolstoi's views on animals as depicted in these three stories, I proceed chronologically from his early work *Childhood* through *Cossacks*, *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, *Kholstomer, On Life* and *Master and Man*, concluding with *The Snowstorm* – an early story, often viewed as a prototype of *Master and Man*. By coming full circle in this manner, the chapter demonstrates that Tolstoi's seemingly radical conversion to vegetarianism and denunciation of hunting are a logical conclusion to his life-long concern and affection for animals. Similar to Dostoevskii's ideal of the Christ-centered harmony of humans and animals, Tolstoi's vision of universal brotherhood is not possible without the non-human world.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to Chekhov whose life and works in many ways echo all three preceding literary colleagues. Similarly to Turgenev, he considered himself agnostic, yet continuously returned to Christian themes and symbols. Also like Turgenev, he perceived Nature as indifferent, but loved its "animate and inanimate manifestations." While he was not imprisoned like Dostoevskii, he chose to undertake a three-month journey to the prison colony on the island of Sakhalin as a doctor. Like Turgenev and Tolstoi, he was an avid hunter, but eventually stopped hunting, motivated by compassion for animals. Similar to Tolstoi he would trap and release mice, and in his depiction of animals he, too, tried to imagine what animals might be feeling, experiencing and thinking. The fourth chapter explores Chekhov's views on animals by analyzing the selected stories and letters that span almost his entire writing career, thus demonstrating that ethical treatment of and compassion for animals were for him a life-long concern.

The conclusion draws the four authors together, suggesting that despite their personal disagreements (and at times even bitter quarrels) and their different approaches

to the depiction of individual subjectivity, the union of humans and animals was essential to each of their understandings of universal harmony. As Jane Costlow observes, the utopian impulse towards a brotherhood of humans and animals originates in Russian Orthodoxy, and "professions of a distinctive relationship to the natural world" have been part of Russians' "narratives about national identity" (*Other Animals* 3,7). Costlow notes that in the exploration of "the question of the animal" in Russia, "it seems clear that some of the standard tropes of the animal studies canon, including the concern about rights and implications of representation, will either be muted or inflected quite differently" than in the West (ibid.).

Visions of universal union and harmony of humans and animals reveal a way of understanding human-animal relationship in a markedly Russian way. Stephanie Posthumus argues that while ecocriticism is based on anxiety about global environmental problems, it is not transferable from one national literature to another. Traditions, philosophies and representations of the non-human world that affect and are affected by literature result in significant cultural differences that make a global ecocritical perspective impossible.[12] Such "non-transferability" of attitudes towards the non-human world includes and applies to animals and their literary counterparts. And while the examination of Russian human-animal history in the context of national identity requires a separate research, drawing upon Gustafson's, Costlow's and Tom Newlin's insights I suggest that the involvement of animals in Russia's "accursed questions" can be traced back to Russian cultural roots. All answers to these questions can ultimately be found in a

[12] Stéphanie Posthumus, "Penser l'imagination environnementale française sous le signe de la difference," *Raison publique* 17 (2012): 15-31.

vision of the communion and universal brotherhood of humans, animals and all of creation.

Chapter 1 – I.S. Turgenev

In a letter to Pauline Viardo from April-May 1848 Turgenev confessed: “I cannot remain unmoved by the sight of a branch covered with young green leaves clearly set against the blue sky. […] I would prefer to watch the precipitous movements of the damp foot of a duck as it scratches the back of its head by the side of a lake, or the long sparkling drops of water falling slowly from the mouth of a cow as it stands motionless and up to its knees drinking water from a pond, to anything the cherubim (those illustrious flying forms) could perceive in their heavens” (1:297-8/21).[13] While in a letter to Bettina von Arnim, he wrote that the ultimate bond between the human soul and nature is “the most pleasant, the most beautiful, and most profound phenomenon in our lives" (I: 211/3).[14] Seeking out such a bond, Turgenev created beautiful descriptions of the Russian countryside, which are “one of the most appreciated aspects of his art “(Conrad 119). Much work has already been done on his depictions of nature by such scholars as Jane Costlow and Tom Newlin. This chapter will focus on his portrayals of animals to demonstrate that Turgenev’s relationship with nature, animals and hunting is more complicated than his painterly landscapes and a hunter’s admiration of nature may suggest at first glance. While he loves and admires “animate and inanimate manifestations of nature,” he does not accept nature’s law as he understands it: loveless,

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[13]I.S. Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v dvadtsati vos’mi tomakh* (PSSP) (Moskva, 1960-70), references to PSS also contain references to the English translation – the page is given after the back slash. Translation sources will be indicated for each work. The translation for this letter is taken from *Turgenev’s Letters.* Selected, translated and edited by A.V. Knowles. London: The Athlone Press, 1983, 21.
[14] This translation is by David Lowe in Allen, Elizabeth Cheresh, ed. *The Essential Turgenev*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1994. 3.

merciless and indifferent. Even though his conflicted views on nature complicate his portrayal of hunting and animals, Turgenev shows human-animal interconnectedness, where animals are treated as both the victims of humans and their co-sufferers.

Turgenev's Nature: "Living Manifestations" vs. A Merciless, Indifferent Force

When Turgenev confesses his love for nature, what he loves are animals, plants and elements, commonly included in the general concept of 'nature.' He explicitly states this position in his review of S. T. Aksakov's *Memoirs of a Sportsman with a Gun in Orenburg Province* (1852) that features a long digression about nature:

> I passionately love nature, especially, in its live manifestations (*v zhivykh proiavleniiakh*). […] Man is connected to nature by a thousand unbroken threads: he is her son; empathy, which is aroused in one's soul by the lives of lower creatures, that resemble us so much in their appearance, inner organization, feelings and sensations, resembles in part the eager interest everyone of us takes in a newborn's development" (5:414).[15]

Calling man "nature's son" and proceeding to point to love for "lower creatures" that are so much like humans, Turgenev appears to acknowledge the difference between humans and animals as one of degree, not kind, especially as he compares empathy for and interest in them with feelings for a human newborn. Humans and "lower creatures" are all nature's offspring.

When he writes about the love of nature, he criticizes as "egotistical" what is essentially an anthropocentric "admiration" of nature when "we love nature in relation to ourselves, using it as our pedestal"; this kind of description shows the reader not nature, but the human who describes. Quoting such examples as "laughing cliffs," he points out unreasonable anthropomorphism (ibid). But as he tries to offer an alternative, objective

[15] Translation mine.

approach to understanding and relating to nature, he begins to talk about the underlying law of nature instead of its "live manifestations" (ibid). This is where his conflicted feelings about the "meaning" of nature become discernable. Although presenting nature's law as one "great harmonious whole," he shows how internally divided and fragmented it is because each entity seeks only to satisfy its interests at the expense of all others:

> For a mosquito you are food that it is using calmly just like a spider who catches it in its spider web, like a root looking for moisture in the earth. Look at the fly that is flying freely from your nose to a piece of sugar to a drop of honey in the center of a flower – and you will understand what I mean, you will understand that the fly is a creature unto itself just as you are (5:415).

Having just criticized the egotism of anthropocentric attitude towards both inanimate and animate "manifestations" of nature, here he tries to justify the self-centeredness of the law of nature reflected in the way animal and plant lives operate. And unable to reconcile nature's supposed wholeness with its egotism, he calls it a "mystery" and quotes Goethe's excerpt on nature, which only further undermines this supposed nature as "harmonious whole":

> Nature sets abyss between all creatures, and everyone seeks to devour each other. She divides everything in order to unite everything. […] She can only be approached through love. […] She seems only to be concerned to create individuals – and yet individuals mean nothing to her" (5:416).

This image of destructive and divisive nature with its merciless food chain significantly challenges any "harmonious wholeness." Even the word "love" cannot hide the fact that this supposed "mother" does not love her offspring, but destroys what "she" creates. Even love seems to work one way: it is needed to approach nature, but there is no mention of nature extending love.

An explanation of the law of nature in the story *Journey into the Woodland* (*Poezdka v poles'e*) (1857) reveals this conflict much more clearly.[16] It is a story about the narrator's hunting trip into a wooded area (*polesie*). He is accompanied by a young man, Kondrat, and a very poor peasant, Egor. The narrator shares that Egor, an excellent hunter, was very unlucky: even though he was a diligent worker, he was poor, his wife was continuously sick and his children kept passing away. A somber mood and the narrator's sense of alienation from nature mark the first day. Nature's indifference to the lot of individual beings implied in the review of Aksakov's *Memoirs* becomes explicit as the narrator hears a voice from the depth of the forests: " I do not care about you, – says nature to man – I reign, and you go and concern yourself with not dying" (7:51). As they travel, he describes the peasants they meet and the surrounding landscape. At the next rest stop as he waits for his peasant guide Egor to fetch some water, the atmosphere around him deepens his sense of his own insignificance, and he sinks into despair over the transience of life, recalling past people, dreams and losses: "Oh, how everything around me was sorrowful and stern – not even sorrowful, but silent, cold and menacing at the same time! My heart sank. […] I felt the closeness of death" (7:60). Egor's return with water rescues him from this mental anguish and brings him back to reality. It is not trees, or wildlife, or landscapes by themselves that arouse such thoughts and feelings, but the overall mood of the place.

As they continue on their journey, they meet more peasants, hunt, and only at the end of the second day does the narrator's inner turmoil seem to subside. As the sun is setting and everything around is preparing for the night, he notices a fly sitting on a

[16] Translation mine.

branch, “baked” in the sun, not moving and from time to time only turning its head from side to side:

> Looking at it, it suddenly seemed to me that I understood the life of nature, understood its clear and manifest, though for many still mysterious, meaning. A quiet and slow animation, a leisureliness and restraint of feelings and forces, an equilibrium of health in any individual creature – that is nature’s very foundation, its unalterable law; that is what maintains it and keeps it going. Everything that lies outside this equilibrium […] is hurled aside by nature as something worthless. Many insects die as soon as they experience those joys of love that violate the equilibrium of life; an ill animal hides in the woods and there wastes away alone: it is as if he feels that he no longer has the right to see the sun that shines for all, nor to breathe, he no longer has the right to live; and a human, who suffered in this world whether because of his own fault, or someone else’s, at the very least ought to remain silent (7:69).

Jane Costlow notes that this contemplative passage “has been of central importance to numerous readers of Turgenev, who have turned to *The Journey into the Woodland* as a way of thinking about aesthetics, nature, and incipient Russian ecological sensibilities” (*Heart Pine Russia* 34).

Scholars tend to view this observation about nature as very positive and life affirming. For example, Robert Louis Jackson states that in this passage “nature […] is eminently positive in its preoccupation with, and embodiment of life processes. It is fundamentally conservative, centripetal, with a preponderant movement toward the creation of form” (*Dialogues with Dostoevsky* 165). Jackson proceeds to note that during this two-day journey the narrator passes from a “painfully subjective” to a “properly objective perspective on Nature” (ibid 166). Costlow writes that at the end of the story the narrator “draws a ‘rule for life’, an intimation of balance and measure” (*World Within Worlds* 18). Tom Newlin describes the first day as “profoundly terrifying,” “a searing negative epiphany” and “a distinctly defective awareness,” and the second day – “profoundly restorative,” “a moment of true in-sight,” and “a noetic epiphany that is at

once intellectual, spiritual and bodily" ("At the Bottom of the River" 82-84). Newlin compares the narrator's "distinctly defective awareness" and his neurotic "romantic self-absorption" of the first day to his "intensely and illuminatingly extrospective" contemplation of the fly at the end of the second day (ibid.).

There is, indeed, a certain sense of calm in the concluding observation of the fly. But this restful atmosphere is more due to the fact that it is evening time when daily activities naturally slow down and the sun is no longer scorching: "everywhere there was quietude, on the dusty road, on the thin tree trunks and clean little leaves of young birch trees there lay a clear and meek light of the evening sun" (7:69). Moreover, the narrator points out in his description that this calming and encouraging feeling is streaming from the "live manifestations" of nature, not from its indifferent force: "All was resting immersed in a calming chill; nothing has fallen asleep yet, but was preparing for the salubrious lulling of the evening and night. All seemed to be telling the human: "Take a rest, our brother; breathe easily and do not grieve before the approaching dream" (ibid.).

As the narrator's animate and inanimate brethren soothe him, it may seem as if his "romantic self-absorption" disappeared, but in reality it is lurking behind his somewhat condescending self-importance as he apperceives the supposedly profound "meaning of nature" that so many others still do not "get." The enumeration of what destroys this "equilibrium" of nature undercuts its implied harmony and questions its legitimacy: the joys of love, an ill animal who feels he no longer has the right to live, and a suffering human. How much is this "equilibrium of life" worth if it rejects as worthless living beings and the very things that constitute life: love, joy, sorrow and suffering?[17] Turgenev

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[17] In a letter to Pauline Viardot from April-May 1848 he wrote: "Mais la vie, la réalité, ses caprices, ses hasards, ses habitudes, sa beauté fugitive . . . j'adore tout cela." (1: 297)

held selfless love as one of the unifying and life-affirming forces. In the prose poem "The Sparrow" (187?), that I will analyze later, he proclaims: "love, is stronger than death and the fear of death, and by love life persists and moves forward." Both a suffering animal and a suffering human who can find no solace and no hope, tossed out as defective elements destroying this supposed "equilibrium," render the latter ethically questionable.

Narrative irony similar to that identified by Costlow in the story "Kasyan from the Beautiful Lands" from *Sketches from a Hunter's Album (Zapiski Okhotnika)*, which will be discussed later, reveals the narrator's self-absorption in this passage and by so doing further undermines his seemingly holistic, positive and "objective" understanding of nature. In this story, while the narrator-hunter is carried away in a "protracted reverie and description" of the summer sky and beautiful forest, Costlow draws attention to the way Turgenev challenges "what seems the egotism of epiphanic merging with nature" when Kasyan jolts the narrator back to earth by asking how he can kill birds (*Heart Pine Russia* 35).

Similarly, in the final scene of *The Journey into the Woodland*, Kondrat's hollering to Egor abruptly interrupts the narrator's "epiphanic" perceiving of nature's "mysterious meaning" and the supposed harmony of nature's law of equilibrium and measure. This concluding moment illustrates what Donna Orwin describes as a "reversal typical of Turgenev": the narrator's contemplation is juxtaposed with Egor's thinking. As a result of this irony and reversal, the narrator's seemingly "profound" insight turns out to be yet another instance of self-absorbed romantic merging with nature, while Egor is preoccupied with real life – the real, vital issues that nature's "equilibrium" rejects.[18]

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[18] For Turgenev's reversals see Donna Orwin *Consequences of Consciousness*, 81

Egor does not reply to Kondrat, but continues to look far ahead pensively as Kondrat explains to the narrator that Egor's last cow just died. Losing a cow for a poor peasant family meant very hard times ahead. As the narrator thinks about Egor—"this one knows how not to complain"—nature's law of equilibrium is put to test: as a suffering human who destroys the "equilibrium of life," should Egor be "hurled aside as something worthless"? Thus, the last thought of this "epiphanic" vision about nature's law about a suffering human who ought to remain silent and a suffering animal who has to expire out of sight reveals this "law" as ethically unacceptable, especially as it reminds one of other well-known silent suffering human and animal beings – the dog Mumu from the eponymous story, who was physically silenced, and Gerasim, whose silence became symbolic of oppressed serfs who remained voiceless in the face of the inhumane institution of serfdom.

Although Costlow has already persuasively analyzed the moral complexity of the narrator's contemplative observation of the fly, I would like to consider the passage/scene from a different angle. Costlow accepts this episode as truly epiphanic and nature's law of equanimity as legitimate, and she questions Egor's silence in the face of "natural law": "Does nature set humans a rule for life? Should we live by the law of conservation of forces? Should Egor keep quiet, and not complain?" (ibid. 34). Interpreting Egor's silence as his submission to the natural law, Costlow suggests that Egor represents *smirenie* – a meekness of spirit the Slavophiles associated with the Russian peasant (*Heart Pine Russia* 33). Drawing upon Turgenev's works *A Nest of Gentry* (1859) and *The Inn* (1855), she points out Turgenev's ambiguity about *smirenie* and concludes that Turgenev

"fully undermines the supposed virtues of humility and equanimity before life's troubles" (ibid. 34).

Building on Costlow's penetrating insight that Turgenev undermines the peasant's silence, I would like to add that before anything else he challenges the natural law itself: the loveless, merciless and unjust law that excludes love and suffering beings is ethically untenable. It is in the face of this law that silence is unacceptable, as he would announce it in *Enough* (*Dovol'no*) (1865) that will be analyzed below. In addition to asking about a suffering human's choice to remain silent or not, we can question the ill animal being deprived of the right to live. Egor's silence resonates in the wake of the cow's death. Legitimization of nature's law, apperceived by a self-absorbed human as epiphanic, objective and positive, represents an anthropocentric perspective. When the narrator muses that "it is as if [the ill animal] felt he no longer had the right to live," it is necessary to question the anthropocentric assumptions underlying his statement. Even the narrator's observation that the fly's immobility is due to nature's law of conservation of forces and equilibrium requires a rereading in light of an animal studies perspective that asks how we humans can know why animals do what they do. The narrator does not question his interpretation of the fly's behavior and projects onto it his understanding of nature's law.[19]

Enough dispels any illusion that Turgenev accepts the indifference of nature's law as it is represented in *The Journey to the Woodland*. *Enough (A Fragment From the Notebook of a Dead Artist)* (1862-1864) is a collection of fourteen paragraphs of memories and reflections on an unhappy life, some paragraphs have to do with a past

[19] The fly may simply be hurt and, therefore, unable to move.

love affair.[20] As Leonard Shapiro comments, "the underlying thought is of man's impotence in the path of all-devouring, indifferent nature – the cosmic will of Schopenhauer" (208). As the feeling of despair and futility increases towards the end, the narrator finds that the only dignity left to man is in rejecting everything, as he exclaims: "Enough!"

The atmosphere of sensing one's insignificance and powerlessness sets in from the very beginning. *Enough* opens with a description of a peaceful and refreshing evening, similar to the end of the day in *The Journey*, but it is no longer calming, and even the nightingale's song reminds the narrator of nature's implacable law. He does not speak of a "wise equilibrium," but instead wants to shrink away and "bid [his heart "to remain silent" (9:110). As he bids farewell to pleasant memories of his beloved, he evokes "a little animal" (*zverek)* who, having taken one last look out of his little hole at the velvety grass, sun, blue and tender waters, huddled in the very depth of his hole, curled up into a ball and fell asleep. "Will he see at least in his sleep the grass, the sun, and blue tender waters?" (9:117) This image echoes the sick animal from the "epiphanic" contemplation of the fly in *The Journey* who hides himself in his hole. But this time the narrator's language is explicitly sympathetic as he uses gentle diminutive words for "a little animal" (*zverek*), grass (*travka*), sun (*solnyshko*), hole (*norka*). Although there are no explicit references to death, the fact that the little animal looks out of his hole for the last time, and the narrator wonders if he will see the sun at least in his sleep suggests a dying animal.

Similar to *The Journey*, the narrator calls nature "a universal mother," but her qualities suggest an archetypal stepmother: she "knows not freedom, knows not good."

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[20] Translation mine.

"She creates destroying, and she cares not whether she creates or she destroys – as long as life be not exterminated, as long as death fall not short of his dues…" (9:120). Nature is a "deaf, dumb, blind force who triumphs not even in her conquests, but goes onward, onward, devouring all things," and while she may create beautiful butterflies, the narrator states that humans and their art cannot be re-created. The last line "the rest is silence" echoes "the suffering human" from *The Journey* who ought to know how to remain silent, Egor, who does not answer but continues to look ahead of him silently, as well as silent Gerasim and silenced Mumu that will be analyzed later. This idea of forced silence strongly suggests that even the calmer atmosphere in *The Journey* is deceiving because Turgenev could never accept this "world where only that is living which has no right to live." In "Nature" (1879) from *Senilia*, a collection of poems in prose, personified Nature openly declares with a voice like a clang of iron: "I know not good nor evil. . . . Reason is no law for me—and what is justice? —I have given thee life, I shall take it away and give to others, worms or men . . . I care not. . . . Go thou and look out for thyself, and hinder me not!" (13:189).[21] Instead of a loving mother, the narrator sees a ruthless, loveless being who puts him in his place in the universal food chain. This common theme of the suffering of innocent beings at the mercy of an implacable outside force and the need to protest against such a force or to question such suffering reflects Turgenev's view on nature that for him represented this force (and was often conflated with fate).

***Mumu* and Chertopkhanov's Stories: Human-Animal Companionship and Animal Victims**

[21] Translation mine.

Among Turgenev's descriptions of human-animal interaction, the story of the deaf and mute serf, Gerasim, and his rescued dog, Mumu, whom he drowns on his owner's order is the most well known and touching. Gerasim's disability and the fact that Mumu is 'only' an animal allow Turgenev to examine the concept of the other from different angles. The tragic story of the human and dog's love for each other becomes the story of the human and animal as defenseless victims at the mercy of an implacable arbitrary force.

From the start the narrator paints Gerasim as very different from those around him. He is a strong, conscientious and hardworking peasant, whose disability separates him from other people: "alienated from people by his misfortune, he grew up mute and mighty, like a tree that grew in fertile soil" (5:265).[22] The narrator intensifies Gerasim's "otherness" by comparing him to non-human forms of life – a tree and an animal. For example, describing the traumatic impact of Gerasim's forced move from his home village to the city, the narrator compares him to a displaced animal who: " having been moved to the city, […] did not understand […] – was longing and confused, as a young, healthy bull feels confused, who has been taken off the field, where grass reached his belly, […] – and now he is being rushed somewhere, but where – only God knows!" (ibid.). Gerasim's emotional state during his initial time in Moscow is like that of a trapped animal: having finished his duties, "he would fling his broom or spade far, he would throw himself on the ground facedown and would lie like that motionless like a captured beast" (5:265).

In addition to his lack of language—one of the capabilities that separate humans and animals—Gerasim's interactions with animals that understand him make him appear

[22] Translation mine.

even more "other."[23] For instance, the roosters do not dare fight in his presence because he is very strict and likes order in everything, and upon seeing fighting roosters he would grab them by the legs, flip and throw them in opposite directions (5:266). But he feels respect for the geese because "as it is well known, the goose is a solemn and judicious bird," and he himself resembles a dignified goose (ibid.). As if to emphasize his "otherness," many serfs call him a "beast," "bear," "wood-goblin" and "black grouse" (one of the Russian names for black grouse '*glukhar*' contains the same root as the word '*glukhoi*' deaf).

In this story, the semi-animalized man and a dog are the only ones who "love each other and show their love," as Edgar L. Frost observes (171). Even humble Tat'iana, the laundrywoman with whom Gerasim falls in love, is too afraid of him, and, perhaps, too oppressed to love him back.[24] In Frost's insightful exploration of the theme of love in *Mumu*, he compares Tat'iana to the dog, noting that both are female, orphaned and of unknown origin. There is also a physical resemblance: Tat'iana is "small, thin, fair-haired, with moles on her left cheek," and Mumu is a "small pup, white with black spots" (5:267, 276). Frost also provides a detailed analysis of the similar words the narrator uses to describe the two. Even the sequence of events draws associations between the woman and the dog: right after the newly forcibly married Tati'ana is sent away with her worthless drunk husband, Gerasim walks home and notices a little puppy who is stuck in mud and desperately trying to get out of the river.

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[23] In his *Discourse on Method* (1637) Rene Descartes, credited with the modern view of animals as "machines sans âme," identifies language as one of the defining characteristics of humans' superiority.
[24] It is possible that had Gerasim married her, she would have come to love him, but within the time frame they knew each other, the narrator describes Tat'iana first as mostly afraid of him and then appreciative of his attention, rather than love.

While there are many similarities between Tat'iana and Mumu that would make comparing them "a Freudian delight," Frost writes that "the episode with Tat'iana is a step up and a preparation for the greater love [Gerasim] finds with Mumu (172). Perhaps, Mumu, unhindered by the need of language for communication and other human notions that made Tat'iana fear non-verbal Gerasim, showed the kind of unconditional love of which only "man's best friend" is capable. As a life-long dog lover himself, Turgenev may be describing from experience the bond between human and animal.[25] The dog became "passionately attached to Gerasim and would follow his every footstep, wagging her little tail" (5:277). She woke him up daily, guarded his tools, became friends with the horse and would bring her to him for work. Moreover, Gerasim loved her madly (*'bez pamiati'*). As Frost notes, the fact that while everyone in the household is fond of her, she loves only her master, demonstrates "the exclusivity" of her love.

Turgenev, who himself deeply grieved his dog Diana's loss, goes into even more detail to describe Gerasim's despair when Mumu disappears after the tyrannical owner got upset because Mumu growled at her. The words the narrator chooses to convey Gerasim's grief and despair contrast with the simple and straightforward descriptions of their mutual love in the preceding paragraph. Gerasim was not simply looking for his dog, but he was "running up and down […], calling her in his own way" (5:282). He was desperately rushing around, and with "the most despairing signs" questioned other serfs, describing her with his hands. These desperate attempts to ask other people for help despite being unable to speak reveal Gerasim's "fleshly vulnerability." His worn-out, dusty appearance after looking all over Moscow for his little canine companion, his

[25] Turgenev's love for his dogs Pégase and Diana is well known. He loved Diana so much that he buried her with his own hands under an oak he planted at his estate (Shapochka 42).

neglect of his duties and disappearance the following morning – a diligent and obedient serf – and his face that seemed to have turned to stone reveal the depth of his despair at the disappearance of Mumu. Thus, the shift from desperate verbs and gestures to the full-stop registered in his motionless stone-line face and complete absence of active verbs when Gerasim does not leave his room the next day emphasize the depth of Gerasim's despair.

The unspeakable (literally and figuratively) joy they both feel when Mumu comes back completes the portrayal of their love for each other: a "prolonged cry of delight broke from his speechless breast, while Mumu licked his entire face" (5:283). Mumu's joy testifies to her love for Gerasim, while the dangling ripped piece of rope around her neck suggests how she might have been treated and what she must have gone through in order to return to him. Their emotional reunion reveals not only the power and depth of their love for each other, but also their vulnerability and reveals how traumatic for Gerasim was Mumu's tragic end.

The novella's end of Gerasim drowning Mumu upon the owner's order and leaving right after has given rise to a number of diverse scholarly interpretations. As Victoria Somoff notes, Turgenev scholars tend to assign significance to a reading of the ending and then inferring from that reading the main message of the novella. Generally, scholarly opinions are divided between two main interpretations: one – that views Gerasim as a rebel who challenges serfdom, the other – that views Gerasim as a defeated, oppressed serf, resigned to his fate. For instance, Sergei Zimovets concludes that the "bull-bear" Gerasim returns to his roots, but as a "castrated animal" (15). Similarly, Frost notes that the fact that Gerasim is submissive enough to kill the creature he loves, even if

he leaves for his home village afterwards, does not signify his freedom. His landowner's cruel order severs his last "opportunity to love and be loved" leaving him "less than a man" (184).

Trying to understand Gerasim's final actions, many readers wonder why he drowns the dog if he leaves afterwards, and why he does not simply leave with the dog. I would like to suggest that considering Gerasim's flight not as a premeditated action, but as a spontaneous reaction to the trauma of being forced to kill the creature he loved most might help explain why he does not simply flee with Mumu. When Gerasim is feeding Mumu her last dinner, his teardrops falling on the dog's forehead, and then later when he is rowing the boat with her, he does not know yet that he will leave. It is the traumatic impact of not only losing a loved one, but also being her very executioner that drives him to the edge where he revolts. The trauma is so severe that, according to his fellow villagers, he never again looks at women nor keeps a dog.

While Turgenev, indeed, uses this novella as a critique of serfdom, he chooses an animal to do that – one of the most defenseless and powerless beings (compared to whom even the serf Gerasim appears to have at least a modicum of autonomy and space to rebel; when Mumu asserts herself by growling at the owner, she is first removed and then simply killed). A portrayal of oppressed serfs, especially children, would already result in a powerful denunciation of serfdom, but Turgenev draws attention to animal abuse, particularly by choosing the dog's name as the title.[26] Against the background of many unsympathetic serfs, especially those who oppress their own kind, Turgenev's inclusion of the animals as the only completely powerless and defenseless victims of human cruelty acquires additional weight. Frost states that Mumu is the "supreme symbol of unselfish,

[26] Even among the general readership, people tend to think of the story as the tale of a drowned dog.

loyal love, […] a symbol for the coming emancipation of the serfs in Russia" (179). As the force that changes Gerasim's life, she stands in contrast to another dog in the story – old Volchok, whose spirit is broken. He is always chained, sleeping in his dog house and "only seldom emitting a coarse, barely audible bark, which he would stop almost immediately, as if sensing its uselessness" (5:278). At the mercy of human hands one dog loses its vitality, the other its life.

A few years before *Mumu*, Turgenev wrote "Chertopkhanov and Nedopyuskin" (1849) and then twenty years later – "The End of Chertopkhanov" (1872) for *Sketches from a Hunter's Album*.[27] In these stories the protagonist Chertopkhanov's story loosely resembles Gerasim's because he, too, finds his favourite animal after he loses both the woman he loves and his best friend. Unlike Gerasim, Chertopkhanov represents the landed gentry, but having realized that his father bankrupted their estate and left him only one small village, he becomes prideful, bitter, angry, unpredictably explosive and cruel. And while Chertopkhanov is disrespectful and brazen towards people, the narrator chooses his inhumane treatment of animals to introduce him and then his cruel killing of an innocent animal to signal the beginning of his demise.

The first thing the readers learn about Chertopkhanov is that he is abusive to animals. When the narrator meets him for the first time during a hunt, Chertopkhanov introduces himself, and then immediately tugs at his horse's neck forcefully, causing the horse to start shaking its head: "it reared up on its hindlegs, flung itself to one side and crushed a dog's paw" (4:298/302). As the dog squeals piercingly, Chertopkhanov strikes the horse's head between the ears with his fist, jumps on the ground to check the dog's

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[27] Translation and transliteration of names for all stories from *Sketches of a Hunter's Album* are by Richard Freeborn, with a few indicated instances where I use my own translation.

paw, kicks the dog to make her stop squealing, mounts the horse again and leaves the scene (ibid.). While the hounds are chasing a hare, the narrator observes that Chertopkhanov is whipping his "unfortunate horse" like a madman. Then, when the dogs capture the wounded hare, Chertopkhanov snatches its mangled body, and "his whole face one wild grimace, thrusts his dagger in [the hare's throat] up to the hilt, thrusts again and then bursts into guffaws of laughter" (4:300/304).

The next time the narrator sees Chertopkhanov, he describes another scene of mistreatment of animals. The narrator decides to visit him, and before he even enters the house, he already hears what turns out to be dog abuse: Chertopkhanov loudly recites the alphabet trying to teach a young poodle a trick: to eat a piece of bread he is holding over the poodle's nose. Squeezing the dog's muzzle, he is yelling at him calling him a fool and stupid. But "the unfortunate poodle was only shuddering and did not dare to open his mouth; he kept sitting, his tail tucked painfully, and was blinking and squinting miserably, as if saying: 'Surely, you are the master'" (4:311)[28]. And when the narrator remarks to him that he intimidated the dog, Chertopkhanov shoves the dog with his leg, after which "the poor dog quietly got up, dropped the piece of bread off his nose, and as if on tip-toe walked into the hallway, deeply insulted. And indeed: a stranger is visiting for the first time, and this is how he is being treated" (4:311-312).[29] The narrator's attentive description of the dog's possible feeling of humiliation underscores Chertopkhanov's abuse.

During his depression following his friend Nedopyuskin's death and the end of his relationship with the woman Masha, Chertopkhanov receives a horse, whom he

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[28] Translation mine.
[29] Translation mine.

names Malek-Adel and who becomes his only joy: “from that day onwards Malek-Adel became the chief concern and joy in Chertopkhanov’s life. He fell in love with him as he’d never fallen in love with Masha, and grew more attached to him than he had been to Nedopyuskin” (4:329/331). The horse is not just physically excellent, “like a fire,” but also intelligent: he recognizes Chertopkhanov’s voice, listens to his commands, and will not let any strangers near – “a treasure, not a horse” (ibid/332). And when Malek-Adel is stolen, Chertopkhanov, angry and stricken with grief, spends a year in search of his horse, bringing him back only to realize that it was not Malek-Adel. And he shoots the horse.

The narrator emphasizes Chertopkhanov’s vanity and hurt pride as the main reasons for his rage when he realizes his newly found Malek-Adel is not the real Malek-Adel. Certain personality differences between the two horses arouse his first suspicions, but it is the local deacon’s comment about the colour differences that confirms Chertophkhanov’s worst fear, and then:

> his self-esteem suffered unendurably; but it wasn’t only the pain of wounded pride that tore at him; a kind of desperation possessed him, malice choked him and a thirst for vengeance sprang within him. But against whom? Who should be avenged? […] Masha, the thieving Cossack, all neighbours, the entire world, finally himself? […] And he was once again the most worthless, the most despised of men, a general laughing-stock, a right hayseed, an out-and-out fool, and an object of derision – and of all people for the deacon!! He imagined, he clearly imagined to himself how that bloody bundle of lies’d start telling stories about how there was this grey horse and this silly old land-owner . . . Oh, hell and damnation! (4:345/347)

As if to ensure that there is nothing to even remotely justify Chertopkhanov’s killing of the horse, the narrator notes that Chertopkhanov is aware that the new horse is good, too, and could serve well. Yet, he furiously pushes these thoughts away feeling guilty that he could confuse this horse with Malek-Adel, and refusing to even mount this nag: “Never!

Fit for a Tatar, for dog food – that's all it was worth" (ibid/348). Whatever sincere feelings he may have experienced towards Malek-Adel, they all drown in his self-esteem issues.

Turgenev describes Chertopkhanov's rage over the wrong Malek-Adel and his decision to kill the horse in significantly greater detail than even Chertopkanov's loss of his friend. Orwin observes that: "Turgenev's method does not show the moment of decision itself, when the character struggles with choices precisely because he, unlike Dostoevsky as he 'picks at' the behaviour of his characters, does not depict the psychological process within which these choices take place. We see only the consequences of a choice already made" (*Consequences of Consciousness* 44). The fact that Turgenev chooses to show Chetropkanov's psychological state and the reasoning that lead him to kill the horse renders this cruelty a serious charge against his character.

Turgenev emphasizes the senselessness of the shooting of the wrong Malek-Adel by describing the new horse's behaviour and habits, with the animal emerging as an individual with his own personality. For example, the narrator repeatedly notes the horse's meek nature. In addition, he relates Chertopkhanov's awareness that "the horse is good, too," making it clear to the reader that the horse's only "fault" was in not being the real Malek-Adel. Chetopkhanov's total disregard for the horse's good personality further questions his attachment to the old Malek-Adel: did he love Malek-Adel for who he was, or mostly as a token of status? The narrator suggests an answer to this question after Chertopkhanov shoots the horse: "[The horse], guilty without guilt, was submissively trotting behind his back… But in Chertopkhanov's heart there was no pity" (4:348).[30] Even after Chertopkhanov hits the horse and pushes him away, the horse returns, nudging

[30] Translation mine.

him in the back, "touched him with his muzzle … reported himself…" (4:349). Screaming, he shoots the horse in the head. "And that is when the only feeling left in him was the awareness that this time he killed himself, too" (ibid.). "The End of Chertopkhanov" is one of Turgenev's mini masterpieces that affirms the animal's subjectivity and condemns animal cruelty. Chertopkhanov's "killing himself" as he kills the horse suggests equal moral worth and the interconnectedness of animal and human lives. And it is this psychological consequence of killing an innocent animal that reveals something in Chertopkhanov that evokes pity.

These works – *Mumu* and Chertopkhanov's two stories – illustrate Frost's observation that in Turgenev's works love is either illusory or short-lived. There is also another common theme: the suffering of the innocent and defenseless creatures at the hand of some external, merciless, arbitrary power, embodied by Gerasim's heartless owner and by Chertopkhanov. Moreover, while even the mute and oppressed human can revolt against this power, in both stories animals are the ultimate helpless and innocent victims who suffer most, and whose trust in humans makes them vulnerable and defenseless against these humans' betrayal of their trust.

Turgenev's "Noble Savage"

As he challenges the law of nature, Turgenev also complicates the image of peasants. Orwin writes that in *Sketches from a Hunter's Album* Turgenev continuously confounds the narrator's expectations based on social stereotypes (39). While Orwin focuses on the peasants' social status, I would like to look at Turgenev's treatment of the Russian peasant as a Russian Noble Savage of innate goodness. As Costlow points out,

by the time of *Sketches from a Hunter's Album* and *The Journey into the Woodlands* "the struggle over just who the peasant was – and how he (occasionally she) should be depicted – had become acute" (*Heart Pine Russia* 29). While Westernizers viewed the peasantry as backward, ignorant and "sunk in […] patriarchal violence," Slavophiles considered the peasant an example of Russian Orthodox wisdom, long suffering and goodness (ibid.). And for both groups peasants were connected to nature, "a connection that easily became inflected with Russian versions of Rousseau's Noble Savage" (ibid.). To trace Turgenev's treatment of the Russian Noble Savage stereotype I will look at the peasants in four stories from *Sketches from a Hunter's Album:* "Khor' and Kalinych" (*Khor' i Kalinych*) (1847), "Ermolai and the Miller's Wife" (*Ermolai i melnichikha*) (1947), "Kas'ian from the Beautiful Lands" (*Kasyan s Krasivoi Mechi*) (1851), "Living Relics" (*Zhivye moshchi*) (1874), and the story *Journey into the Woodland*.[31]

Already in the opening to the story "Khor' and Kalinych" the narrator begins by remarking on the difference between peasants from the Orlov and the Kaluzhskii districts: while the former are "of little stature, round-shouldered, gloomy, […] taking no part in trade, eating poorly and wearing bast shoes," the latter are tall, "look at you boldly and merrily with a clean, clear complexion, trade in grease and tar, and wear boots on feast days" (4:7/15). The narrator then meets two serfs: Khor' – a fairly well-to-do serf with a large family – and his friend Kalinych – a tall, hardworking peasant with a kind face, but unable to maintain his household because he always hunts with his landowner. The narrator describes Khor' as "close to people" and Kalinych as "close to nature" because the latter can remove worms, knows how to handle bees, how to treat fear, rabies, and blood. During the narrator's stories about his travels abroad, Kalinych is

[31] *Journey into the Woodland* is not part of *Sketches from a Hunter's Album.*

moved by the descriptions of nature, mountains, waterfalls, unusual architecture and so on, unlike Khor' who is more interested in the administrative and governmental side of life (4:18). And although the narrator does not set them up as polar opposites, he does paint Kalinych more sympathetically: while Khor' mistreats his wife who is afraid of him and feels deep contempt for women saying that "woman is man's servant," Kalinych does not hurt anyone, is afraid of his wife, and is very accommodating, meek, easy going and carefree. Thus, Kalinych seems to represent the common stereotype of the close-to-nature peasant as innately good and long-suffering.

Similar to Kalinych, the narrator's hunting companion serf Ermolai is a skillful hunter; no one compares to him when it comes to catching fish with his bare hands, grabbing lobsters, searching for game, and using bird calls to capture partridges and nightingales (4:24). But despite such similarities in their "closeness to nature," there are essential differences between the two peasants: while the narrator describes Ermolai as easygoing and carefree, reminiscent of Kalinych, unlike the latter's good-natured, romantic easygoingness, Ermolai's carefree attitude is that of irresponsibility and self-centeredness. Although he is poor like Kalinych, his poverty is due more to his irresponsibility: the narrator observes that Ermolai could easily buy new ammunition and hunting supplies, but he does not. He squanders the narrator's money, abuses his wife and dog, and takes advantage of an unfortunate woman. Unlike Kalinych who has a way with bees who listen to him, Ermolai is unable to train dogs, despite his excellent hunting skill, because he has no patience. The narrator even observes that there was in Ermolai some sullen ferocity, and he did not like his facial expression when he would bite into a shot

bird (4:25). While being “close to nature,” Ermolai exhibits neither innate goodness, nor long-suffering, nor wisdom.

In *Journey into the Woodland*, Egor and Efrem are also both close to nature, but in very different ways. Egor is similar to Kalinych in his simplicity and knowledge of the natural world: he knows how to deceive partridges, hunt bears and move through the woods without drawing attention to himself. He is known as a man of few words (‘*molchal’nik*’), has honest eyes and the dignity of a deer. And like Kalinych, he cannot maintain his household because he hunts: “a passion for hunting’s nothing for a muzhik, whoever takes up with a rifle is a bad farmer (7:57). Unlike Egor, Efrem is disruptive, brazen and aggressive; his advice to the narrator's other hunting companion Kondrat is: “if you are timid, you are done for; the one who’s got guts is the one who eats (7:64). While he is an outlaw and defiant of authority, his opinion on the village council is well respected. As Costlow notes, he “embodies the elemental, anarchic spirit of the woods,” but he holds beehives as sacred. Both Egor and Efrem know how to understand the woods. For example, Egor can recognize signs of a bear’s presence, while Efrem knows there is a forest fire at the place where Egor and the narrator are headed.

Khor’, Kalinych, Ermolai, Egor and Efrem are only a few examples of Turgenev’s literary peasants, but they clearly demonstrate how Turgenev challenges the image of the Russian Noble Savage, uncorrupted by civilization and innately good. While Kalinych and Egor are honest, meek and kind, Efrem is disruptive and violent, and Ermolai is abusive and dishonorable. Despite their differences, the common denominator in their relationship to the “living manifestations” of nature is violence. Ermolai illustrates this best: his relationship with animals is purely predatory: all he does is “catch” (*lovit*’),

"grab" (*dostavat'*), search for (*iskat'*), lure (*podmanivat'*) and obtain (*dobyvat'*) various animals (4:24). While Kalinych and Egor are essentially good and kind men, they hunt, and their hunting has a negative impact on their lives. The only truly positive attuned-to-nature characters are Kasyan from "Kasyan from the Beautiful Lands" and Lukeria from "Living Relics" – who both denounce hunting.

Kasyan – the protagonist from "Kasyan from the Beautiful Lands" – whom the narrator's coachman calls "a holy fool," is very similar to Kalinych, Ermolai, Egor and Efrem in his understanding of the natural world. Like Kalinych and Ermolai, he is carefree, but if carefree Ermolai is irresponsible and uncaring, Kasyan's "carefree" attitude stems from his reliance on God: "I live as the Lord ordains I should," he replies to the narrator (4:126/133). While his submission to God's will also reflects the meekness and humility of the Russian peasant, his reliance on God does not mean idleness – he cares for his little daughter and tries to help others as a healer (*lekarka*). In his healing abilities he is similar to Kalinych, but he emphasizes that all is from God: "What power have I got?... And who is there who has such power? It all comes from God. But there are… herbs, there are flowers: they help, it's true" (4:127/134).

In his peculiar worldview that appears to be a combination of pagan and Christian beliefs, he is against hunting because exposing blood that is "hidden from the light" is a great sin. While he accepts fishing because a fish "has no blood" and "does not feel," and views hens and geese as intended for humans, he condemns killing wild animals – they are meant to live wild and free, and should not be killed. When the narrator shoots a landrail, Kasyan confronts him, looking him straight in the eye: "Why did you kill the little bird?" Moreover, he explains that the narrator's hunting was unsuccessful because

he (Kasyan) kept all the game away through his “thoughts.” Sitting on a cut birch tree, saddened by the killed landrail, he almost blends in with the surrounding trees as “their liquid, greenish shadows glided calmly to and fro over his puny figure” (4:124/131). His peculiar, "holy fool's" worldview fully recognizes the finitude humans and animals share because “against death neither human nor animal can do anything,” and Kasyan accepts this as God’s wisdom and will.

As Kasyan explains his views to the narrator, he equalizes humans and animals. When the narrator asks him why he catches nightingales even though he is against touching the forest and other “creatures,” the narrator uses the word ‘*tvari*’ (Biblical “creatures”) to refer to animals. Replying that he catches nightingales for human joy and solace, Kasyan repeats that it is wrong to kill creatures because “death will have its own” anyway and he then uses a human example to illustrate his point, telling of a local carpenter’s untimely death. His closeness to the non-human world also manifests itself in such details as his nickname “Flea,” as well as his ability to communicate with birds: as the narrator and he begin to walk, he does not talk to the narrator, but "chirps" and "twits," imitating birds who reply to him (4:122).

In “Living Relics” Lukeria also opposes hunting and is even more connected to saintliness. Once a beautiful and upbeat young woman, she becomes bed-ridden after a freak accident. As she is wasting away, her face resembles an old icon: bronze color, narrow nose, barely visible lips. But while her appearance looks like a saint’s relics, her faith, her humble acceptance of her severe disability and her gratitude make her saintly. Her selfless appreciation of animals organically flows from her “saintliness.” Having transcended ordinary human desires and strivings, she finds genuine joy in hearing the

humming of bees in the field, or a pigeon's cooing, in seeing a hen with her chickens who coming to peck at some crumbs, a passing sparrow or a butterfly (4:357).

Seeing these non-human creatures and hearing them who keep her company unawares is one of the things that helps her feel alive and present. After recalling a family of swallows that made a nest in one of the corners in her room and raised their young (*detki*), she adds that one of the local hunters killed them and she reproaches the narrator: " And what good could he have got from a swallow? After all, a swallow's no more harm than a beetle! … What wicked men you are, you hunters!" (4:358/360). The narrator is quick to assure her that he does not shoot swallows, but she goes on to tell of a hare who ran in, as if running away from dogs: "[The hare] sat down quite close and spent a long time sniffing the air and twitching his whiskers – a regular officer he was! And he took a look at me and realized that I couldn't do him any harm" (ibid.).

Both Kasyan and Lukeria are free from a violent predatory relationship with animals. Eva Kagan-Kans suggests a similarity between Kasyan and Lukeria by pointing out that Lukeria "extends the fusion with nature that was observed in Kasyan" ("The Metaphysics of an Artist" 393). Although perhaps not thinking of themselves in these terms, they are truly at one with the natural world, without the kind of self-centered romantic merging with nature that the narrator in *The Journey into the Woodland* experiences. As Costlow examines the moral ambivalence of the narrator's episode with the fly, she insightfully observes, "the virtues and delight of contemplative response to the natural world are not in themselves at stake. […] Contemplation of the natural world can bring with it a deep and restorative peace" (*Heart Pine Russia* 34).

Lukeria's quiet delight in her limited communion with the natural world demonstrates such "restorative peace." As she explains to the narrator, she grieved at first, but gradually she accepted her condition because "many others have it worse":

> Some haven't even got a home. And others are blind or dumb. But I can see perfectly, praise be to God, and I can hear everything, every little thing. If there is a mole digging underground, I can hear it. I can smell every scent, it doesn't matter how faint it is! If the buckwheat is just beginning to flower in the field, or a lime tree is just blossoming in the garden, I don't have to be told: I'm the first to smell the scent (4:357/359).

Animals and plants "restored" Lukeria and helped her accept her situation and find gratitude by filling her life with their sounds and activities, making her aware of the multiplicity of God-created life, thus strengthening her faith. Having become aware of hares, swallows, hens and butterflies, Lukeria no longer feels alone. Moreover, in her "saintly" state she becomes closer to animals as her sharpened senses resemble those of animals. As one of the last two stories in *Sketches from a Hunter's Album*, Lukeria's story brings together non-violence, animals and faith in a meaningful and unexpected way for Turgenev, an agnostic and avid hunter.

Hunting

Among Turgenev's beautiful and accurate descriptions of hunting there are some that are somewhat unsettling in their cynicism. For example, "Ermolai and The Miller's Wife" from *Sketches from a Hunter's Album* opens with a beautiful description of the forest just before the sunset as the narrator wants to explain what the "set off for 'cover'" mode of hunting is about. With the sun glistening in the tree tops and the sky changing its hues, the narrator describes how different bird species gradually fall asleep. Such species-specific descriptions individualize birds and result in a rather personalized portrayal of

the forest life and sounds, which the narrator completes with: "and (only hunters will understand that) in this profound silence there appears a very special type of cawing and hissing, one can hear a measured beat of flapping wings – and a woodcock, beautifully tilting his long nose, is smoothly flying towards your gun shot" (4:22).[32] The combination of an unsuspecting inhabitant of this forest, already presented as full of diverse forms of life, and an aestheticized description of this inhabitant flying towards its death is disconcerting.

In another story "L'gov" (*L'gov*) from the same collection, the narrator describes another hunting experience in a pond. As the boat with the narrator and his hunting companions makes its way to the reeds, "the fun started" (*poshla potekha*) (4:88/95). Frightened by the humans' sudden invasion, the ducks take flight, and "gunfire […] resounded in unison after them" (*vystrely druzhno razdavalis' vsled za nimi*). The narrator remarks: "it was a delight to watch how the stumpy birds somersaulted in the air and splashed down heavily in the water" (ibid.). This is not hunting for sustenance. And the cynicism of describing frightened and killed birds as "funny" and their dead bodies as "somersaulting" as if alive is unsettling. The disregard for the prey birds becomes even more pronounced when the narrator notes that they could not pick up all of the shot birds because some of them fell into thick reeds. As experienced hunters, they knew that hunting in thick reeds would make it difficult to pick up the killed birds, but it did not seem to matter. Just as it did not seem to matter that they left many wounded ducks to die a slow death.

Although descriptions of such disregard for the prey are not numerous, they are disconcerting enough to warrant attention, especially in view of Turgenev's real life

[32] Translation mine.

excessive hunting. For example, in a letter to S. T. Aksakov from 17 (29) October, 1852 he lists a total of 304 birds he shot, while his two hunting companions together shot a total of 500 (2:73-74). He admits that the numbers may seem huge, but since he had to travel far to hunt, he does not consider that his hunting was successful (ibid). In another letter to S. T. Aksakov from 12 (24) May, 1853 he informs him that he has just returned from a hunting trip during which he and his two hunting companions shot a total of 105 red game (2:155-156). While Turgenev seems to downplay the large numbers, in 1852 in his *Memoirs of a Rifle Hunter* for which Turgenev wrote two reviews, Aksakov expresses concern about declining wildfowl population in Orenburg area and admits that he and other hunters were more like exterminators (*istrebiteli*) than true hunters.[33]

Just as unquestioning descriptions of "somersaulting" dead ducks seem at odds with Turgenev's sensitive descriptions of the human-animal bond and animal suffering, such real-life almost compulsive hunting appears to contradict his lifelong love for "living manifestations" of nature. Turgenev's understanding of Nature's law as loveless, destructive, and indifferent helps clarify these contradictions. It is as if within this natural law of the "equilibrium of life and death," where every being is for itself—mosquitoes feeding on humans, spiders feeding on mosquitoes and birds eating insects—excessive hunting fits as a human way of satisfying humans' needs. Yet as much as Turgenev tried to rationalize Nature's law as "harmonious" in its "equilibrium," he was unable to accept it. And if his resentment and protest against such loveless law became explicit only towards the end of his life, in such late works as *Enough* and "Nature" (analyzed above), hints of them peak through such insensitively described episodes in these earlier stories in

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[33] Nonetheless, even while acknowledging their excessive hunting, S.T. Aksakov could not fully accept the fact that overhunting caused decline in the wildfowl population.

Sketches from a Hunter's Album. His emotionally detached "objective" observations of hunters and his occasional cynicism are his defense mechanisms in dealing with his inner conflict. Cynicism hides one's vulnerability, it is a "wall around a garden of bitterness and frustrated desires," "wounded idealism" and "banished hope" (O'Dea).

According to Jose Ortega y Gasset, "every good hunter is uneasy in the depths of his conscience when faced with the death he is about to inflict upon the enchanting animal (102)." Thomas P. Hodge comments that: "no doubt this unease stems in part from the hunter's inevitable act of empathy, of considering the horror he would feel in the animal's place" (470). Turgenev's occasional descriptions of hunting contrast his numerous touching and compassionate portrayals of the human-animal bond and suffering animals, pointing to the author's possible inner conflict. But his non-acceptance of nature's indifference and inner conflict between his hunting obsession and empathy for animals become increasingly more explicit after the 1860s and especially towards the end of his life.

As his health deteriorated, his detached hunter's stance completely disappeared and he showed animals with compassion in some of his last works: the prose poems "The Sparrow" (*Vorobei*) (1878), "The Dog" (*Sobaka*) (1878), "The Pigeons" (*Golubi*) (1879), "How Beautiful How Fresh were the Roses" (*Kak khoroshi, kak svezhi byli rozy*) (1879), "Partridges" (*Kuropatki*) (1882) and a children's story *The Quail* (*Perepelka*) (1882).[34] In earlier works, such as his review of Aksakov's *Memoirs of a Rifle Hunter* and *Enough*, Turgenev recognized similarities between humans and "lower animals," but in a moment of despair protested that, unlike butterflies, humans were each born unique. But in "The Dog" and "How Beautiful How Tender were The Roses" he explicitly focuses on

[34] Translation of these poems in prose and *The Quail* mine.

continuity between humans and animals. "The Dog" is a very short piece that captures a moment when the narrator looks at his dog. The dog looks the narrator straight in the eye as if it wants to say something and the narrator looks back. Similarly to Levinas' remark that Bobby the dog "lacks brain to universalize maxims" the narrator thinks that the dog is "mute, without words, does not understand herself "(ibid.). But unlike Levinas, who denied ethical power to Bobby, the narrator disregards the dog's lack of words and recognizes her subjectivity: "I understand her" (ibid.).

The narrator "sees the gaze, the face that gazes before seeing the visible eyes of the other" (Derrida 12).[35] He focuses on what he and his dog share: "I understand that at this moment in her and in me there lives one and the same feeling, that there is no difference between us. We are identical: in each there is the same little fire burning and glowing. Death will come, wave its cold wide wing… And the end!" (13:148). The little glowing fire burning inside both evokes the light streaming from a human heart in *Enough* (that is fading away in the narrator) and thus reveals the essential kinship and shared mortality between the human and the animal. The dog's "muteness," her inability to express her feelings with words, connect her to all other animals and humans who "ought to remain silent" in the face of suffering and nature's merciless law: from Emel'ian's abused dog and wife, to Gerasim and Mumu, to the sick animal who hides deep in his hole to expire alone, or to Egor "who knows how not to complain." The concluding lines acknowledge the ethical force of the dog's gaze and the fundamental closeness of humans and animals: "No, it is not a human and animal exchanging gazes…

[35] Derrida comments on Levinas' reminder that "best way of meeting the other, is to not even notice the color of his eyes." But if Levinas thinks of the other as human only, Derrida extends the concept to animals. (12).

This is two pairs of identical eyes looking at each other. And in each pair, in the animal and the human – one and the same life huddles timidly to another" (ibid).

In another poem in prose "How Beautiful, How Fresh Were Roses" the narrator continues to contemplate the finitude humans and animals share, and their closeness. Recalling the little animal from *Enough* who glances for the last time at the velvety grass and then curls up in the depth of his little hole, on a wintry evening the narrator huddles in the corner of his dark room and reminisces about his past. First, he recalls a beautiful young girl with whom he was in love. Then, he pictures a happy family life with two children and his wife playing the piano. So when he asks next "Who is there coughing so coarsely and quietly?" one expects another person from his past. Instead, unexpectedly, he answers: "Curled up in a ball, huddling and shivering, at my feet, it is my old dog, my one and only comrade … […] And they all passed away… passed away…" (13:193). His one and only canine friend becomes enclosed within his family, sharing this inability to avoid suffering and death.[36]

In the poems "The Sparrow" and "The Pigeons" Turgenev conveys continuity between animals and humans. In "Pigeons" the narrator comments on camaraderie of two pigeons when one helps another to fly to safety as a summer storm advances. And he feels good seeing that they are well, as they sit huddling together. "The Sparrow" relates an episode when an older sparrow shields a helpless fledgling that fell from its nest onto the narrator's dog. The narrator tries to show the situation from the sparrow's point of view when he says: "He ran to rescue his child… but his entire little body trembled with horror! He was sacrificing himself! What a monster the dog must have appeared to him!"

[36] This companionship between an old, ailing narrator and his loyal old dog evokes the old man and his old dog Azorka from Dostoevskii's *The Humiliated and Insulted* (1861) that will be analyzed in the next chapter.

(13:163). Feeling compassion for and admiration of the little bird, the narrator tells his readers not to laugh because he felt deferential before and humbled by the bird's love. And his concluding generalization about love being the moving force of life applies to both humans and animals, thus again defying the modern human-animal dichotomy.

The last two works about animals, a prose poem "Partridges" and a children's story "The Quail," as well as his translation of G. Flaubert's *The Legend of St. Julian the Hospitaler* (1877), all denounce hunting, exposing his ambivalent feelings that first became apparent in "Kasyan" and "Living Relics." *The Legend of St. Julian the Hospitaler* is based on a medieval tale about a nobleman whose excessive hunting brought about a curse that he would kill his parents. Having fulfilled the prophecy, he pays penance and is forgiven. His bloodthirstiness that he channeled through hunting is the factor that determines his fate. Already as a child, long before his father taught him how to hunt, Julian kills a harmless mouse at the church; begins to kill birds in the garden, laughing as they fall on him; first injures, and then strangles a pigeon. Once he learns how to hunt, he revels in killing rather than hunting for sustenance. The ultimate episode of him slaying animals indiscriminately leads to the climax when he kills a family of deer with the deer-father cursing him. Although Turgenev himself may not have been a bloodthirsty hunter like Julian, the scale of some of Turgenev's hunting harvests are excessive too. Turgenev avoids this topic in his review of Aksakov's *Notes*, but has the positive characters of Kasyan and Lukeria denounce hunting, and chooses to translate *The Legend of St. Julian*, which suggests ambivalence about hunting that he could no longer avoid towards the end of his life.

"Partridges" and *The Quail* both explicitly present hunting as violence. In "Partridges," as the terminally ill narrator questions his fate and what he has done to deserve this slow and painful end, he thinks of a family of partridges who "huddle together, dig in the dirt, happy" (13:214). A shot is fired and "one of them, with a broken wing and wounded, falls – and dragging her little legs with difficulty, hides in the grass" (13:215). Here the narrator does not find fun in watching how the bird's awkward body is "turning" in the air and then splashes in water as the narrator in *Sketches from a Hunter's Album* did. Instead, he uses the diminutive '*lapki*' to describe the legs of "the unfortunate" partridge who may be thinking of "why out of all of them she was the one to get shot." And the narrator concludes: "Lie there, you sick creature, until death finds you," evoking the sick animal who has to die alone in his hole so as not to disturb nature's law of equilibrium. In these last stories the distance between a hunter-observer and animals disappears, and Turgenev's narrator emerges as acutely aware of the vulnerability of the animals he once hunted.

"The Quail" is the last story about animals Turgenev wrote. Here the child-narrator's innocence and sensitivity emphasize the violence of hunting. A ten-year-old boy often joins his father, an avid hunter, in his hunting and dreams of the time when he will be old enough to hold a rifle himself. He enjoys watching as wounded birds flail in the dog's mouth and he feels no pity whatsoever until one day when they kill a mother quail who tries to distract the dog from her nest by pretending to be wounded. However, as the father explains, she miscalculated and the dog grabbed her, injuring her fatally. As the dying bird lies on the father's palm, for the first time, the boy gets to look their prey in the eye:

> She was lying motionless on my father's palm, her head dangling – and was looking at me with her brown little eye. And, suddenly, I felt so sorry for her! It seemed to me, she was looking at me and thinking: "Why do I have to die? Why? I was fulfilling my duty; was trying to protect my little ones, to lead the dog farther way – and got caught! Poor me! Poor! This is unfair! Unfair! (13:138)

Meeting the animal's gaze and recognizing the creature as suffering, the boy undergoes an ethical encounter like the one described by Derrida. When the bird's eyes close, the boy begins to cry, but having looked into her eye and seen himself "be seen through the eyes of the other, in the *seeing* and not just *seen* eyes of the other" he momentarily loses his passion for hunting (Derrida 12). The ethical force of this experience even changes the father in the boy's eyes for a moment: the father appears unkind as he tries to justify the quail's death by saying that she was cunning, but the dog outsmarted her. The narrator begins to worry about her young, and when they find her nest, he buries her next to it, puts a cross on it and imagines her in Heaven. His father assures him that the father-quail will care for them. When they come back to the same spot a few days later and the boy's father does not shoot a quail they see, his image is restored in the boy's eyes who thinks that his father is kind, after all.

It would seem that after this experience the boy would renounce hunting completely, but he only loses enthusiasm for it: " Since that day my passion for hunting disappeared. […] However, when I grew up, I, too, began to shoot, but I never became a real hunter. Here is what disaccustomed me" (13:139). What follows next is a hunting episode during which he and his companion found and wounded a mother black grouse with her fledglings. When she flew away, the narrator's companion began to whistle like a fledgling to which the mother responded so "tenderly." Seeing her rushing towards them, her chest bleeding all over, the narrator thought: "Looks like a mother's heart could

not bear it" (13:140). Feeling like an evil person, he clapped his hands, ruining the hunt and angering his companion. Since the narrator introduces this experience by saying that it "disaccustomed" him to hunting, the reader expects his renunciation of the practice to follow. But Turgenev disappoints readers' expectations for the second time with a concluding sentence that "from that day on it was harder and harder for me to kill and shed blood" (ibid.).

This last story about animals seems to sum up Turgenev's inner conflict about his compulsive passion for hunting, love of animals, and views on nature. For example, in such works as *The Journey to the Woodlands*, *Enough*, and prose poem "Nature" examined here, he wants to see nature as a "mother," but immediately subverts this idea by characterizing it as an indifferent force that destroys what it creates and is deaf to the suffering of humans and animals. Only one of the narrator's thoughts in "The Quail"—that "a motherly heart could not bear it"—finalizes this subversion. The mother quail defending her young and the wounded mother-grouse, her chest bleeding, rushing to what she thinks is one of her fledglings, exemplify what true mothers are and what indifferent nature is not.

The narrator's inability to stop hunting even after such traumatic episodes seems to reflect Turgenev's complicated relationship with hunting. On the one hand, he writes about how much lower animals are like us, about his love for his dog Diana and about suffering humans and animals as co-sufferers and victims of nature's merciless law; on the other, he hunts excessively, justifying such practices in the narrator's conversation with Kasyan, and bordering on an obsessive compulsion (that Aksakov describes as '*istreblenie*'). This tension reflects an overarching dynamics of his life that is rife with

contradictions permeating all the important questions for him.[37] For example, he rejected religion, yet was an agnostic who continuously returned to Christian themes and images.[38] The image of Christ from the eponymous prose poem (1878) is almost Dostoevskian in his humanity and closeness to ordinary people. He describes himself standing in a low, village church as a youth, surrounded by peasants whose heads resemble a wheat field, when someone comes up from behind and stands next to him. Without looking at the person, he understands that it is Christ. Overcoming his curiosity and fear, he looks up at his "neighbor" whose face is like all other human faces and who is dressed like everyone else: "What kind of Christ is this? – I thought. – Such an ordinary, ordinary man! Can't be!" […] And […] I have understood, that precisely a face like that, resembling all human faces – that is Christ's face" (13:186). An agnostic who understood and depicted Christ so intimately is the avid almost compulsive hunter who denounced animal abuse and hunting. In the end, it is not surprising that his deeply spiritual and God-believing characters Kasyan and Lukeria are the ones who denounce hunting.

Conclusion

At first glance, Turgenev's lifelong passion for hunting may appear incongruous with increasingly ambiguous depictions of it. At the same time, his love of nature seems at odds with his portrayal of nature as indifferent and loveless. But when it becomes clear that he distinguishes between Nature – "mother" with her law – and its "animate and

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[37] Scholars often comment on Turgenev's duality and contradictions (Eva Kagan-Kans, "Fate and Fantasy" 545)

[38] Schapiro states that "his hesitant attitude towards religion, almost a longing for something he could not sincerely feel, persisted for some years, perhaps to the end of his life" (146). In a letter writing about his daughter's religiosity he calls his not being a Christian his "private misfortune" (134).

inanimate manifestations" – humans and animals as her unloved children – these contradictions disappear.

Turgenev's view of nature as an indifferent blind force might have contributed to his inner tension about hunting. Schapiro states that two of Turgenev's favorite themes are: "the blind, impersonal force of nature, which pursues its own ends […] and is quite indifferent to men's aspirations;" and the overriding importance of love in human relations" (287).[39] The irreconcilability of these two themes is the source of his conflicted feelings about hunting and animals. As an impersonal entity in nature's "perfect equilibrium" and a subject to its law of food chain in which "each separate unit within it should exist solely for itself," Turgenev rationalizes his own hunting interests. But the recurring discussions of the loveless "mother-nature" and images of humans and animals suffering in silence suggest that deep down the tension remained. Only towards the end of Turgenev's life when his health was deteriorating does the uncaring hunter disappear and a sensitive human being emerge to embrace the vulnerability and finitude shared with animals.

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[39] To illustrate the importance of love for Turgenev, Schapiro draws on the concluding line that 'by love does life persist and move forward" from the prose poem "The Sparrow." Yet even though the story is about a real sparrow and the narrator begs to be taken seriously, Schapiro points to the "importance of love in human relations" excluding the animal who showed the love.

Chapter 2 - F. M. Dostoevskii

Sergei Durylin claims that in Dostoevskii's novels "there is much of the human, too much of the human" because the novels are so "densely populated" by humans who wrestle with questions about the nature and origin of human evil, spiritual despair and faith, compassion and redemption (480). But amidst all the insulted and the humiliated, the underground men, pure-hearted sinners, parricides, rejected brothers and accidental families there is a category of characters whom scholars tend to overlook – suffering animals. From the prison animals of the *Notes from a Dead House* (1861) to the bludgeoned horse in *Crime and Punishment* (1866), or the dog Zhuchka with Ilyusha in *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880), animals' stories are interwoven within all these human issues. In this chapter, I will examine Dostoevskii's animal representations in *Notes from a Dead House* (1860-62), *The Humiliated and the Insulted* (1861), *Diary of a Writer* (1873-1881), *Crime and Punishment* (1866) and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880). The animals' roles in their respective works demonstrate that in Dostoevskii's writings one's treatment of animals reflects one's spiritual and moral standing, and without embracing animals as members of God's family the ideal of Christ-like love is incomplete.[40]

Dostoevskii was interested in portraying human-animal dynamics throughout his writing career, focusing particularly on the human-animal bond and human cruelty towards animals. Already in *The Petersburg Dreams in Poetry and Prose* (1859-1861) he underscored an old miser's greed by stating that he starved his cat to death. Dostoevskii's

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[40] F. M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh* (PSS) (Leningrad, 1972-90), references to PSS also contain references to the English translation – the page is given after the back slash. The sources of translations will be indicated for each work.

interest in animals and association of children and animals resonated with his personal life: playing "horses" was a popular game in his family, and he himself was well informed about horse care (Vladimirsev 319). His eldest son, Fedia, loved horses so much that as a toddler he would break away from his nanny, run up to a horse in the street, and hug the horse's leg. Eventually Dostoevskii's wife bought a young colt in 1880 when she saw the colt's owner selling it "for skinning." The colt became very attached to the children, following them like a dog, but, unfortunately, fell ill and died. The little boy's love for horses anticipates Ilyusha and his father's dream of having a little horse, while toddler Fedia's hugging of horse's legs echoes little Raskolnikov's embracing of the dead horse's head in *Crime in Punishment*, even though the novel was written several years before Fedia was even born.

Notes from a Dead House[41]

Already in *Notes from a Dead House* Dostoevskii sets forth the correlation between the capacity to love animals and one's spiritual state. This work represents the protagonist-narrator Goryanchikov's memoirs about his life in prison in Siberia after he confessed to and was sentenced for murdering his wife.[42] As Robert Louis Jackson notes, "all roads lead to and from [this novel]" (*The Art of Dostoevsky*13). For instance, he states that "it is no exaggeration to say that almost every work of Dostoevsky in the last two decades of his life can and must be read in the context of *House of the Dead*" (ibid.

[41] All English translations of the novel and transliterations of characters' names are from *Notes from a Dead House* trans. by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), unless indicated otherwise.

[42] As Jackson notes, scholars comment on the inconsistencies about the narrator, who despite his sentence, in his prison memoirs unfolds as a political prisoner. Also, the Russian reading public in the 1860s could easily identify the narrator with the author. Yet, Dostoevskii did not change anything when the work was republished.

x). He goes on to note that "in its themes and preoccupations [it] anticipates the problem content of Dostoevsky's novels in the 1860s and 1870s" (ibid. 9). One of these themes is that of the human-animal relationship and animals' place in God's creation. In addition to dedicating an entire chapter to "Prison Animals," Dostoevskii mentions animals and humans' treatment of them throughout the work. Scholars tend to focus on the prison animals as symbols of freedom. For example, Peter McQuire Wolf suggests that "direct juxtaposition of descriptions about animals tells us a great deal about man," and points to the difference between a prison horse's position and that of the prisoners, noting that even though the horse is within the prison walls, it is beyond the prison and thus not the same as the prisoners (115). Prison animals are "symbols" through which freedom is depicted (ibid).

Almost from the very beginning of the work, unsympathetic characters' good treatment of animals humanizes them. In chapter 2, "First Impressions (I)," Goryanchikov describes an "unrestrained" and "malicious" major who "in the prison […] was hated and feared like a plague" (4:28/31). The narrator vacillates between painting a cruel monster and finding an explanation for the major's disposition. First, he admits that everything terrible he was told about the major was true, sharing various incidents of the major's mistreatment of the prisoners. But then he tries to understand the major's cruelty towards prisoners, suggesting that it is the unlimited power over so many people that made him "dreadful" because "in himself he was only a disordered and malicious man" (ibid.). And immediately after describing the major's cruel treatment of prisoners, the narrator tells the reader that there was something this monster held dearest – a poodle, Trezorka. Using the diminutive endearing "Trezorka" instead of a neutral "Trezor"

conveys the depth of the major's attachment to the dog, whom he loved "like his own son" (ibid). When Trezorka fell ill and died, "he nearly lost his mind from grief" (ibid.).

Similarly to *Crime and Punishment* (analyzed below), where Raskolnikov's compassion for the abused horse shows his essential goodness and makes his final regeneration feel more plausible, the poodle Trezorka reveals the major's capacity for goodness and renders his change of heart convincing, when he later begs forgiveness of a prisoner whom he had flogged.[43] Goryanchikov writes that "it meant there was some human sense in this drunken, cantankerous, and disorderly man" (4:217-218/278). The readers had a first glimpse of this humanity when the major wept over his beloved dog like his own child.

Sensitive treatment of animals demonstrates "some feeling of humanity" in some convicts, while animal cruelty emphasizes others' depravity. In the chapter "Prison Animals," the prisoners actively and passionately participate in buying a new horse after their workhorse, Gnedko, passed away. He eventually became the prison favorite, and prisoners "often came to pet him" (4:188/240). Another prison pet was the goat, Vaska, who was raised in prison since he was a little kid. Everybody "got to love him" and many were saddened when the major ordered the goat killed. Goryanchikov notes that the prisoners could love animals, and "if they had been allowed to, they would eagerly have raised lots of domestic livestock and birds" (4:189/241). He emphasizes that there is hardly any other activity that "could have softened and ennobled the stern, brutal

[43] Having described the scene as related to him by that prisoner himself, the narrator acknowledges that for someone of his disposition it was "generous," while adding that being drunk might have contributed to that. This "drunkenness" should not minimize the major's effort because based on the narrator's descriptions, the perpetually red-faced major always had a drinking problem. Yet, he did not regret having mistreated the prisoner before.

character of the prisoners more" – a thought that Dostoevskii would repeat in his *Diary of a Writer* and *The Brothers Karamazov* (ibid.).

Aside from Gnedko and Vaska, the prisoners did not show much love for other non-human residents. When someone brought in an injured and exhausted eagle, "the whole prison population surrounded him" in a characteristic Dostoevskian crowd scene, with spectators gaping at the injured eagle who was aware of the humans' voyeuristic gaze and fiercely returns it, "prepared to sell his life dearly" (4:193/246). With the exception of the person who brought him in and those (or the one) unknown who would bring him some food and water, most prisoners showed no compassion for this injured and terrified wild bird. On the contrary, prisoners would come up to stare at him and set a prison dog on him, finding it amusing. In the face of a distressed and suffering non-human being, the majority of prisoners were incapable of an ethical, empathetic response. While a couple of months later the prisoners seemed to show some sympathy for the eagle, deciding to set him free, only a dozen of them cared enough to actually take him outside for the release. But those who did felt a certain satisfaction as if they were freeing themselves.

Many scholars draw attention to the eagle's role in the theme of freedom. Gabdullina notes that the eagle is a "messenger of the free world" (103). Wolf juxtaposes a wild animal's freedom with that of a human being, suggesting that the eagle's freedom is "the freedom to live in nature according to its instincts, [while] human freedom […] means the capacity to live outside one's instincts, or even more precisely, that man has no instinct, only freedom" (114). Jackson sees in the eagle "the most poignant allusion to Goryanchikov's inner condition in the first period of his incarceration" as the eagle

hobbles off to a corner, looking at everybody with the "proud and fierce gaze of a wounded king" (*The Art of Dostoevsky* 55). Analyzing the convicts' exchange about the difference between them and the bird, Jackson writes that people are unlike birds in their "capacity to adapt to unfreedom. Yet even in adapting, they never lose their need for freedom" (ibid.). While the image of the wild eagle as a symbol of freedom is important, the eagle as the animal other reflects the convicts' inconsistent treatment of animals. If some convicts are cruel, others are compassionate enough to give the wild bird the freedom they cannot have.

Besides the eagle, there were other birds – geese – for whom the prisoners did not show much concern. As with the eagle and goat, Vaska, no one knew to whom the geese belonged, but they hatched in the prison. The whole gaggle took to following the prisoners everywhere, including work. While people do not commonly consider geese as capable of being a companion animal, the birds' display of affection for the prisoners that included "spreading their wings," "jumping," and "honking" sounds similar to dogs' wagging tails, jumping and squealing with delight, thus emphasizing their "companion"-like affection for the convicts.[44] While the prisoners found the geese "entertaining" for some time, they did not appear to exhibit any affection for the geese, as the narrator's descriptions show only the geese's devotion to the convicts. Even as he concludes, the narrator says "in spite of all *their* devotion, they were all slaughtered for some festive day" (italics mine).

It is the convicts' treatment of dogs that reveals their capacity for cruelty towards non-human others most clearly. The prisoners ignored some of them, and even abused

[44] Konrad Lorenz investigated and described the principle of imprinting in his observations of graylag geese.

others. For example, there was a dog Belka who had been run over by a cart and became severely deformed. Mangy, with constantly suppurating eyes and her denuded tail always between her legs, she never barked or growled at anyone, “as if she didn’t dare.” “Insulted by fate, she had obviously decided to submit, because whenever she saw someone, “she would immediately roll over on her back […] in a sign of submission” (4:190/242). And every prisoner would kick her with his boot, as if it were “his unfailing duty,” adding: “Take that, you creep” (ibid.).

Cruelty to dogs affected Goryanchikov personally because he lost his own dog Kultyapka whom he raised from a blind, helpless puppy and came to love dearly. Goryanchikov’s first dog-friend Sharik, who will be analyzed later, immediately took the puppy under his protection, slept and played with him “the way grown-up dogs usually play with puppies” (4:191/243). Goryanchikov lovingly described Kultyapka’s excitable and high-spirited personality: he would squeal, yelp, and clamber up to lick his face, and “is ready to parade all his other feelings on the spot: ‘Only let my enthusiasm be seen; decorum doesn’t matter!’” And wherever Goryanchikov might be, as soon as he shouted “Kultyapka!” the dog “would suddenly appear from around the corner, as if from nowhere, and with squealing rapture would come flying to me, rolling like a ball and turning somersaults on the way” (ibid.). Goryanchikov admitted that he was “terribly fond of the little monster” (ibid.). Kultyapka disappeared after one of the prisoners-tanners, Neustroev, noticed his beautiful thick fur and began to earn his trust with treats. Kultyapka – an exuberant individual with a distinct personality – became reduced to the fur lining a pair of boots. Not only did Neustroev take advantage of a trusting dog, but

also cruelly disregarded the narrator's feelings, especially as he showed the shoes to Goryanchikov.

The prison dogs were not the only ones who suffered from the convicts-tanners' cruelty, as they would often procure dogs from somewhere else, sometimes even stolen purebreds. The depth and intensity of Goryanchikov's indignation and repulsion at such cruelty to dogs (and their owners in case of stolen dogs) becomes clear when he sees one prisoner holding on a rope a "magnificent big dog, obviously of a valuable breed" whom "some scoundrel of a lackey had stolen from his master and sold him to [the prison] shoemakers for thirty silver kopecks" (4:191/244). The direct reference to Judas indicates Goryanchikov's view of the moral and spiritual reprehensibility of such acts. He also portrays the stolen dog as a conscious, feeling victim: "The poor dog seemed to understand the fate being prepared for him. He glanced questioningly and uneasily at the three of us in turn and only occasionally ventured to wag his bushy tail, which he kept between his legs, as if wishing to soften us by this sign of his trust in us" (ibid.). Unable to intervene, the narrator moves away. The contrast between the individualized description of the "magnificent" non-human being "questioningly looking" at its killers, and its skin and body thrown "into the big and deep refuse pit […] in the farthest corner of the prison," foreshadow Tolstoi's graphic description of the slaughterhouse in "The First Step" (ibid.).

As he did with the major, Goryanchikov tries to understand the causes of such cruelty to dogs, mentioning that the common folk considered dogs unclean. But the parallels between the convicts' treatment of dogs and their attitude to certain groups of fellow convicts complicates and subverts such "common folk" beliefs as a possible

justification. For example, the peasant, “common folk,” prisoners “generally took a dark and unfavorable view of former noblemen” (4:26/28). Even though these prisoners of noble origin have been deprived of all the rights of their class and reduced to complete equality with everyone else, the “common folk” convicts never accepted them as their own, watching their suffering with delight (ibid.). While Goryanchikov says that this was not because of conscious prejudice, but happened “just so, quite sincerely, unconsciously,” his next comment that “[the convicts] sincerely considered us noblemen, even though they themselves liked to taunt us with our fall” casts doubt on just how “unconscious” the peasant prisoners were. Goryanchikov, who treats others without these class hierarchies, admits that only towards the end of his term did the majority of them come to like him and see in him a “good” man.

The common folk convicts’ mistreatment of and gloating over their fellow “formerly noble” prisoners (regardless how conscious or unconscious the prejudice underlying it) resembles their abuse of dogs, supposedly based on a common folk prejudice. If they are unable to simply see other suffering human beings in the convicted nobility, especially in someone as attentive and kind as Goryanchikov, to expect them to recognize a suffering being in a dog is futile. The prisoners’ cruelty towards the meek, deformed Belka, who did not even dare to bark, but only pitifully squealed in pain as they kick her, parallels their mistreatment of their good-humored, kind counterparts. It is disconcerting to Goryanchikov that “a good-natured, guileless man would at once be subjected to humiliation” (4:73/88), and unless a man fought back, assuming an air of dignity and pride, he was mistreated.

While the prison community has difficulty accepting Goryanchikov as one of them, a prison dog Sharik immediately bonds with the new prisoner. When Goryanchikov arrived, his first impression of the place where he was to stay for ten years was that it was "monstrous." Cut off from the outside world, living in subhuman conditions and a "mephitic atmosphere," many prisoners began to lose their humanity.[45] Ready to "devour" each other, over time, they turned into "half-demented mummies," for whom ceaseless quarrelling, squabbles and "artistic" bad language were predominant forms of daily communication, marking a loss of normal usage of language and reason – the two supposedly uniquely human attributes that make humans superior to animals. The reality of this "life outside life" in this "house of the living dead" is crushing to Goryanchikov who is aware of the challenge to retain his dignity, and it is an animal who helps him not to lose his humanity.

Before Goryanchikov befriended him, for many years Sharik "simply existed," living off the kitchen scraps and sleeping in the yard, and no one took any notice of him. Yet, every day when the prisoners were returning from work, he "ran to the gate, affectionately greeted each party, wagging his tail and affably trying to catch the eye of each man […] waiting for at least some affection" (4:190/242). But nobody paid any attention to him or petted him. After Goryanchikov showed some kindness to Sharik by simply petting him and sharing some bread, the dog became "one being left in the whole world who loved [him] and was attached to [him], [his] friend, [his] only friend – [his] faithful dog Sharik" (4:77/94). The moving details of their relationship that Goryanchikov shares conveys the strength and depth of their mutual affection:

[45] Mephitic – foul-smelling, noxious

> When I stroked him, he stood still, looked at me affectionately, and, as a sign of contentment, quietly wagged his tail. Now, not having seen me for a while, […] he ran around looking for me among them all, and finding me behind the barracks, ran with a squeal to meet me. I don't know what came over me, but I rushed to kiss him and hugged his head. He put his front paws on my shoulders and started licking my face. "So here is the friend fate has sent me!" I thought, and afterwards, during that first oppressive and gloomy time, whenever I came back from work, the first thing I did, before going anywhere, was to hurry behind the barracks with Sharik leaping ahead of me and squealing with joy, to hug his head and kiss it, kiss it, with some sort of sweet and at the same time tormentingly bitter feeling wringing my heart (4:77/93-94)

Dostoevskii's prison dog Sharik demonstrates an animal's ethical response to the Other. As Goryanchikov and Sharik begin by exchanging compassionate ethical gestures and form a loving bond, each responds ethically to the animal Other. For the French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, only humans can be the Other capable of evoking an ethical response and only humans have a "face"; animals are seen as controlled by their biological drives, always in a relentless struggle for survival, and hence, oblivious of the Other's "moral summons." And while biological drives determine humans' lives, too, Levinas believes that only humans can break with this animality, reaching out to the Other (Calarco 58-59).

Sharik, however, breaks with this biological order and his own struggle for survival. Even before Goryanchikov, Sharik reached out to the prisoners, greeting them at the gates and invitingly looking into their faces, hoping for some affection (4:190/242). Precisely because Sharik's affectionate attitude towards the convicts who ignore him is neither a grateful reciprocal response to their kindness, nor an expectation of a treat, it is an ethical act proper. It is safe to assume, that, living on the prison's grounds, Sharik must have witnessed convicts' punishments, their cruel superiors, as well as their abuse of each other. And while he cannot give them anything substantial, he offers himself: his

affection, cheerfulness and kindness. The dog recognized Goryanchikov's individual singularity and reminded him of his humanity by accepting and reciprocating his kindness.

The narrator foregrounds Sharik's ethical actions by drawing parallels between him and a woman named Nastasya Ivanovna. In fact, Nastasya Ivanovna and Sharik frame their chapter: she opens it and Sharik concludes. Nastasya Ivanovna is a widow, who cared for exiles in Siberia. She was one of the many people in Siberia who seemed to "have made their purpose in life a brotherly care for the "unfortunate," a totally disinterested, saintly compassion for and commiseration with them as for their own children" (4:68/81). Her description is very similar to that of Sharik, who, when stroked looked affectionately at Goryanchikov, gently wagging his tail to signal his pleasure, always delighted to see him, happily bounding along with yelps of joy (4:77/93). Goryanchikov writes that "she seemed to consider it a special happiness to do all she could for us" and all that you noticed about her was "an infinite kindness, an overwhelming desire to please, to make things easier, to be sure to do something nice for you" (4:68/81) Like Sharik happily yelping and always running to meet Goryanchikov, Nastasya Ivanovna "tried to read our eyes, laughed when [the exiles] laughed, hastened to agree with everything [they] said, she fussed over treating us to whatever she could" (4:69/82). The arc between the opening example of a human's selfless expression of love for convicts, and the concluding example of a dog who shows the same selfless affection for them foregrounds the animal's ethical behavior. The narrator seals the dog as an ethical being by referring to both, the woman and the dog as a "friend": Goryanchikov

and other convicts "felt that there outside [they] had a very devoted friend," while inside the prison Goryanchikov found his "only, faithful friend" in Sharik (4:68/81; 4:77/94).

Goryanchikov continues to challenge the traditional modern notions of human superiority over animals. Unlike the narrator, the common folk convicts who rigorously maintain the social hierarchy by refusing to accept the convicted nobles, transfer the same hierarchical view of the human-animal relationship when they comment on animals' intelligence in two episodes – those centered on Gnedko and the wild eagle. Gnedko quickly learned the routine, and when the driver would shout at him to go on by himself to the kitchen, the horse would pull the barrel to the kitchen, stop and wait for the kitchen staff to unload the water. All the convicts would admire the horse, exclaiming, "Smart boy Gnedko!"…"Does what he's told!" adding "a brute, but he understands" (4:189/241). The narrator does not agree or disagree explicitly with the "brute"'s capacity for understanding, but instead observes that Gnedko "shakes his head and snorts, as if he really does understand and is pleased to be praised" (ibid.). And when someone would take him some bread, the horse would eat and nod his head "as if to say: 'I know you, I do! I'm a nice horse and you're a good man!' "(ibid). Open-ended "as though/as if" help the narrator to wonder about the horse's thoughts while allowing for the possibility of a non-human consciousness the extent of which lies beyond the narrator's human perception.

A somewhat similar exchange among convicts about the differences between humans and animals happens when some prisoners decided to release the injured eagle. When some said that "he's a free, tough bird, he's not used to prison," somebody added: "Meaning, he's not like us," to which someone replied: "What blather: he's a bird, and

we're men" (4:194/247). While after the comments about Gnedko the narrator imagines what an intelligent Gnedko might have understood and thought, here he leaves the statement about "the wild bird vs. men" open. As the eagle's story is the last in the chapter "Prison Animals," the narrator leaves the unresolved question of how different a wild bird and men are for the reader to ponder.

Goryanchikov's observations of Gnedko, the eagle, or Sharik's "wise eyes," and other prison animals suggest that intelligence is not a uniquely human attribute. He also believes that the rational faculty alone has no moral value. Thus, when he discusses an executioner's nature and "brutish characteristics," he notes that "all the executioners I've happened to see were full-grown men, with sense, with intelligence," but are examples of "how far human nature can be distorted" – reason without soul is prone to corruption (4:156-158/198-201). When he describes Nastasya Ivanovna, he observes that: "it was even impossible to tell whether she was intelligent or educated. The one thing noticeable about her at every step was an infinite goodness, an overwhelming desire to please, […] to do something nice for you. All this could be seen in her gentle, kind eyes" (4:68/81). In fact, as he talks about Nastasya Ivanovna, he argues against the notion that "the loftiest love for one's neighbor is at the same time the greatest egoism" by concluding "where the egoism was in all this, I fail to understand" (4:69/82). This appears to be Dostoevskii's rejection of the idea that rational self-interest is the key motive for human behavior. Intellect and education alone are less important than kindness, capacity for compassion and love for another – the very qualities people like Nastasya Ivanovna and the animals Goryanchikov meets in prison possess.

The character of Alei, a young Dagestani Tatar billeted next to Goryanchikov, and whom Jackson calls “the embodiment of absolute good,” brings together a regard for animals as embodying spiritual and moral value, and humans’ and animals’ closeness as God’s creations (as Zosima will explicitly teach in *The Brothers Karamazov*) (*The Art of Dostoevsky* 108). When Goryanchikov uses the Bible to teach Alei how to read, he is very moved by Jesus’ teachings about forgiveness and loving one’s neighbors and one’s enemies. Moreover, Alei acknowledges Isa (Jesus in the Quran) as God’s prophet, and out of all possible Quranic references, recalls how Jesus made a bird of clay and blew on it, and it flew (4:54). The fact that Goryanchikov remembers and chooses to include Alei’s Quranic quote that closely parallels the Biblical creation of humans emphasizes the importance of the kinship between humans and animals for him.[46]

Parallels between Alei and Sharik further foreground the image of Alei as an “embodiment” of goodness. Alei’s effect on Goryanchikov, as Alei’s “beautiful, open, intelligent and at the same time good-naturedly naïve face won [Goryanchikov’s] heart at first sight,” is similar to the moments when Goryanchikov’s heart ached with a “a sweet and at the same time tormentingly bitter feeling” when after a long day he would embrace Sharik’s head and kiss it (4:51/60). Just as Sharik’s loving eyes and boundless joy upon seeing Goryanchikov save the latter from despair in this “hell on earth,” Alei’s smile and big, tender eyes relieve Goryanchikov’s anguish and sadness. Moreover, Goryanchikov’s feeling that Sharik is the friend whom “fate” sent him parallels his gratitude “that fate had sent me [Alei]” (ibid.). Finally, before Alei leaves the prison, he leads the narrator behind the barracks and throws himself on his neck, weeping and thanking him for “making a

[46] While in Genesis the word “dust” is used (KJV), in other books, including Isaiah, the word “clay” is used: “*we are the clay and thou our potter*” (Isa 64:8).

man out of him," reminiscent of Sharik and Goryanchikov embracing each other behind the barracks, as the dog helps the man retain his humanity (4:54/64).

One's treatment of animals as a reflection of one's spiritual standing acquires larger thematic significance as the majority of the convicts' treatment of animals – inconsistent and often cruel – mirrors their inconsistent, fickle religious feelings. Goryanchikov observes the convicts actually practicing their faith during Christmas and Easter celebrations – the "real holidays" because there is no work and the daily routine of prison life is disrupted. The prisoners anticipate and prepare for these holidays, piously following all the services, but eventually even these days become days of drinking and debauchery. It was mostly the older convicts who prayed, while the younger ones rarely crossed themselves even during these holidays. They learned to follow Christian rituals and understand some symbols, but did not fully understand and internalize the "good news" of loving their neighbors. Therefore, the narrator understands that just as there will always be many like Gazin who feels no remorse over luring a little boy to murder him, there will always be those like the prisoner Neustroev, who lures the narrator's beloved puppy, Kultyapka, to kill him.

Similar to Goryanchikov's belief that a relationship with animals can humanize these criminals, the observance of religious holidays is also in a sense an act of remembrance and recovery of the convicts' lost humanity. The narrator writes that "besides innate reverence for the great day, the prisoner unconsciously felt that by observing the holiday he was as if in contact with the whole world, that he was therefore not entirely an outcast, a lost man, a cut-off slice from everything, that things in prison things were the same as among other people" (4:105/131). Likewise, their affection for

Gnedko, the pet goat Vaska, or even their contact with the wild eagle seem to have a similarly grounding effect. Horses have always been an indispensible participant of peasant life, and the purchase of a new horse (Gnedko) – particularly because they felt as though they, "just like free men […] really were buying a horse for themselves" (4:186/237). The horse seemed to be a connection to the outside world, a reminder of life when they were free men.

Elaborating on the animals' positive influence on humans, Goryanchikov describes their water-carrier (who worked with Gnedko) as having a "staid and taciturn character," observing that "all Russian coachmen tend to be of extremely sedate and even taciturn character, as if it were indeed true that the constant handling of horses endows a man with a special staidness and importance" (4:188/240-241). Dostoevskii repeats this idea in his notes for *The Brothers Karamazov* in Zosima's teachings about animals: "Little children ought to be raised with animals – with a horse, a cow, a dog. They will be better and their souls will have more understanding" (15:222). Although Dostoevskii believed that association with animals benefited humans spiritually, animals for him are not simply vehicles to convey the idea of what is humane or inhumane. As the many prison animals demonstrate, they are feeling and thinking individuals in their own right, living according to God's will, and through this innate goodness and wisdom, as later articulated by Zosima, capable of bringing humans to a higher spiritual/moral plane.

Along with affectionately portrayed animal characters, Dostoevskii uses what could be considered negative animal metaphors. For example, he describes the angry major's eye as sharp as a lynx's, and says that had it not been for work, the prisoners "would have devoured each other like spiders in a jar" (4:16/18). Gazin – one of the first

frightening convicts Goryanchikov meets – seemed to be a "huge, monstrous spider." And without labor and lawful possessions a man can "turn into a brute" (4:16/17). References to the "beastly" nature of wild animals to convey human savageness found in many cultures are often reductive of animals.[47] But as Ivan Karamazov will say that is unfair to beasts because a tiger just eats, but only humans can be artistically cruel (14:217/238). Father Zosima will emphasize this idea by noting that a bear is fierce, but not in any way to be blamed for this trait.

The way Dostoevskii uses metaphors of children/childhood can help make sense of his metaphoric/metonymic usage of "beastly" characteristics as negative. The treatment of and closeness to children, like treatment of animals, reflect a character's spiritual standing and moral state. In harmony with the Bible, Dostoevskii places innocent children closest to Christ and adult childlikeness suggests a character's essential, natural goodness (Rowe 233). Young Alei, whose trustful, childishly artless smile soothed the narrator's grief, is a good example. To reinforce Alei's childlikeness the narrator adds that he was "as chaste as a young girl," and following his (Alei's) brothers who treated him like a young boy and loved him with a fatherly love, he refers to him as a boy. Another good example is a convict Sirotkin – a humble, quiet and handsome youth, who did not drink and hardly quarreled with anyone. When asked something, he would look at people like a ten-year-old child, and when he got any money, he would spend it not on necessities, but on a kalach and gingerbread, and eat them up just "as if he were seven years old" (4:39/47). Even his name – Sirotkin – derives from a diminutive 'sirotka' – a little orphan child. There was also an Old Believer – an old "childishly

[47] In his work *Animals and Nature: Cultural Myths, Cultural Realities*, Rod Preece examines attitudes towards animals across different cultures, noting that some animals were thought of as "incarnations of evil."

submissive" man to whom the convicts always entrusted their money for safe keeping, who had a "serene, gentle laughter which contained much childlike innocence," and whom the narrator once heard praying and weeping over his 'little children," whom he would never see again. Childlike qualities in morally upright, positive characters reinforce their natural goodness.

Drawing on qualities commonly associated with children, such as finding fun in simple activities and unrestrained expressions of joy, Goryanchikov humanizes the convicts. When a group of convicts prepared a theatrical performance, they "were glad as children of the smallest successes, they even became vainglorious" (4:117/148). Sharing his impressions of the theatrical production, Goryanchikov observes that the prisoners "were children, perfect children, even though some of these children were forty years old" (ibid.). The narrator complicates, however, such positive associations with childhood, when he comments that "only in prison did I hear stories of the most horrible, most unnatural deeds, the most monstrous murders, told with absolute irrepressible, the most childishly merry laughter" (4:15/16).

The association of childishness with immaturity clarifies the unsettling effect of the combination of childlike qualities and "the most monstrous" crimes in one sentence about one and the same group of people. Jackson points out that the "childlike nature in a grown man also suggests an underdeveloped moral and social consciousness" (Jackson *Deliriums* 133).[48] To illustrate his point, Jackson uses the convicts' response to the informer Aristov, noting that for them "indignation with the informer was unthinkable"

[48] In her analysis of childhood in Dickens, Dostoevskii and Tolstoi, Orwin makes similar observations examining how "the suitability of childhood as a model for adult virtue is questioned" in Dostoevskii's *The Insulted and the Injured*. She suggests that Dostoevskii shows that adults with their grown-up passions need more than a childish perspective for moral guidance (*Consequences of Consciousness* 154).

(ibid.). While the narrator's revulsion with Aristov is "the measure of [the narrator's] profound moral and social consciousness," these convicts are without conscience (ibid.). While current psychological studies indicate that toddlers do exhibit moral sense, they also show that young infants need their caregivers' help in fostering moral development (Carpendale, Hammond). Young children do not have a clear understanding of right and wrong, and personal accountability. In the Biblical context, before the Fall, Adam and Eve dwelt in a state of innocence, not knowing good and evil. While such innocence in children is natural, age-appropriate and therefore harmonious, it becomes a liability in adult men as lack of a moral compass and sense of responsibility can lead to depravity and crime. Thus, while young children's innocence, as a state of being meek, teachable, trusting and free from vices, is a virtue that places them closest to Christ, childishness in adults transforms into a lack of moral consciousness and personal accountability.[49]

Such use of children as a metaphor to convey the moral immaturity of peasant convicts does not actually negate or diminish Dostoevskii's high regard for children as the closest to Christ. Comparing Dostoevskii's and Tolstoi's visions of childhood, Orwin suggests that for Dostoevskii "childhood goodness is higher, purer, than any deemed humanly possible for Tolstoi" (*Consequences of Consciousness* 155).[50] By the same token, while predation is natural for many animals, especially because, as Zosima will teach, they "cannot help it," the same bloodthirstiness in humans turns into savageness and brutality that the commonly accepted metaphor of "beast" is used to convey. And similarly to the children metaphor, Dostoevskii's use of variants of "beastly" to describe

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[49] Another literary example of this is in Dickens' *Bleak House* (1853), where Skimpole uses the excuse of being a 'child' to justify horrible immorality.

[50] Orwin explains that for Dostoevskii childhood goodness in adults "represents the possibility of a nonegoistic human being which in adulthood persists along with the egotism that develops with reason and passion (ibid.).

human savagery does not diminish or negate Dostoevskii' high regard for animals. In fact, A. G. Gacheva notes that for Dostoevskii there are no unclean animals, and humans are called to care for God's Creation, including animals (qtd. in Ivanova 287).

Animals in *The Humiliated and Insulted* and *Diary of a Writer*

In *The Humiliated and Insulted*, published at about the same time as *Notes from a Dead House* in 1861, Dostoevskii opens with the story of the human-animal bond between an old man and his old dog, Azorka. Their descriptions are very similar: both are emaciated, have barely any hair left, and look lifeless and old as if they they had stepped out of some tale by Hoffman. The narrator draws attention to the strong connection between the two, noticing that the dog does not leave the man's side, as if "constituting together with him something whole and inseparable" (3:171).[51] At the bakery where the narrator met them, the loyal and affectionate dog would lie down at the old man's feet with its nose between his boots, and they would sit in silence for hours.

The depth of the bond between the two becomes poignantly apparent when Azorka quietly passes away at the old man's feet. The narrator takes the time to describe this moment in detail. As the result of a misunderstanding, the old man assumes he is being chased out of the bakery and calls his dog. Unable to wake Azorka up, the man drops his cane, falls on his knees and with both hands lifts Azorka's face: "The man looked at him for a minute, as if shocked and not understanding that Azorka had already died, then he quietly bent down to his old servant and friend, and pressed his pale cheek to [the dog]'s dead face" (3:175). Shortly after he stumbles outside, he dies in the street in the narrator's arms.

[51]English translation for *The Humiliated and Insulted* is mine.

Opening the book with the old man's affection for and grief over his non-human companion reveals his humanity, evoking the readers' sympathy. Witnessing his vulnerability and capacity for love early in the book will be essential later to complicate the image of him as an insulted father who disowned his daughter when she eloped and resisted forgiving her until it was too late. The unmistakable parallels between him at his deceased daughter's side, stricken with regret and grief, and him gently holding dead Azorka's face—the dog who originally belonged to his daughter—reveal the interconnectedness of human and animal fates, the mortality and finitude they share. In the middle of this human drama of betrayal, broken family ties, resentment, and pride, the dog is the only being capable of unconditional love and loyalty.

The interconnectedness of human and animal lives is a repeated theme in Dostoevkii's *Diary of a Writer* (1873-1881) – a collection of his fictional and non-fiction works. As in his novels, he points to similarities between human and animal emotions. For example, commenting on a story of child abuse, he compares the woman who was trying to protect a little girl from her abusive father to a mother hen: "These pitiful hens, when trying to protect their chickens, can become quite formidable" (22:62).[52] Here he also draws gruesome analogies between defenseless animals and equally vulnerable people, such as women and children. For instance, in the story of a wife-beater, the husband mistreats his wife "worse than a dog," like many wife-beaters who whip their wives ruthlessly "like a cat" (21:20-22).

His diary entry on the anniversary of the Society for the Protection of Animals, to which he was deeply devoted, reflects his view of animals as beings both demanding moral consideration and reflecting humans' spiritual and moral standing. He shares a

[52] Translation for *Diary of a Writer* mine.

formative memory that would become the source for Raskolnikov's dream of the bludgeoned horse. Once he witnessed how as a courier was senselessly hitting his coachman over the head with a fist, the coachman began mercilessly whipping his horses. [53] Dostoevskii writes that here "each blow to the animal leapt out of a strike against the human" (22:28-29). Believing that animal abuse and human abuse are inextricably connected, he emphasizes the Society's mission as "humane and humanizing" (*chelovechnaia i ochelovechivaiushchaia*) (22:31). Within the "humanizing" aspect of the human-animal relationship, he connects the themes of children and animals as he observes that scenes of animal abuse "brutalize and corrupt people, especially, children" (ibid.). Similarly, in the notebooks for *The Brothers Karamazov* he claimed that growing up with animals will make children better people and and give "their souls more understanding" (15:252).

Crime and Punishment – Raskolnikov's Dream About the Horse

Arguably, Dostoevskii's most memorable literary animals are found in *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. In *Crime and Punishment*, right before Raskolnikov finalizes his decision to commit murder, he has a dream based on childhood memories of witnessing peasants mercilessly whipping their emaciated old horses.[54] Many analyses of Raskolnikov's dream concentrate on the horse's symbolic connection to the hero himself or other characters. For example, Ronald LeBlanc focuses on the

[53] Nietzsche, who admired Dostoevskii, is said to have had a similar experience in Turin. As the conventional story has it, in January of 1889, in a manic state, Nitzsche was walking when he saw someone flogging his horse. He rushed to the horse, embracing the animal, and collapsed to the ground in tears. Based on this story there was a Hungarian film released in 2011 "The Turin Horse."

[54] Describing Raskolnikov's dream, the narrator says that he often saw how a little emaciated hag would try pulling an overly heavy load, often getting stuck in mud or a ditch. And peasants would start whipping the hag, even across her eyes (6:46-47).

ways Dostoevskii shows the body as the site of violence, and the concept of possession as a license for abuse. In a more psychoanalytic interpretation, W.D. Snodgrass draws parallels between the cart that the horse had to pull and the carts Raskolnikov encountered during the day, arguing that the horse represents both Raskolnikov and Marmeladov (90-98). Other scholars have suggested that the horse symbolizes the pawnbroker, or Raskolnikov's mother, or his landlady, while identifying the drunken peasant Mikolka with Raskolnikov. Adding to these provocative insights into the psychology of the protagonist, I will explore the significance of the horse's "animality" as Dostoevskii challenges Cartesian notions of animal-machine and positions the animal as the key in preparing Raskolnikov's regeneration in the epilogue.

The episode with the horse is a typically Dostoevskian crowded scene in which the author explores the implications of seeing someone's suffering. In *Misanthropology,* Gary Saul Morson explores fundamental human vices resulting from the social aspect of human nature in the context of Dostoevskii's works, and raised the question: what do we see when we "regard the gaze of another?" (62). Answering his own question, he points to a variety of "gazes" in Dostoevskii's works that include exhibitionism, voyeurism and "turning others into unwilling witnesses" (ibid.). The dream of the beaten horse illustrates many of the perverse ways of regarding others described by Morson. There is the exhibitionistic Mikolka who needs onlookers to validate his ownership and thus his right to do whatever he wants with his property. The returned complicit regard of the jeering crowd only goads him on. Besides the majority of the willing spectators gleefully watching the horror, there are a couple of unwilling witnesses who, nonetheless, also do nothing to stop the abuse. Among this audience little Raskolnikov is the only unwilling

witness who refuses to participate, and the only one who attempts to intervene, demonstrating his capacity for regarding others compassionately.

Raskolnikov's refusal to engage in the collective voyeurism of the animal's suffering illustrates Levinas'/Derrida's ethical encounter with the face of the Other as he experiences this ethical disruption. To convey the traumatic brutality with which the scene of savagery and the suffering horse jolts the boy out of his contentment and sense of security, and shatters his world, the narrator emphasizes the serene atmosphere of Raskolnikov's walk with his father to the graveyard in the beginning of the dream: "in the middle of the graveyard stood a stone church. […] [Raskolnikov] loved the church, the old-fashioned, unadorned icons and the old priest with the shaking head" (6:46/107).[55] The narrator adds that "whenever [little Raskolnikov] visited the graveyard, he used religiously and reverently to cross himself and to bow down and kiss the little grave of his younger brother" (ibid). His "holding his father's hand" as he looked with dread at the tavern as they are passing by conveys his sense of security because his father is with him. Then the narrator gradually shifts attention to the "peculiar" commotion and a strange cart by the tavern, mentioning in passing that the cart reminded him of similar carts he would see out of his window – with a feeble nag straining under a heavy load, whom peasants would beat cruelly and for whom he always felt very, very sorry. After this follows an increasingly disturbing description of Mikolka's rage and the abused horse. Little Raskolnikov grows deeply disturbed, crying and asking his father what those people are doing. There is an abrupt switch from Christian-centered peaceful reverence and the security of his father's grasp to Raskolnikov tearing himself away from his

[55] All English translations of the novel and transliterations of characters' names are from *Crime and Punishment: A Novel in Six Parts with Epilogue,* trans. by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), unless indicated otherwise.

father's hand, beside himself with horror, crying, choking, his tears streaming, wringing his hands. He did not even feel when "the men gave him a cut with the whip across his face" (6:48/112).

Developing Levinas' ethical discourse of the face of the Other, Derrida suggests that while an animal's ability to suffer touches us, it is an animal's inability to avoid pain, its "fleshly vulnerability" and exposure to wounding that affect us most deeply, both emotionally and ethically:

> Being able to suffer is no longer a power, it is a possibility without power, a possibility of the impossible. Morality resides there, as the most radical means of thinking the finitude that we share with animals, the mortality that belongs to the very finitude of life, to the experience of compassion, to the possibility of sharing the possibility of this nonpower, the possibility of the impossibility, the anguish of this vulnerability and the vulnerability of this anguish (28).

Dostoevskii portrays this "nonpower" quite literally when he describes how the horse tries to kick her abusers as their blows keep raining down on her. Right after Mikolka shouts: "It's my property! I'll do what I choose," laughter breaks into a roar and the "mare, roused by the shower of blows, began feebly kicking. Even the old man [who said such abuse was unchristian] could not help smiling. To think of a wretched little beast like that trying to kick" (6:48/112). The futility of her attempts to fight back only makes her embodied vulnerability, her "nonpower" ever more palpable and unbearable for Raskolnikov. When he finally made his way to her, "put his arms round her bleeding dead head and kissed it, kissed the eyes and kissed the lips," the horse literally becomes the face in the Derridian sense (6:49/115).

Raskolnikov is not the only one who experiences the power of the encounter with the face of the animal Other. The others who witness the crime, but have no compassion and/or do nothing to stop Mikolka, are still affected by and react to it. As Derrida

expands his thoughts on animals' ethical impact, he points out that the force of witnessing animal suffering is undeniable:

> No one can deny the suffering, fear or panic, the terror or fright that humans witness in certain animals. The response to the question "can they suffer?" leaves no doubt. In fact it has never left any room for doubt; it precedes the indubitable, is older than it. No doubt either, then, for the possibility of our giving vent to a surge of compassion, even if it is then misunderstood, repressed, or denied, held in respect. Before the *undeniable* of this response (yes, they suffer, like us who suffer for them and with them), before this response that precedes all other questions, the problematic changes ground and base. (28).

For Derrida, both responses – negative and positive – testify to the encounter's power and to the fact that the vulnerability and expressivity of the animal's face pierce and affect us. In this dream, Mikolka, those who join him in the beating, and the rosy-cheeked woman who sits in the cart cracking sunflower seeds and laughing as the men trash the horse, offer examples of such a negative response. The fact that the horse is Mikolka's "property" leaves her without any line of protection or defense. Mikolka acknowledges his absolute power over the horse, the possibilities of treating her whichever way he may choose when he yells: "Don't meddle! It's my property, I'll do what I choose." (6:48/112).

Dostoevskii uses Mikolka's rage and cruelty as one way to suggest the closeness and interconnectedness of the fates of animals and humans. Servants in this period were themselves vulnerable and unable to defend themselves from the abuse of their masters. The abused often becomes the abuser for two reasons: 1) it is the only way of relating to the outside world that they learned; 2) their rage is a subconscious reaction, coping mechanism and denial when confronted with the abuse of someone else. The fact that they recognize the same defenselessness and vulnerability in the animal Other not only demonstrates the ethical force of the animal Other, but also acknowledges the

commonality between humans and animals, their shared "nonpower" and finitude. We see a positive outcome of recognizing this commonality in *The Brothers Karamazov* when Snegiryov, an impoverished, "insulted and humiliated" man, who regards animals with compassion, teaches his son, Ilyusha, to treat horses with care. In fact, his lesson to Ilyusha directly counters Mikolka's abuse because as Snegiryov and Ilyusha dream of moving to another city, Snegiryov suggests that only Ilyusha's mother and sisters will ride in the cart, while they will walk alongside so as not to overload the horse.

The differences in response to the vulnerable animal Other among various oppressed people tie into the problem of the origin of evil that for Dostoevskii was inseparable from questions of faith and goodness. Although an examination of Dostoevskii's views on the nature of evil is outside the scope of this chapter, I would like to point out one relevant aspect: while Dostoevskii acknowledges the influence of environment, he also affirms personal responsibility. While in the *Diary of a Writer* Dostoevskii mentions the courier's senseless beating of the coachman who, in turn, mercilessly whips his horses, in *Crime and Punishment* he does not offer any direct outside cause of Mikolka's rage. Even such details as Mikolka's "fat neck" and "meaty, red" face suggest that he is not starving and destitute. Analyzing Dostoevskii's psychology of evil, Orwin notes that "it consists in the first place of material existence unleavened by Christian love" (*Consequences of Consciousness* 159). As some voices in the crowd yell at Mikolka that he "has no cross on him" (*kresta na tebe net*), a traditional Russian expression pointing to the lack of Christian feelings in someone, and the abuse scene contrasts with the preceding images of an old church by the cemetery, Dostoevskii seems to show the absence of Christian love as the main cause of Mikolka's cruelty. This

connection between Christ-like love and treatment of animals, already suggested in *Notes from a Dead House*, will become explicit in Zosima's teaching.[56]

Raskolnikov's dream, by aligning animal and child, shows the essential goodness at the core of his nature. From the very beginning of the novel as the reader becomes acquainted with Raskolnikov, Dostoevskii keeps in suspense not only the novel's detective plotline, but also who Raskolnikov is as a person. Little Raskolnikov's tender feelings towards the church at the start of the dream render him an essentially good, positive character, before modern rationalistic ideas corrupted and confused his mind. His active love and his active compassion for the horse reinforce his core goodness.

Granted, before this dream the adult Raskolnikov demonstrated that he was capable of kindness when he shared his few remaining coins with the Marmeladovs and tried to protect a drunken girl from a lecher. But in both situations his subsequent cynical remarks and regrets potentially mar these impressions of him as a morally upright man, leaving it unclear which one is the true Raskolnikov – the one who felt prompted to help, or the one who cynically mocked his own effort. Edward Wasiolek writes that Raskolnikov's inner conflict represents two kinds of "logic" basic to human condition: God and divine logic, and self and human logic (Wasiolek 70). Throughout the novel Raskolnikov's psyche is the battleground for these two impulses. In addition, Raskolnikov's compassion for the beaten horse is a more powerful statement of character than his concern the Marmeladovs or the drunken girl because it is easier to feel sorry for someone of one's own species/kind. While, as Dostoevskii himself acknowledged, it is

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[56] Lisa Knapp sees Descartes as one of literary sources for Mikolka's cruelty Raskolnikov's murder. She points out that "the mathematics of the murder evoke the Cartesian aspect of the act he contemplates" (245). Recalling a story about Descartes' two dogs, whom he would often beat for amusement, Knapp draws a parallel between Descartes and the drunken Mikolka who, like Descartes, thinks he has the right to abuse his horse because it is his "property" (ibid. 244).

difficult “to love thy neighbor” because humans are capable of crime and sin, to feel compassion for another species requires an even greater leap.

Raskolnikov’s concern for the suffering horse plays an important structural role in the novel because it makes his regeneration in the epilogue more convincing. The “goodness” in Raskolnikov – that he is able to recognize a face in the suffering non-human Other and to risk his own safety to protect this Other – logically anticipates his conversion and the scene of redemption in the epilogue. For many years literary scholars have debated the relevance of the epilogue to the main body of the novel, with many claiming that the hero’s conversion in the epilogue is poorly motivated and happens without warning.[57] Yet, there are others who see a greater continuity between the two parts of the work. Little Raskolnikov’s powerful Derridian ethical reaction to the non-human Other contributes to the unity between the two parts.

In the epilogue, images of nature and birds punctuate his gradual renewal. Initially, to emphasize his isolation from other prisoners, Sonya, and the human race, the narrator writes that he, who once felt relieved outside the city and cried over abused horses, forgot why anyone could “care so much for a ray of sunshine, for the primeval forest, the cold spring hidden away […], green grass and the bird singing in the bush” (6:418/965). But on the day of his actual renewal, it is his contact with nature, his contemplative gaze at the wide deserted river and the vast steppe bathed in sunshine that leads to his realization of his love for Sonya and spiritual awakening. Dostoevskii uses the word *voskresenie* (“resurrection”) three times: “complete resurrection into a new life,” “love resurrected them,” and “he was resurrected” (6:421). “Resurrection” implies a

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[57] For example, Ernst J. Simmons writes that “the Epilogue is manifestly the weakest section of the novel, and the regeneration of Raskolnikov under the influence of Christian humility and love for Sonya is neither artistically palatable nor psychologically sound” (28).

revitalization of something that once existed before, not something entirely new that springs up all at once out of nowhere. It is the restoration of the Raskolnikov who choked on tears shed for an abused horse. Someone who seems innately to understand the interconnectedness of men, birds and beasts and to share responsibility for all, regardless of species differences, will be able to rise to a new life.

The Brothers Karamazov

The Brothers Karamazov is Dostoevskii's last and most mature work, and it presents a synthesis of his main themes, images, and ethical and spiritual concerns.[58] In this final novel Dostoevskii also pronounced his most developed word on the human-animal relationship: that treatment of animals reflects one's spiritual standing, and that without animals Christ-like active love is incomplete. In this final section of the chapter, I explore the significance of animals for the questions of faith, evil and suffering in *The Brothers Karamazov* by returning to the biblical roots of Zosima's teachings and tracing how these teachings are enacted in the novel.

Their treatment of and empathy for animals serve as a spiritual litmus test for many of the key characters in *The Brothers Karamazov*, including Ivan, Smerdyakov, Kolya Krasotkin, Ilyusha and even Alyosha. When Ivan confides his "rebellion" to Alyosha, his capacity to feel love for the "sticky leaves" and his acknowledgement that the metaphor of "beastly cruelty" is unfair to animals because only man can be

[58] In his Introduction to *The Notebooks on The Brothers Karamazov*, Edward Wasiolek writes: "whether Dostoevsky began [the novel] in 1878, 1877 or 1876, […] it is clear that in another sense he had been writing it throughout most of his career. There is hardly a character type, situation, technique, device, or idea that Dostoevsky had not rehearsed before" (2). Harold Bloom states that the novel was "intended as Dostoevsky's apocalypse. Its genre might be best called Scripture, rather than novel or tragedy, saga or chronicle. [His] scope is from Genesis to Revelation, with the Book of Job and the Gospel of John as the centers (Introduction 1).

"artistically" cruel are indicators that there is still a seed of faith in him.[59] Smerdyakov's deeply disturbed personality becomes evident through his animal cruelty long before his act of parricide. As a child he liked hanging cats – the same mode he chose to end his own life – and subsequently burying them in mock-ceremonies. He also taught Ilyusha the cruel trick of feeding dogs a piece of bread with a hidden pin inside, which would kill the dog Zhuchka. These dark sides of both Ivan and Smerdyakov find their double in Kolya Krasotkin, whose treatment of animals is one of clearest reflections of his spiritual standing and potential for Goodness or Evil.

Some scholars have pointed to Krasotkin being an imitation, or a double of Ivan. Miller notes such similarities as a desire to impress others, quoting famous authors like Belinskii and Voltaire, and claiming to love humankind in general while rejecting God's world (100-103). Moreover, both claim to love children. Yet while Ivan recites examples of tortured children, Kolya becomes a child torturer himself when he causes suffering to Ilyusha by rejecting him when he needed Kolya's support the most (ibid 104). But Kolya's potential for evil is most manifest in the episode when he provokes a peasant to kill a goose by rolling a cart over its neck when it reaches for spilled oats under the wheel. In court, the peasant keeps saying that Kolya "made him do it"(*naustil*), but Kolya replies that he "merely stated a general idea and was speaking only hypothetically" (14:496/549).[60] This parallels Ivan's role in his father's death, when he "merely" gave ideas to Smerdyakov. Although Kolya may be heartless and manipulative, for

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[59] Miller remarks that the sticky green leaves "function as a Bakhtinian loophole, an indication early on in the novel that whatever rebellion may lie ahead of this character, the potential for love and affirmation is there, too (The Brothers Karamazov *Today* 7).

[60] All English translations of the novel and transliterations of characters' names are from *The Brothers Karamazov* trans. by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (North Point Press, 1990), unless indicated otherwise. The translations of Dostoevskii's letters are from F. Dostoevsky. *Complete Letters in Five Volumes*. Ed. and trans. David A. Lowe, Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1988-1991.

Dostoevskii children in particular can never be irreversibly evil. William Rowe observes that Dostoevskii "attributed vast potentials to children of almost any age" and placed children closest to Christ (42, 233). The young Kolya is not a hardened villain, and Dostoevskii uses another animal – a dog – to reveal his potential for goodness. Despite his vanity and egocentrism, Kolya is touched by Ilyusha and Zhuchka's story. He makes an effort to find a dog that resembled Zhuchka to offer as a replacement. Thus, the dog helps Kolya make amends for his cruelty to Ilyusha and restore their friendship. And it is during the visit when he presents the dog that Kolya's façade of sophistication and corruption begins to fall away, and his still sensitive, kind essence emerges.

The story of Zhuchka is especially poignant because it again brings together a suffering animal and a suffering child. Dostoevskii emphasizes their closeness by describing Ilyusha's admiration for Kolya very similarly to Perezvon's loyalty to him. For instance, when Kolya takes Ilyusha under his wing, Ilyusha becomes slavishly devoted to him (14:479). In Kolya's own words: he […] obeyed me as though I were God, tried to copy me. In the intervals between classes he would come running to me at once" (ibid). Similarly, Perezvon "howled in [Kolya's] absence, when he was away at school, and when he came home, squealed with delight, jumped madly, begged, […] [and] did all the tricks he had been taught, not on command, but solely from the ardor of his rapturous feelings and grateful heart" (14:466/519).

Moreover, Ilyusha and Zhuchka echo the little peasant boy from Ivan's rebellion who accidentally injured his master's dog and whom this master had ripped apart by his hounds. Here, again, Dostoevskii shows closeness between children and animals in their innocence and vulnerability. Both can become instruments of brutality in the hands of

manipulative, evil adults. Their defenselessness reveals the "fleshly vulnerability" that humans and animals share. And both often fall victims to others' evil and degeneracy.[61] Both Zhuchka and Ilyusha suffer at the hands of the disturbed adult Smerdyakov: the dog as a victim and Ilyusha as a manipulated tool of torture. In the little peasant boy's situation the roles are reversed: the little boy is a victim of his master's sadism, and the hounds who were trained to attack on command become a tool of torture in their savage master's hands. Both Ilyusha and the hounds have little understanding of the full consequences of the actions that adults taught them.

The animal characters' role of spiritual and moral barometer flows organically from Zosima's teachings to love "all God's creation," which summarizes the author's view on the relationship between humans and animals. Although often in literary works authorial opinion is different from that of his characters, Dostoevskii himself admitted that Zosima's views were his own: "Although I quite share the ideas that he expresses, yet if I were personally expressing them, on my own behalf, I would express them in a different form and a different language" (30:102/5:130-131).[62] Zosima exhorts: "Love the animals: God gave them the rudiments of thought and an untroubled joy. Do not trouble it, do not torment them, do not take their joy from them, do not go against God's purpose" (14:289/319).

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[61] This parallel between Ilyusha/Zhuchka and the little peasant boy/hounds resembles the parallel between Raskolnikov/horse in his dream and Marmeladov/ the horse that trampled him. In Raskolnikov's dream the horse dies as a result of human cruelty; while Marmeladov dies because a horse runs over him. However, in Marmeladov's situation in reality the horse becomes a tool in a coachman's – another human's – hands.
[62] Dostoevskii also emphasized the importance of Zosima's teachings, considering them a "culminating point of the novel" (30:102/5:130-131). In another letter he wrote: "[He isn't] preaching, […] but telling the story of his own [Zosima's] life. If I manage it, I'll do a good thing: I will force people to recognize that a pure, ideal Christian is not an abstract matter, but one graphically real, possible, standing right before our eyes. [...] The whole novel is being written for their [the teachings'] sake." (30:68/5:89)

Zosima's commandment to love animals compliments and clarifies Dostoevskii's response to Darwin's theory of the origin of man, where Dostoevskii conceded that humans may have descended from apes, but claimed that the difference between humans and animals lies in the fact that God "breathed a breath of life" into man (29.2:85/3:57). One implication of this statement is that animals do not have a human soul. However, this does not mean that they may not have some equivalent "soul" of their own. When Zosima tells stories about his youth, he shares his conversation with a peasant lad about "the beauty of this world of God's and about its great mystery" (14:267/294). He says: "Every blade of grass, every insect, ant, and golden bee, all so amazingly know their path, though they have not intelligence, they bear witness to the mystery of God and continuously accomplish it themselves" (ibid).

Some scholars see Zosima's teachings about loving all forms of creation as a "disturbing" mixture of pantheism, animism, and mysticism, rather than Christianity (Anderson 273). For example, L.A. Zander uses the term "panentheism" to reconcile "pagan virtues" of Zosima's teachings with Christianity (9, 63). Rosenshield writes that: "Father Zosima's thought is shot through with undeniably pantheistic, Franciscan, Pietistic, Utopian Socialist, Hegelian historicist and sentimental humanitarian elements" (503). Konstantin Mochulsky notes that "not only liberal criticism, but also those who venerated the "old monks and prelates," such as Konstantin Leontyev, did not acknowledge the Elder Zosima as the ideal of the Russian monk" (589).

While there are definite similarities between Zosima's animals and 'blades of grass' "bearing witness to the mystery of God" and pantheistic ideas of the Divine omnipresence, Zosima's teachings are firmly rooted in the Biblical understanding of the

connection between the human and non-human worlds. For example, Zosima's claim that animals were with Christ before us corresponds to the order of creation when animals were placed on earth before humans. In the Book of Job (referred to by Zosima and important to Dostoevskii personally) during the final chapters before Job repents and is rewarded, the Lord recounts how He created all natural phenomena and animals in particular, and the entire natural kingdom shows His greatness. In the following Book of Psalms, Psalm 148 presents all of Creation—which would include blades of grass, sticky leaves and even singing minerals—singing praises to God.[63] Moreover, while the whole of Creation, including plants, planets, and elements, can glorify God, when it comes to the non-human world, the Bible focuses mainly on the human-animal relationship and interconnectedness – just like Zosima.[64] Ultimately, in his prophetic vision of the post-Apocalyptic world, Isaiah uses the restored harmony between human and animal, as well as the disappearance of the predatory instinct, to illustrate paradisiacal peace:

> the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, […] and the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. […] And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child will put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord. (Isa 11:6-9)

Most importantly, animal sacrifice is directly connected with the Savior. Animal sacrifice in the Old Testament prepared people for Christ's personal sacrifice, and it is his human-divine sacrifice that obviated animal sacrifices.[65] Thus, Zosima's teachings about the whole of Creation praising God and his special emphasis on human-animal

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[63] A famous Orthodox prayer "Let every breath praise the Lord" is based on Psalm 148 and likewise invites everything and everyone in God's world, including animals, to praise the Creator.

[64] In Proverbs, man is told to learn wisdom from ants (6:6), and that righteous men care for their beasts (12:10). In the Gospels, Christ teaches that God takes care even of birds and flowers (with birds mentioned first): "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. […] Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow […], if God so clothe the grass of the field, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (Matt 6:26-30).

[65] See Chamblin, Draper.

relationship are rooted in the Bible even if there are suggestions of possible pagan influences as well (traces of pagan worship are still present even in some religious holidays of the Russian Orthodox church and Western Christian Churches).[66]

Although Zosima says that animals "have not [human] 'intelligence,'" the fact that they "know" God's mystery and even "accomplish" it suggests that Dostoevskii allows for the possibility of some other form of knowing specific to animals ("the knowledge of the Lord" that fills the earth in Isaiah's vision). The animals' ways of knowing are a mystery to humans because it is part of the greater mystery of God's creation. While on its own Dostoevskii's comment about Darwinian theory may appear to suggest human superiority over animals, to truly understand Dostoevskii's view, this comment cannot be separated from Zosima's teachings that summarize his opinions. Taken together, Dostoevskii's well-known response to Darwin's theory of the origin of man and Zosima's injunction strongly suggest that while Dostoevskii recognizes the difference between humans and animals, which for him centers on the notions of the human soul and human intelligence, he acknowledges that animals possess a subjectivity of their own.

In his speech about animals Zosima clearly distinguishes among three distinct subjectivities: human, animal and divine. He begins by appealing to human reason and heart, teaching his listeners to love and pray for all sinners because everyone needs to have at least someone who can show compassion for him or her: "…do not forget to pray. […] repeat within yourself: 'Lord, have mercy upon all who come before you today.' […] many […] part with the earth in isolation, unknown to anyone, in sadness and sorrow

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[66] See Nissenbaum.

that no one mourns for them.[…] How moving it is for their soul […] that there is still a human being on earth who loves him. […] Love man also in his sin" (14:289/318).

Then he tells them about animals' "thoughts and joys," because animals' happiness is God's intent. Dostoevskii uses the same word for "thought" (*mysl'*) both for animals and God, claiming God gave animals "rudiments of thought" (*nachalo mysli*) and humans should not work against "God's thought" (*mysli bozh'ei*).[67] The explicit usage of the same word and its implied application to humans strongly suggest that the author views the difference between God, humans and animals as one of degree, not kind. Higher Divine wisdom and mystery is followed by human reason and then the animals' "rudiments of thought."[68] This removes any potential opposition of human superiority vs. animal inferiority, which is exactly what Zosima tells his listeners next: " Man, do not exalt yourself above the animals, they are sinless, and you, with your grandeur, fester the earth by your appearance on it, and leave your festering trace behind you – alas, almost every one of us does" (14:289/319). As Zosima told a peasant lad earlier, animals are even spiritually superior to humans because "Christ is with them before us": "It is even touching to know that there is no sin upon [animals], for everything is perfect, everything except man is sinless, and Christ is with them even before us" (14:268/295).

When the peasant lad questions: "But can it be that they, too, have Christ?" Zosima categorically affirms: "How could it be otherwise? […] for the Word is for all, all creation and all creatures, every little leaf is striving towards the Word "(ibid). Right after

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[67] In English translations it may not be readily recognizable. For example, Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, use different words: for the animals – "thought" and for God's thoughts – the word "purpose." In Constance Garnett's translation for animals' thoughts she, too, uses the word "thought," while for God's thought – the word "intent." David McDuff's translation is similar to Garnett's: "thought" for animals and "intent" for God.

[68] Such distinction between human reason and God's reason is in harmony with the Bible where God says: "Your thoughts are not my thoughts, and your ways are not my ways…" (*KJV Bible*, Isa. 55:8-9)

his exhortation to love animals, Zosima enjoins his listeners to love children who are also sinless. By placing animals between an injunction to adults to love each other and an injunction to love children, Zosima encloses animals within one family of God's creation.

The theme of family in the novel embraces animals and humans as one God's family. Anna Berman contrasts the "hierarchical, paternal love" of the Inquisitor and the "lateral, brotherly" love of Christ, suggesting that Dostoevskii proposes brotherly love as an alternative and a solution to the breakdown of father-son relations and crisis of the family and society (264). She points out the non-hierarchical nature of siblinghood that extends beyond blood relations and to the unconditional love of Zosima's theology that does not need to be "earned" or deserved (271-276). This horizontal, non-hierarchical brotherly love manifests the equality of all members of God's creation, including non-human creatures: all are worthy of love because they share the same Creator and thus are all siblings/brothers. Zosima talks specifically about loving one's fellow man, animals, plants, children and all things in God's world, rather than making a binary distinction between "people" and "nature" for example, or between humans and non-human creatures. He does not divide along species lines, nor does he say that any of these categories should earn love, or possess certain attributes as prerequisites to being loved. Thus, Zosima does not posit reason, language or any other such supposedly exclusively human attributes used in traditional anthropocentric discourse to establish human superiority over animals as factors that determine the value of an animal.

Just as Dostoevskii was aware that Zosima's active brotherly love for one's fellow men is a challenge for most people, he surely understood that to expect the same people

to love and embrace animals as their "siblings" in God would be nearly futile.[69] For example, everyone in the novel fails to love and see one of their own in the most dehumanized character, Smerdyakov – a rejected son and brother. Grigory, who called his own six-fingered baby a "dragon," told little Smerdyakov that he was not a human being, while for his father and brothers Smerdyakov was only a lackey.[70] Even Alyosha fails not only to simply acknowledge and love his brother, but also to follow Zosima's injunction to "love a man even in his sin" and to pray for those who "part with the earth in isolation, unknown to anyone, in sadness and sorrow" because "no one will mourn for them" (14:289/318).[71] Smerdyakov fits well Zosima's description of the "thousands of [forgotten and unloved] men": he remains largely unknown to everyone and he leaves his life in isolation and in a most disturbing manner, especially for a Christian. He is unsociable, "sad" and completely crushed upon realization that the only person whom he loved – Ivan – never cared about him.

As everyone rejects "non-human" Smerdyakov, it comes as no surprise that except for Ilyusha, no one—not even Alyosha—appears deeply concerned with

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[69] One of the passages Dostoevskii marked in his New Testament is 1 John 4:20: "for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen" (Kjetsaa 9). But without loving God there cannot be faith. Likewise, if humans struggle to love other humans, it is not surprising that they fail to love non-human beings. As Zosima teaches Khokhlakova, "by the experience of active love" faith can be restored – striving to love all of God's Creation, including animals: "If you love everything, you will perceive the mystery of God in things. […] And you will come at last to love the whole world with an entire, universal love" (14:289/319). And to love the whole of God's Creation is to love God, to have faith.

[70] Gary Saul Morson, Diane Thompson and Olga Meerson are among scholars who examine Smerdyakov's status of a rejected brother as central to the novel.

[71] Berman sees his suicide as "one of utter hopelessness" (280), while according to Holquist he commits suicide "from the despair of a twice-abandoned orphan" (182). Given Smerdykov's grim role in the novel and Alyosha's spiritual aspirations and mission, perhaps, Dostoevskii intended Alyosha's failure to love such a forgotten soul as Smerdyakov to illustrate how much hard work Zosima's active love requires. Smerdyakov's affection for Ivan and the following realization that Ivan did not love him parallel Ivan's own words to Alyosha after the reading of his *poema*: "I thought, brother, that when I left here I'd have you, at least, in all the world, […] but now I see that in your heart, too, there is no room for me" (14:240/263). But while Alyosha kisses Ivan emulating Christ from the *poema*, Ivan hits Smerdyakov and calling him a "viper" tells him: "I don't care about you" (15:46,47/622,623).

Zhuchka's fate. Alyosha and the boys ask about her mostly because they want to comfort Ilyusha. Of course, guilt torments Ilyusha, however, not only guilt, but also genuine anguish as he "was crying and shaking" when he kept repeating that she ran away squealing (14:480/535). And Ilyusha may not have been guilty of Zhuchka's suffering at all. Readers usually assume that Ilyusha gave Zhuchka the bread with the pin in it. However, nowhere in the text does it say that. Readers learn the details about this episode from Kolya who claims: "He [Smerdyakov] told [Ilyusha] to take a piece of bread, to stick a pin in it, and throw it to one of those hungry dogs. . . . So they prepared a piece of bread like that and threw it to Zhuchka . . . ." (ibid.). Since Kolya says "they," it is very possible that Ilyusha did not do it himself, but merely watched Smerdyakov demonstrate the trick. The severity of the trauma Ilyusha suffered when he realized what they had done shows that such sadism is fundamentally alien to him. He even believes and keeps repeating to his father that his illness is a punishment for the suffering he caused Zhuchka. Alyosha tells Kolya: "Would you believe that three times, since he got sick, I've heard him say in tears to his father: 'I'm sick because I killed Zhuchka, papa, God is punishing me for it' – and he won't give up the idea" (14:482/536).

Ilyusha's anguish over the dog's suffering illustrates Levinas' and Derrida's idea of the ethical encounter with the face of the other. Levinas often acknowledged the influence of Zosima's teaching about "each of us [being] guilty before everyone for everyone, and I more than the others" on his ethics, including the relation to the other and the face.[72]

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[72] On Levinas and Dostoevskii see Toumayan.

For Levinas the "face" conveys the other's transcendence.[73] Exploring Dostoevskii's influence on Levinas, Alain Toumayan points out the difference between two Russian words for "face" that Dostoevskii uses: '*litso*,' the face "in a more concrete, immediate and conceptual sense of natural recognition or legal identification," and '*lik*,' the face in an "implicitly transcendent sense" (65).[74] The most common usages of 'lik' to refer to the faces of saints on icons and to the the communion of saints *('lik sviatykh'*) demonstrate its transcendent meaning that is explicit in the ways Zosima uses it. He describes Alyosha's face as a '*lik*' that reminds him of Markel, implying a spiritual resemblance. He was hoping that Alyosha's "brotherly face" (*bratskii lik*) would help Dmitri. He remembers Markel's glad, joyful '*lik*' that reflects his epiphany. And he uses the same transcendent word to describe animals: "Look [he says to the peasant lad] at the horse, that great animal that stands so close to man, or the ox, that nourishes him and works for him, so downcast and pensive, look at their faces (*liki*): what meekness, what trustfulness, and what beauty are in that [kind of] face (*lik*)" (15:295).

Unlike Zosima, who sees a meek, saintly *'lik'* in an animal's face, for Levinas only humans have a "face" and, hence, can be the other capable of evoking an ethical response. As mentioned ealier, Derrida expands from Levinas' limited conception of the other as human, arguing that animals can confront us with as much ethical force, if not more. When Ilyusha realizes the physical agony they caused Zhuchka, and watches and hears her running away squealing, he experiences this Levinasian/Derridian ethical disruption.

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[73] "The face is a living presence; it is expression. [. . .] The face speaks." (66).

[74] This distinction becomes lost in the English translation because the same word *'lik'* is translated sometimes as "countenance," other times as "face."

Ilyusha is the only character – besides Zosima and his brother Markel – who can see a face in the non-human other and love such "others" "actively" in *The Brothers Karamazov.* Before his passing, Markel addresses the birds outside his window: "Birds of God, joyous birds, you, too, must forgive me, because I have also sinned before you. There was so much of God's glory around me; birds, trees, meadows, sky, and I alone lived in shame, I alone dishonored everything, and did no notice the beauty and glory of it at all. […] I want to be guilty before them, […] for I don't know how to love them." (14:263/289). Zosima acknowledges that asking forgiveness of birds might sound senseless, but

> it is right; for all is like an ocean, all flows and connects. […] Let it be madness to ask forgiveness of the birds, still it would be easier for birds, and for a child, and for any animal near you, if you yourself were more gracious than you are now. […] All is like an ocean […]. Tormented by universal love, you, too, would then start praying to the birds, […] that they too will forgive you your sins. (14:290/319)

Likewise, in the spirit of Zosima's teachings, when the boys bring Ilyusha a hare hoping it will comfort him, with sensitivity and understanding uncharacteristic of a boy his age, he asks them to let the hare free in the field.[75] He is tender with a newborn puppy his father brings to comfort him, even though the puppy reminded him of Zhuchka. For him "complete happiness" would be if "there could be both Zhuchka and the puppy together" (14:487/541). He makes a special request to have some bread crumbled on his grave so that "the sparrows may fly down" and their chirping will cheer him up. He is virtually the only one who loves his fellow men (even briefly befriending animalized Smerdyakov) and animals.

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[75] In the notebooks for the novel, Ilyusha asks his father: "Papa, buy a little bird and set it free" (15:311).

Traditionally, scholars have viewed Alyosha as a Christ figure when he gives his speech at the stone surrounded by his twelve disciples at the end of the novel. While such an interpretation of Alyosha is merited, I would like to suggest that Alyosha is not the bearer of the central "positive message" in the novel. His Christ-like stance is significantly problematized by his anti-Semitism. When Liza Khokhlakova asks him whether or not the blood libel is true, Alyosha replies: "I don't know" (15:24). As Richard Pevear has observed, "Alyosha is a novice in more than once sense: a novice monk […] and a novice human being" (xviii). Alyosha's reply to Liza's question is not his only failure; he falls short of Zosima's active love by failing to recognize his (probably) biological and (definitely) universal brother in Smerdyakov, and he fails to show any concern for animals. It is Zosima who rises above not only ethnic but also species boundaries enjoining us to love all of God's creation. And it is Ilyusha who embodies such active love most fully. He is the figure with the most links to Christ, as his untimely passing becomes a foundation for the brotherhood of boys, just as the Christian community was built on Christ's sacrifice.[76] Ilyusha's defense of his father and his willingness to bear humiliation for his father's sake are reminiscent of Christ being "about his Father's business."[77] He forgives his father's offender and intercedes for him with his father. And just like Christ on the cross entrusted his mother to the care of his disciple, so does dying Ilyusha, surrounded by the twelve boys, tell them: "Papa will cry,

[76] Unlike Alyosha's, even Ilyusha's first name has strong associations with God. "Ilya" is a Slavic version of "Elijah" – a theophoric name, i.e., a name of which God's name is part, meaning "My God is Yahu." Elijah is one of the legendary prophets of the Old Testament, who performed miracles, including a resurrection, never knew death, and who returned as John the Baptist – the harbinger of Christ – in the New Testament.

[77] At the age of twelve, Jesus went with his parents to Jerusalem, where he tarried without letting them know. Eventually they found him in Jerusalem, "in the midst of doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." They reprimanded him, but he replied, "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business" (*KJV Bible*, Luke 2:41- 49)

be with papa" (15:189/768).[78] And in Christ-like love, Ilyusha experiences the suffering of the animal other as his own.

Developing Levinas' ethical discourse of the face of the other, Derrida suggests that while the animal's capacity for suffering touches us, it is an animal's inability to avoid pain, its "fleshly vulnerability" and exposure to wounding that affect us most deeply, both emotionally and ethically. As in Raskolnikov's dream when the bludgeoned horse is trying to kick her abusers, Dostoevskii portrays this "vulnerability" and "nonpower" literally when both Zhuchka and Ilyusha suffer as a result of betrayed trust. And similar to contrast between Mikolka and the crowd's and little Raskolnikov's reaction to the animal's vulnerability, Zhuchka's story reveals both negative and positive responses to the force of an encounter with the animal other's "undeniable," as Derrida wrote, suffering. They reflect the penetrating power and impact of the vulnerability of the animal's face. Thus, Ilyusha is not the only one who experiences this power of the encounter with the face of the animal other. Such encounters affect Smerdyakov who seems to be drawn to inflicting suffering on the vulnerable, unsuspecting animals and a child. While Ilyusha responds with compassion, Smerdyakov takes advantage of this vulnerability to satisfy some sadistic impulses.

Derrida's ethical response to the suffering animal, his acknowledgement of suffering for and with animals can be traced back through Levinas to Zosima's teachings about mutual responsibility and active love. It is in the context of Zosima's ideal of Christ-like love, that everyone is guilty of Zhuchka's and Ilyusha's suffering. With his theology of everything being like an ocean, "all flows and connects," when "touch it in

[78] When Jesus on the cross saw his mother and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, "Woman, behold thy son!" Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother!" (*KJV Bible,* John 19:26-27).

one place and it echoes at the other end of the world," Zosima teaches his listeners to watch themselves "every day, every hour and every minute," to take care that their image is seemly:

> See, here you have passed by a small child, passed by in anger, with a foul word, with a wrathful soul; you perhaps did not notice the child, but he saw you, and your unsightly and impious image has remained in his defenseless heart. You did not know it, but you may thereby have planted a bad seed in him and it may grow, and all because you did not restrain yourself before the child, because you did not nurture in yourself a heedful, active love. (14:289-290/319)

With his "wrathful heart" and "spiteful, ugly words" telling a child that he is a monster and not a human being, Grigory plants "an evil seed" in little Smerdyakov that grows.[79] Teenage Smerdyakov's biological father tells him he has the "soul of a lackey" and later calls him a [Balaam's] ass, while his brothers treat him like a lackey. Smerdyakov's characterization, especially his cruelty to animals, is reminiscent of that of an abused child. One could speculate that had he not been abused, or if there had been at least one person who loved and accepted him, if, perhaps at least Alyosha had treated him as an equal, it might have had a therapeutic effect and prevented the deformation of his personality, and that, in turn, might have prevented him from teaching Ilyusha the brutal pin trick that killed Zhuchka.[80] Thus, all are responsible for Zhuchka's and Ilyusha's

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[79] These are Garnett's translations of Zosima's words that I find more fitting than those of Pevear and Volokhonsky to describe Grigory's mistreatment of little Smerdyakov (299).
Young Smerdyakov's onset of seizures suggest the severity of the psychological and physical abuse to which Grigory subjected him because epileptic and non-epileptic seizures are common in victims of abuse, especially, children. Recent studies find associations between child abuse and a range of brain abnormalities that result in "symptoms suggestive of temporal lobe epilepsy (TLE)" and nonepileptic seizures (Teiche, Martin H.), (Kenneth Alper, MD, et al.). Meerson also believes that Grigory's beating caused Smerdyakov's epilepsy (199).

[80] Although commonly scholars tend to think that Zhuchka survived, I would like to suggest that she did not. Firstly, from the physiological point of view her survival is unlikely. Granted, generally dogs tend to swallow all sorts of sharp objects, including needles, and then pass them. But for the successful passing of a needle, a dog needs to eat a significant amount of food. A constantly starving Zhuchka would not have had access to enough food to bulk up and pass the needle. Moreover, her squealing in pain indicates that the needle had already lodged in soft tissues – in such cases a vet intervention is the only solution. In addition, within the context of Christ's redemption and atonement, as well as the Grand Inquisitor's argument, there

suffering, including Alyosha.[81] Although the pin fed to Zhuchka is the most disturbing example of animal cruelty in the novel, it is not an isolated incident, but part of a larger theme of human-animal cruelty and the interconnectedness of humans and animals like the "ocean" of which Zosima spoke. As Julian Connolly points out, Dostoevskii uses repeated images and motifs to add structural unity and complicate his ideas (32). The recurring images of children throwing stones are inseparable from the theme of animal abuse and Zosima's ideal of the Christ-like active love and universal brotherhood.

In all the stone throwing situations, the children seem to be unaware that what they are doing is an act of violence, or of the full physical and psychological impact on

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are a few things to consider. 1) Only Christ has the power to resurrect, and that fact emphasizes Krasotkin's "resurrection" of Perezvon as a trick. 2) Zhuchka's survival would be a miracle, and miracles do not foster faith and can destroy it, as the Inquisitor acknowledges. The Grand Inquisitor specifically lists miracles as the first powerful principle in enslaving people's conscience (the other two are secrecy and authority). Miracles lull people into contentment and shield them from discomfort and suffering that come with free will and choice. But suffering is part of life and without free will there can be no moral and spiritual growth. Miracles as a reversal of sins and mistakes, defy the significance of Christ's atonement and redemption – if the wrongs can simply be reversed, there is no need for repentance, forgiveness and redemption. Miracles follow faith, not precede it. This principle can be found in Alyosha's frustrated expectation of a miracle when Zosima died – as Zosima's words to Alyosha that he had much to learn and grow suggest, Alyosha's faith was not strong or mature enough. 3) Similarly to Christ's refusal to step down from the cross miraculously (as recounted by the Inquisitor) being crucial for people's faith, the loss of Zhuchka was spiritually important for Krasotkin. Even though it was Smerdyakov who taught Ilyusha the cruel trick, Krasotkin's manipulative rejection of traumatized Ilyusha intensified the latter's anguish, contributing to his fatal illness. The fact that Krasotkin made an effort to find a dog resembling Zhuchka to bring her to Ilyusha suggests the inner change in Krasotkin that becomes visible in him at Ilyusha's bedside and after. Telling the stories of abused children, Ivan addresses the same problem of the impossibility of reverting certain wrongs in this life, rejecting a reconciliation in the paradisiacal future. Zhuchka's miraculous survival and the resulting happy reconciliation of everyone concerned is what Ivan would prefer and the Inquisitor would offer people. But in the context of Christ's freedom of choice and the ensuing complex entanglement of repentance, awareness, redemption, moral suffering and personal responsibility, Zhuchka will be restored in that future of universal harmony that Ivan refuses to accept.

[81] The effect Alyosha's kiss had on Ivan shows how healing can love and acceptance be. In the beginning of his outpouring Ivan tells Alyosha that he wants "to be healed" by him (14:222/243). After Alyosha's kiss Ivan makes his declaration of love, which "implies that Alyosha's . . . brotherly love has already overcome the Inquisitor in Ivan's heart" (Berman 270). Ivan's healing has begun. Perhaps, had Alyosha shown the same acceptance and brotherly love to Smerdyakov, the latter's spiritual and emotional healing could have begun, too. Meerson states that Smerdyakov's denied brotherhood was his "sore sport," his "reason" for his crime, and those who […] caused this sore spot must also be responsible for [his crime]" (208). Consequently, that "implicates [not only his natural brothers, but also] all those who deny him universal brotherhood" (ibid.). Morson, too, writes that "Alyosha contributes to the tragedy" by rejecting Smerdyakov as his brother (93). According to Vladimir Golstein, Smerdyakov's failed surrogate father Grigory "bears his share of guilt in the murder of Fyodor Karamazov" (95).

the victim. When Ivan tells the story about the poor peasant boy, who accidentally injured his landowner's dog and was subsequently ripped apart by this landowner's dogs, he says that the boy threw the stone "in play" (*igraia*) most likely not realizing that a stone could hurt the dog (or anyone else in its radius). Likewise, the schoolboys who initially began teasing, beating and jeering at Ilyusha when he first appeared at school and who resumed bullying him after Krasotkin rejected him do not seem to realize fully that their actions are cruel and emotionally traumatic. When Alyosha comes across them during their stone throwing confrontation with Ilyusha, the narrator tells about their "rosy, animated faces" (14:161/177). As they talk to Alyosha and throw stones at Ilyusha, they are laughing.

In this scene, one fighting against six, Ilyusha reminds the narrator of a hounded cornered animal. When Alyosha is talking to him, Ilyusha "went wild like a little beast" (*zverenok*).[82] The analogy between a cornered animal in distress and Ilyusha becomes even stronger when Ilyusha bites Aloysha's finger to the bone. Furthermore, the narrator's description of Ilyusha running away in a loud tearful wail is similar to how Zhuchka, having swallowed that piece of bread, ran away squealing. Thus, in this stone-throwing scene cruelty to a weak child blends with cruelty to an animal.

The little baby-beast Ilyusha echoes the criminal Richard from Geneva whom Ivan describes to Alyosha and who converted and repented before being beheaded. Ivan says that Richard was given to some Swiss shepherds at the age of six and grew up like a little wild baby beast *(dikii zverenok)*, living and eating next to pigs. By drawing a link between an abused innocent Swiss boy and Ilyusha as "wild baby beasts" Dostoevskii

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[82] The Russian word '*zverenok*' translated as "a little wild beast" in fact means "a little baby or child beast." The nuance is significant because it subsumes animals in the theme of children by deemphasizing species differences and focusing on a common factor between human and non-human creatures – vulnerability of children.

emphasizes the closeness of innocent children and innocent animals who fall victims to heartless, inhumane adults.

At the same time, by using a "little baby beast," the author humanizes "beast" *(zver'),* which is often a metaphor for mercilessness and cruelty. Both Ilyusha's and Richard's behavior suggest that little beasts become angry and violent when abused and cornered. Zosima teaches: " In the forest the fearsome bear wanders, terrible and ferocious, and not at all guilty for that" (14:268/295). Telling Alyosha stories of human savagery, Ivan says that the term "'animal cruelty' of man […] is terribly unjust and offensive to animals, [because] no animal could ever be so cruel as a man, so artfully, so artistically cruel. A tiger simply gnaws and tears. That is all he can do" (14:217/238). His words also refer to the idea that wild animals are "beastly" due to their nature, but without malice and evil, cruel intent, unlike humans who know what they are doing.

The last instance of stone throwing – little Smurov throwing a piece of brick at sparrows at the end of the novel – is the starkest example of a total lack of awareness of one's violence. Only a few minutes before his act all the boys, including Smurov, bid farewell to Ilyusha and watch his father crumble a crust of bread to attract sparrows to Ilyusha's grave as Ilyusha had wanted. On the way back from the cemetery they are all crying, and when Ilyusha's father, completely stricken with grief, flings his hat in the snow, it is Smurov who picks it up and carries it for him while still crying. His grief is sincere and he showed much concern for Ilyusha during his illness. Yet, the narrator observes that Smurov, "with the captain's hat in his hand, was also crying terribly, he still managed, while almost running, to snatch up a piece of brick lying red on the snow-covered path and fling it at the flock of the sparrows flying quickly by. He missed, of

course, and went on running, crying" (15:193/772).[83] What prompted Smurov, all the while crying bitterly for Ilyusha, to pick up a piece of brick and throw it at the very sparrows that Ilyusha cherished and wanted to have on his grave? Who "did not restrain himself" around all these boys and planted an "evil seed" in their hearts that they could consider throwing a stone at another being – especially an animal – funny or playful?[84] The entire novel and Zosima's teachings in particular provide an answer and a solution. "Look to yourself every day and every hour, every minute, that your image be ever gracious. […] Brothers, love is a teacher; but [. . .] it is difficult to acquire, it is dearly bought, by long work over a long time. […] Make yourself sincerely responsible for everything and everyone" (14:289-290/319-320).

Zosima and the novel as a whole also answer Ivan, who believes that Christ-like love for people is impossible on Earth. Citing the suffering of innocent children, Ivan rejects the "higher harmony" at the price of "one little tear of […] one tormented child" (14:223/245). He admits that he is unable to understand God or to accept this world, because he has a "Euclidean earthly mind" and cannot understand things that are not of this limited three-dimensional world created according to Euclid's geometry (14:214/235). He expresses his indignation in the *poema* about the Grand Inquisitor, which ends with Christ's silent kiss on the Inquisitor's "bloodless aged lips" in response to the latter's rebellious challenge. When Ivan asks if Alyosha will now renounce him,

[83] After Kolya Krasotkin told everyone his story about breaking a goose's neck, the narrator observes that Smurov "liked the story about the goose very much" (14:496/550).
[84] Perhaps, Ilyusha was so kind because his father was "careful" with him. Having been traumatized by Dmitri's abuse of his father, Ilyusha wanted to duel with Dmitri when he grew up. But as a father, Captain teaches him: "It's a sin to kill, even in a duel." Ilyusha immediately changes his revenge plan by deciding to knock Dmitri down, grab Dmitri's sword and tell him that although he could kill him, he forgives him (14:188-189/207). When Snegiryov and Ilyusha were dreaming about buying a horse and moving away, Snegiryov taught him to take good care of the horse by not overloading it (ibid).

Alyosha responds with a silent kiss on Ivan's lips emulating Christ (14:240/263). Berman argues that this is a kiss "of a brother for a brother" (269).

While Alyosha demonstrates to Ivan that even in this "pitiful, earthly" imperfect world, where two parallel lines will never meet, it is possible to love one's close ones,[85] it is the animal-child Ilyusha, with an animalistic name,[86] who shows that Zosima's active "all-embracing" love not only for men, but even for birds and animals – the other close ones – is attainable.[87] The little boy and the dog share a Christ-like brotherly kiss when Perezvon licks Ilyusha's cheek as the boy embraces the dog's head with both arms and buries his face in the dog's shaggy coat (14:492/546). As Zosima's theology offers an answer to Ivan's rebellion, so, too, does the loving embrace of a dog and a boy with a newborn puppy next to them.[88] It demonstrates the reconciliation and "complete happiness" that Ivan could not allow. It is this active, Christ-like love that could turn the thrown stones into a foundation for a non-Euclidean world in which loving, praying to and begging forgiveness of the birds is no longer senseless, and being one's non-human brother's keeper is a way of life.

Conclusion

Beginning with Dostoevskii's early works, animals have always been involved in the human dramas he created, as he wrestled with questions of faith and unbelief, good

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[85] Pevear and Volokhonsky use the word "neighbor" for the biblical reference to "loving one's neighbor" Ivan is making (14:215/236), see *KJV Bible* Matt.5:43; Luke 10:27. Dostoevskii uses "*svoik bliznykh*" from the Russian Bible that would be better translated as "close ones." See Berman 265.
[86] Ilyusha's last name Snegiryov derives from the Russian word '*snegir*' – bullfinch.
[87] "All-embracing" is from Garnett's translation (299).
[88] Ilyusha's hugging and kissing Perezvon evokes Dostoevskii's other human-animal relationships, from Goryanchikov and his dogs, to the old man gently embracing his non-human friend's face in *The Humiliated and Insulted*, and little Raskolnikov kissing the dead horse's bloodied eyes in *Crime and Punishment*.

and evil, moral freedom and personal accountability. Animals are particularly inseparable from his idea of Christ-like love. His portrayal of animals shows the continuity between human and animal emotional lives as they share mortality and vulnerability in the face of evil. Analyzing Goryanchikov's thoughts about whether the convicts feel or do not feel remorse, Orwin observes that Dostoevskii "does not assume that he can completely illuminate the inner life of others" (*Consequences of Consciousness* 131). Likewise, as he tries to understand what animals may be thinking, he accepts his limitations and respectfully leaves the question open, understanding that the full depth of animals' subjectivity, even more so than humans', remains inaccessible to him.

Dostoevskii often brings together animals and children in a way that emphasizes animals' spiritual status. Children occupy a special place in Dostoevskii's world because—as the closest beings to Christ—they represent innocence, moral purity and unfeigned faith. Such a view of children comes from the Christian teachings: "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise" (Matt. 21:16) and "Except… ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). Zosima's teaching that animals were with Christ before humans, and the interconnectedness of children and animals that Dostoevskii depicts suggest the he believed in animals' special spiritual standing. Rowe has observed that in Dostoevskii's works little children "often lead to his biggest ideas" (Rowe 233-235). Whether it is little Raskolnikov embracing the killed horse, or Ilyusha grieving over Zhuchka, these children and animals together lead to Dostoevksii's "biggest ideas" about humans' and animals' place in God's creation.

Chapter 3: L. Tolstoi

> I. Turgenev shared a memory:
> We were walking through a pasture, […] when we looked up and saw standing there […] an old horse of the most pitiful and wretched appearance […] old age and toil had somehow utterly bent him out of shape … he just stood there […]. We went up to this unfortunate gelding, and Tolstoy began petting him while saying what he thought the horse was feeling and thinking. I was positively spellbound […]. He had got inside the very soul of the poor beast and taken me with him. I could not refrain from remarking, 'Listen, Lev Nikolaevich, you must have been a horse once yourself." You couldn't find a better rendering of the inner condition of a horse. (*I.S. Turgenev v vospominaniiakh* 237)

In one of Tolstoi's early war stories, "The Raid" (1852), a fearless lieutenant enters a burning house to save two pigeons, while a young ensign rescues a goat kid from his fellow Cossacks after an attack because he confuses the kid's cry with that of a child. In his final novel about war, *Hadji Murad* (1896-1904)[89], in the midst of the final battle Tolstoi brings the readers' attention to a horse wounded in the head: "she did not fall, but breaking her hobbles, and running through the bushes, she rushed to the other horses, pressing close to them and watering the young grass with her blood" (35:115). Why was saving the pigeons important? What are the readers to make of the defamiliarizing aural comparison of a baby goat's cry with that of a human child? And why, as his main character is about to be killed and human casualties abound, does Tolstoi devote narrative attention to a wounded horse seeking her own kind as she bleeds?

To explore these questions, in this chapter I will examine Tolstoi's views on animals and human-animal relationships in his fictional and non-fictional works. As Richard Gustafson notes, Tolstoy "left no systematic treatment of his ideas," being "opposed to the technical language of academic philosophy and theology," and in Tolstoi's own words, "a philosophical system has within it not only the thinker's

[89] Written in 1896-1904, published in 1912.

mistakes, but the mistakes of the system" (Gustafson 89; 48:344). Therefore, to gain a better understanding of his views on animals I will use both his fictional and non-fictional works: where his repeated articulations of his ideas about animals in essays and letters may begin to sound confusing, his literary animal characters will come to the rescue.

In his examination of Tolstoi's theology and faith, Gustafson maintains that, contrary to the common assumption that there are two Tolstois (a pre-conversion artist and a post-conversion religious prophet), "there is no radical shift in [Tolstoy's] attitudes or theoretical understanding many have deduced from reading *A Confession*" (ibid.). Therefore, he treats Tolstoi's corpus as a more unified whole (ibid.). From the beginning of Tolstoi's writing career Tolstoi, animals are often in the midst of human drama, questions of faith and moral sense. From the childhood game of "ant brothers," symbolizing the unity of all living beings, to his advocacy of vegetarianism and cessation of hunting later in life, and despite his many crises and contradictions, there is no "radical shift" in his attitudes towards animals in his pre- and post-conversion periods. I hope to demonstrate that Tolstoi's concern for animals and human-animal dynamics deepens as his thinking matures and ultimately contributes to his vegetarianism.

Animals are inextricably connected to Tolstoy's questions of faith, the meaning of life and harmony with God and All. Gustafson states that Tolstoi's faith, "sense of life and self stem from the fundamental need to belong," and his "universal citizenship" is an "expanded sense of residency in the whole world" (8). Expressing this sense of "residency" and relatedness to All, Tolstoi wrote: "the tenderness and ecstasy we experience in contemplating nature is the recollection of that time when we were animals, trees, flowers, the earth. More precisely, it is the awareness of the unity (*edinstvo)* with

everything, which is hidden from us by Time" (55:217). His childhood vision of the "ant brotherhood" already implied "being animals." When Tolstoi was five years old, his older brother Nikolai announced that he knew of a secret to human happiness that would eliminate disease, anger and unhappiness, and all would unite in the "ant brotherhood." So, Tolstoi and his brothers would play the game of "ant brothers" – huddling together in shared love under a shawl draped over two chairs. It was possible that Nikolai confused the Russian word for "ant" (*muravei*) with Moravian Brothers, but Tolstoi recalled that he liked the word "ant" in particular, because it reminded him of an anthill (Basinksii 6). The ideal of the "Ant Brotherhood" – of being at one with all – "remained unaltered for [Tolstoi]" (34:387). Later in life, Tolstoi requested to be buried at the spot where the green stick, on which the secret to the universal love was written, was supposedly hidden.[90]

Analyzing Tolstoi's need and call to be "at one with all," Gustafson writes that Tolstoy's "best sense of self is realized in [a] reciprocal belonging: he belongs in and to the world which belongs to him" (8). Gustafson's observation that Tolstoi belongs "when he loves" and "participates in the life of others" is reflected in Tolstoi's portrayal of animals: he depicts them sensitively, affirming their subjectivity and trying to understand their perspective. And in this "reciprocal belonging" animals respond in kind: his fictional horses and dogs love back and participate in the humans' lives around them, trying to understand the human animals. As Tolstoi's thought on animals and their place

[90]Whether or not Nikolai confused the Russian word '*muravei*' for "ant" with the Moravian Brethren, Tolstoy was very interested in "social insects," at one point becoming a beekeeper himself. Tom Newlin provides a fascinating examination of Tolstoy's beekeeping experience and its connection to his thought in " 'Swarm Life' and the Biology of *War and Peace"* (2012).

in "universal citizenship" evolved throughout his life, his later works tend to present his ideas more fully and clearly. Thus, since I believe Gustafson is right that "the later clarifies the earlier [and] later works may reveal the hidden patterns and meanings of earlier ones" (7), I will begin with a few of his later works that demonstrate more explicitly his sense of "at-oneness" with animals and his denunciation of violence towards them, and then will proceed in chronological order beginning with *Childhood*.

Vegetarianism

When he feels "ecstatic" love for all, using Gustafson's term, Tolstoi is at one with everything and everyone, but before everyone can feel this love and this state of reciprocal love can be permanent, people must stop "oppressing their brothers" and "living off their suffering" (52:270). His vegetarianism was one of his "first steps" toward stopping his participation in a way of life that caused the suffering of his non-human brothers. As discussed in the Introduction, Peter Brang, Robin Feuer Miller, Andrea McDowell, Josephine Donovan and other scholars consider Tolstoi's empathetic concern for animals one of the decisive factors in his decision to abstain from meat. Yet, some scholars minimize or even dismiss his compassion for animals as a motivation for his vegetarianism. For example, LeBlanc writes:

> Present day historians of the vegetarian movement in Russia tend to ignore the close association between abstinence from meat and abstinence from sex posited by Tolstoy. Instead they emphasize the progressive, humanitarian aspects of Tolstoy's vegetarianism: how his refusal to eat meat stems from his ethical refusal to commit violence upon any of God's living creatures … . (95)

LeBlanc states that Tolstoi "was less concerned about cruelty to animals" than about "ascetic discipline and moral self-perfection" (97). Daniel Rancour-Laferrier, using *The*

Kreutzer Sonata as an example, links Tolstoi's "gastronomic asceticism" with sexual abstinence and writes that "etiologically, Tolstoi's vegetarianism probably served to counteract archaic cannibalistic wishes to consume the once unavailable maternal breast" (117).

While the issues of sensuality and moral chastity significantly contribute to Tolstoi's views on abstaining from meat, even in *The Kreutzer Sonata*, to which Rancour-Laferrier refers, Tolstoi's argument is based first and foremost on denunciation of oppression and destruction of others as in institutionalized prostitution that dooms a percentage of women "to perish bodily and spiritually for the satisfaction of the passing demands of men," as he explains in the "Afterword" (27:79-92/111).[91] He draws a parallel between these objectified human victims and meat eating: "and what I wanted to say here was that [debauchery] is bad because it cannot be that it is necessary for the sake of the health of some people to destroy the body and soul of other people, in the same way that it cannot be necessary for the sake of the health of some people to drink the blood of others" (95). In line with these comments in the "Afterword," Miller notes that Tolstoi's vegetarianism was motivated "in large part by his intensifying philosophy of non-violence, his horror of doing harm to animals and witnessing them suffer" (*Tolstoy's Peaceable Kingdom* 52).

In "The First Step" (1891)—Tolstoi's preface to the Russian translation of *The Ethic of Diet* by Howard Williams—Tolstoi's blunt and graphic descriptions of a slaughterhouse express his compassion and denunciation of killing animals.[92] Tolstoi notes that since the consumption of meat is not only one of the manifestations of the sin

[91] Translation of the "Afterward" is by Richard Edwards, see *Tolstoy Studies Journal*, vol. vi, 1993.
[92] Although he finds the article weak, D. Merezhkovskii writes that Tolstoy's depiction of the dying animals in *The First Step* is "one of his greatest creations" (134).

of lust, but also is so ingrained in our culture, and self-indulgence is so addictive, to abandon the practice of consuming "slain" animals will, of course, require considerable self-control. And as he demonstrates in this work, abstinence from meat is not simply another way to self mastery, it is also a stand against animal suffering.

The narrator's description of his experience at the slaughterhouse and his conversation with butchers there show that compassion for animals is one of the main reasons for his vegetarianism. As he talks to butchers, the narrator asks them whether or not they feel sorry for the animals. Eventually, they acknowledge that they do, especially when the animal is meek and tame: "They come, poor things, and trust you. It is very pitiful!" (*Idet, serdeshnaia, verit tebe. Zhivo zhalko!*) (29:79/51).).[93] When he witnesses the slaughtering of a pig, he says that his nearsightedness does not allow him to see all the details, but what he can see is the pig's pink human-like (*rozovoe, kak chelovecheskoe*) body and he hears her human-like scream (*chelovecheskii krik*) that echoes a goat kid's human childlike cry in "The Raid" (1852) (ibid.). At the slaughterhouse, the oxen's and bulls' awareness of the situation suggests the horror they must be feeling and the profound violence against them, as the narrator shares "what [he] had not seen before":

> how the oxen were forced to enter the door. Each time an ox was seized in the enclosure and pulled forward by a rope tied to its horns; the animal smelling blood refused to advance, sometimes bellowed and drew back. Two men were unable to drag it in by force, so one of the butchers went each time and grasped the animal's tail and twisted it with such violence so that the gristle crackled, and the ox advanced (29:82/56).

Although the overall procedure of their slaughter is the same, the description of each animal's desperate fight for life is different: one is still trying to escape, its slashed

[93] Translation of "The First Step" is from Leo Tolstoy, *The First Step*, trans. Aylmer Maude (Mancester-Albert Broadbent), 1900.

throat bleeding; another gets all of his four legs broken, yet tries to pull away while on the floor; a third is still alive and convulsing as the butchers begin to skin it. If these animals are hauled to the slaughterhouse like a commodity—calves piled up on carts, their heads dangling, like a mass of things referred to as a generic, impersonal “cattle”—such an “individualized” approach to their murders and “personal” desperate attempts to flee reveal them as “distinct beings”[94] – each a subject with consciousness and will. Thus, first the impersonal mass of cattle transforms into non-human individuals, each in his or her own way fighting for life, and then these violated individuals disappear back into skinned, bloodied carcasses hanging from the ceiling, with heads, “bright red lungs and brown livers driving away from the slaughterhouse” (29:80/53). As the “distinct” beings are reduced to body parts and organs, Tolstoi’s passionate revulsion at the violence against these non-human beings becomes obvious.

As the narrator watches dealers in the slaughterhouse yard bargaining and marking cattle, he observes how far these people are from any ethical concerns: “These men were evidently all preoccupied with money matters and calculations, and any thought as to whether it was right or wrong to kill these animals was as far from their minds as were questions about the chemical composition of the blood that covered the floor of the chambers” (29:80-81/53-54). Yet Tolstoi does not allow the reader to avoid the ethical. In one particular description of a beautiful young bull who resisted sturdily, the butcher as usual twisted his tail, the bull sprang forward, then stopped and looked sideways “with its black eyes, the whites of which had filled with blood” (29:82/56). This

[94] Olenin from *The Cossacks*, that will be analyzed later, becomes aware of himself and animals as “distinct beings.”

moment of the bull looking at the butchers evokes Derrida's thoughts about the ethical power of the animal other's gaze:

> What does this bottomless gaze offer to my sight [donne à voir]? What does it "say" to me, demonstrating quite simply the naked truth of every gaze, when that truth allows me to see and be seen through the eyes of the other, in the seeing and not just seen eyes of the other? […] As with every bottomless gaze, as with the eyes of the other, the gaze called "animal" offers to my sight the abyssal limit of the human. And in these moments of nakedness, as regards the animal, everything can happen to me (12).

What happens to the narrator is an ethical disruption. To some butchers – nothing happens, because they, using Derrida's words about the implications of the animal's gaze, have never allowed themselves to see and be seen by the animal. "Their gaze has never intersected with that of the animal directed at them" (Derrida 12-13). But there are also those who "did happen to be seen furtively by the animal one day, [and] took no […] account of it" (ibid.). As one butcher told Tolstoi, at first he "was afraid to kill," but eventually lost the fear (29:78-79/50). And Tolstoi notes that by so suppressing "the highest spiritual capacity—that of sympathy and pity toward living creatures like himself—and by violating his own feelings [man] becomes cruel" and this is even more dreadful that the cruel act itself (29:79/51).

While it may seem that Tolstoi's emphasis on the psyche of the human agent somehow devalues animal suffering, this is not actually the case. Instead, Tolstoi suggests that desensitization to killing animals perpetuates and multiplies the abuse making it invisible and resulting in more and more victims. This is how

> so many savage, immoral things made their way into our life […], that it is difficult for us even to understand the audacity and senselessness of upholding in our days Christianity or virtue with beefsteaks [referring to an evangelist who

> attacked monastic ascetism his own concept of 'Christianity and beefsteaks][95] . This association does not horrify us, solely because *a strange thing has befallen us. We look and see not, listen and hear not.* There is no bad odour, no sound, no monstrosity, to which man cannot become so accustomed that he ceases to remark what would strike a man unaccustomed to it (italics mine) (29:78/49-50).

Tolstoi stresses the importance of looking and seeing, stating that unlike ostriches, we "cannot believe that if we do not look at what we do not wish to see, it will not exist" (29:84/59). He returns to the slaughtered bull's once seeing eyes " that had shone with such splendid color five minutes before, [but now are] fixed and glassy" (ibid.). Tolstoi's brutally honest, graphic denunciation of animal cruelty in a way anticipates Derrida's decrying various forms of animal abuse, especially "the industrialization of the production and consumption of animal meat" (25). Almost as if referring to Tolstoi's graphic descriptions of animal slaughter, Derrida writes:[96]

> Everybody knows what terrifying and intolerable pictures a realist painting could give to the industrial, mechanical, chemical, hormonal, and genetic violence to which man has been submitting animal life for the past two centuries. Everybody knows what the production, breeding, transport, and slaughter of these animals has become. Instead of thrusting these images in your faces or awakening them in your memory, […] let me say [that] if these images are "pathetic," if they evoke sympathy, it is also because they "pathetically" open the immense question of pathos and the pathological, […] of suffering, pity and compassion; and the place that must be accorded to the interpretation of this compassion, to the sharing of this suffering among the living, to the law, ethics, and politic that must be brought to bear upon this experience of compassion (26).

A number of Tolstoi's late fictional works focus on the "sharing of suffering among the living," especially on becoming aware of the other's suffering and its ethical implications, denouncing killing animals and eating meat. . For example, in Tolstoi's

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[95]The narrator writes: "An evangelical preacher who was attacking monastic asceticism and priding himself on his originality, once said to me, 'My Christianity is not concerned with fasting and privations, but with beefsteaks.' Christianity, or virtue in general – with beefsteaks!" (29:78/49)

[96] It is not known whether Derrida read Tolstoi, but it is very probably especially because Levinas, on whose concept of the face of the other Derrida builds, often mentioned having been influenced by the Russian authors, including Dostoevskii, Gogol and Tolstoi.

fairytale "Esarhaddon, King of Assyria" (1903) the protagonist literally steps into the shoes of others: another human and an animal. Esarhaddon, the powerful king of Assyria, conquered the kingdom of King Lailie, ravaged his towns, slaughtered, flayed or impaled Lailie's people while confining Lailie in a cage. As he is thinking about how to execute Lailie, an old man appears and tells him that he is Lailie. Esarhaddon refuses to believe, but the old man insists that Esarhaddon and Lailie are one, and that all Lailie's tortured, flayed and impaled warriors still exist, and Esarhaddon tortured himself, not them. Desiring to understand what the old man means, Esarhaddon, following his suggestion, dips his head in a font of water, whereby he transforms into Lailie, which leaves him feeling "not feeling at all surprised at this, but only wondering that he did not know it before" (34:127/743). Ruling as Lailie, he indulges in his "favorite amusement: the hunt," one day killing wild asses, the next day – an old lioness with his own hand, and capturing her two cubs (ibid.). Only after he, as Lailie, is defeated by himself-Esarhaddon, captured and brought to the stake to be impaled, does he break down and begin to plead for mercy, and lifting his head out of the font, awakens. In a scene from the draft, which was not included in the published version, but is found in *Collected Shorter Fiction* translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude and Nigel J. Cooper, Esarhaddon's experience as Lailie is followed by his transformation into a she-ass grazing in a valley with her colt. Tolstoy relates Esarhaddon's experience as a she-ass from her point of view, describing her glad sensation of nursing her colt. Then, suddenly an arrow pierces the she-ass's side, and feeling a burning pain, Esarhaddon and his colt begin to gallop towards their herd. But another arrow strikes the colt's neck, he falls upon his knees, while Esarhaddon-the-she-ass, unable to abandon him, stays by his said until a "fearful two-legged being – a man –

ran up and cut [the colt's] throat"(746).[97] In this draft only after being an animal does Esarhaddon awaken.

The old man's explanation of Esarhaddon-Lailie's experience is virtually a summary of Tolstoi's religious-ethical vision of life's essence and meaning:

> Do you now understand […] that Lailie is you, and the warriors you put to death were you also? And not the warriors only, but the animals which you slew when hunting and ate at your feasts were also you. You thought life dwelt in you alone, but I have drawn aside the veil of delusion, and you have seen that in doing evil to others you have done it to yourself as well. Life is one in everything, and within yourself you manifest but a portion of this one life. And only in that portion that is within you can you make life better or worse, magnify or diminish it. You can make life better within yourself only by destroying the barriers that divide your life from that of other beings, and by regarding others as yourself and loving them. To destroy the life that dwells in others is not within your power (34:129/746).

Having faced impalement as Lailie and witnessed the killing of his colt as a she-ass, Esarhaddon frees everyone, renounces his old life style and wanders the world teaching people these truths.[98] Donovan observes that in this story "the standpoint of an ass [...] promote[s] ethical awareness of the animal's subjectivity on the part of the human protagonist" and forces him to re-examine his own ethical priorities" (113). I agree with her conclusion that Tolstoi "disrupts 'habitual ways of thinking' about animals, the speciesist assumption that animals are for humans' use, and [makes the human realize] that he and all living creatures are bound together in a common subjecthood, linked in a chord of sympathy" (ibid.).

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[97] This page refers to Leo Tolstoy. *Collected Shorter Fiction*, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude and Nigel J, Cooper. There is no reference to the PSSP since this part of the story about the king becoming an animal is not included. Pp.557-558

[98] Tolstoi had encountered ideas about unity of life in his reading of Eastern philosophy. He was impressed by the Buddhist understanding of the unity of life and of universal guilt, both of which are highlighted in his adaptation of the Eastern legend "It's you" [*Eto ty*]. In Tolstoi's version, the wise man in the story [*mudrets*] explains to his interlocutor: "Look around yourself at all living things and say to yourself: all this is me. All men are brothers, that is, all people in their essence are one and the same person. Before a higher justice there is no evil that would not be punished. When you lift your hand against your enemy, you hit yourself because the offender and the offended are in essence one and the same" (34:139).

Tolstoi's short children's tale "The Wolf" (1908) presents the same ideas about loving and regarding animals as oneself.[99] A little boy who loves eating chicken and is afraid of wolves is confronted in a dream by a frightening wolf who asks him in a human voice why he loves eating little chicks, but is so afraid of being eaten by a wolf. The wolf explains to him: "But these chicks are just as alive as you are. Every morning go and watch how they are captured, […] and how their throats are cut, how their mother clucks because they are being taken from her. Have you seen it?" (37:5).[100] As in "The First Step" Tolstoi emphasizes "seeing" the face in the animal other, to use the Levinasian/Derridian term. Having seen this dream, the boy stops eating meat all together. As in the Esarhhadon tale, Tolstoi uses a reversal of perspectives here: a wild predator so often vilified by humans as bloodthirsty and rapacious teaches a human child about empathy for all creatures.

Hunting

The seeds of these ideas about an underlying, unifying principle in nature that could inspire a moral revision of one's life and love for all are already present in the experiences of another little boy – Nikolen'ka from Tolstoi's "auto-psychological" trilogy *Childhood/Boyhood/Youth* (1852-75).[101] Childhood consists of a series of events that challenge Nikolen'ka's sense of emotional security. Exploring Tolstoi's sense of alienation and belonging through Nikolen'ka's experiences, Gustafson draws attention to the dance event where the little boy feels completely inadequate and rejected. The memory of his mother, that dispels his feeling of alienation, leads Nikolen'ka to

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[99] Tolstoi wrote this tale for his grandchildren (children of Mikhail L'vovich).
[100] Translation mine.
[101] "Autopsychological" is Lydia Ginsburg's term. See *O psikhologicheskoi proze*, 314.

contemplate nature: “the meadow in front of the house, the tall lime trees in the yard, the clear pond over which swallows swirled, the blue sky [with] white transparent clouds, the fragrant stacks of new-mown hay” (1:72).[102] As Gustafson observes, this picture of the paradisiacal garden on the family estate represents the “harmony of the natural world [that] restores well-being” (29). Gustafson notes the importance of the image of the paradisiacal harmony of nature for Tolstoi because “the garden is the place of faith, an image not of the physical world, but of the universe of love. In Tolstoi’s works all great moments of faith […] take place in the expanse of nature which this garden represents” (Gustafson 30).[103] During the hare-hunting scene Nikolen’ka finds himself in a similar almost “paradisiacal garden” moment.

Although at the time of writing *Childhood* Tolstoi was an active hunter, Nikolen’ka’s experience in the hunting scene somewhat unsettles the seemingly positive description of hunting. The hound-master Turka, whose description opens the chapter, looks cruel and fierce to Nikolen’ka, as if he were setting off for a deadly battle rather than a hunt. The narrator describes animal abuse in the very first paragraph: “It was sad to see what would befall the unfortunate [hound] who happened to lag behind. […] One of the hound-masters would hit her with a whip yelling: ‘Back to the pack!’” When they all finally arrive at the designated place, Turka unleashes the dogs and they look visibly relieved: “the hounds expressed their joy by wagging their tails, sniffed and straightened themselves out as they wandered in different directions” (1:22).

[102] Translation for *Childhood* mine.
[103] Acknowledging most critics’ praise of Tolstoi’s descriptions of nature in *Childhood*, Wasiolek points out nature’s moral significance for Tolstoi noting that “nature is […] a kind of touchstone for what is good in the sense of something given and something definite” (*Tolstoy’s Major Fiction* 20).

The most ambiguous moment is Nikolen'ka's waiting for the hare as he becomes immersed in observing intently the surrounding non-human life. His imagination gets far ahead of him and he is already picturing himself chasing a third hare," when among the roots of the oak-tree under which he is sitting Nikolen'ka notices a swarm of ants:

> In serried files they kept pressing forward on the level track they had made for themselves—some carrying burdens, some not. I took a piece of twig and blocked their way. Instantly it was curious to see how they made light of the obstacle. Some got past it by creeping underneath, and some by climbing over it. A few, however, there were (especially those weighted with loads) who were puzzled about what to do. (1:25)

Then a yellow butterfly distracts him from the ants and he begins to watch it with "intense interest" as it "circles over some half-faded blossoms of white clover, [and then] settle[s] on one of them." The narrator notes that the butterfly seems "completely comfortable," whether it is due to "the sun's warmth that delighted it, or whether it [is] busy sucking nectar from the flower. [The butterfly] hardly moved its wings at all, and pressed itself down into the clover until [Nikolen'ka] could hardly see its body " (ibid.).

So far the narrator presents non-human beings as subjects with consciousness and agency: the hounds express contentment, the ants are busy with their tasks and the butterfly looks very comfortable. And Nikolen'ka who is observing them, his dog's muzzle on his lap, seems to be part of this almost "paradisiacal garden" moment with his childlike curiosity. Yet, Nikolen'ka is there to participate in killing. The presence of ants particularly suggests the narrator's ambiguity about hunting because of the famous "ant brothers" – Tolstoi's childhood symbol of the whole harmony, love and brotherhood. The live brotherhood of ants in the midst of the organized killing of another non-human brother suggests a certain ambivalence about hunting.

While Tolstoi did not renounce hunting until the 1880s, other hunting moments in his works, such as *The Cossacks* and *War and Peace* are also equivocal. In *The Cossacks* the protagonist, Olenin, whose name is derived from the Russian word *'olen'* (deer or stag), is a man with "no family, no homeland, no faith, no needs," who "believes in nothing and accepts nothing," cannot reciprocate love and shrinks from any commitment because he values his freedom more than anything. But during his stay in the army in the Caucasus he falls in love and becomes more self-aware, and animals are amongst the main participants in the moments that lead him to new realizations about himself and the meaning of life.

The old Cossack Eroshka, who becomes Olenin's hunting companion, first suggests to him that humans and animals are similar, but there is a tension between Eroshka's love of hunting and his view of animals. On the one hand, Eroshka is an excellent hunter, as he tells Olenin: "I can find any beast, any bird for you; and what and where – I know it all. I have dogs, and two rifles, and nets, and a horse and a hawk – I have everything, and thank God for that" (6:56-57).[104] On the other hand, he feels compassion for animals and acknowledges their subjectivity. He is upset when hunters wound a bear but do not kill it: "Oh, I don't like that! So don't like that! Why damage the beast? […] and now the bear will go, poor thing (*serdechnyi*) , smearing his blood in the reeds for nothing" (6:57). As he describes his boar hunt, he tells Olenin that the she-boar told her piglets: "Misfortune, my children: a human is here" and they fled. And when Olenin asks how a pig could say that to her piglets, Eroshka replies: "What did you think? An animal is a fool?... No, he is more intelligent than a human. He knows everything," and he points out a pig's ability to smell human tracks: "that means, she has intelligence,

[104] Translation of *Cossacks* mine.

that she can sense your stink, but you can't" (6:57-58). Eroshka continues: "You want to kill her, but she wants to walk in the forest alive. You have your law, and she has her law. She is a pig, but no worse than you; just like you [she is] God's creature. Oh, stupid human, stupid, stupid human!" A few moments later he disapproves of another Cossack, Lukashka, celebrating his shooting of a Chechen earlier that day: "He killed a Chechen and is happy. And what is he happy about? Fool, fool!" The similar structure of his comments about killing a pig and killing a Chechen—and calling the human "stupid" and a "fool" in both situations— betrays certain reservations about hunting. Furthermore, by seeing a pig and her piglets as mother and children, and by literally calling her God's creature just like a human, Eroshka encircles humans and animals in one brotherhood under God.

Not only hunting, however, but also Eroshka's treatment of the animals in his house undercuts his sense of universal brotherhood. In his house he keeps a hen, a falcon and a hawk – all tied. While that may be necessary for taming the birds of prey for hunting, the falcon's screeching and his attempts to free himself from the rope suggest distress, which Eroshka ignores. Together with the pheasants on the floor and a jackdaw on the table, half plucked and ripped apart to feed the hawk – such crowding of the prey dead and alive and captive predators in one room reflects Eroshka's complexity as a character. Donna Orwin suggests that Eroshka's wisdom "moderates an essentially solitary self-love, […] only love of others makes humans social" (*Tolstoy's Art and Thought* 91). Gustafson notes that Eroshka's idea that "there is no sin in anything" because of the natural goodness of all creation serves to justify his own dishonest behaviour (56). While self-interest, indeed, often motivates Eroshka's actions, he

selflessly shoos night moths away from the fire, and disapproves of rejoicing over killing an enemy, while he has killed many himself. His angry outburst at Olenin's question if he killed people, and the narrator's words that "not just one murder of both Chechens and Russians was on his soul" (*ne odno ubiistvo i chechen, i russkikh bylo u nego na dushe*) suggest a mixture of guilt and remorse about killing another being.

Tolstoi depicts Eroshka as a "noble savage" whose life reflects the natural law, according to which everything exists for itself; and the social order exemplified by war (based essentially on prey-predator dynamics) justifies both hunting the mother pig and her piglets and the war between Chechens and Cossacks. At the same time, Eroshka professes faith in God, bows to icons, and believes in the brotherhood of God's creatures that includes animals and humans. Even the descriptions of him reflect his complicated personality. Upon meeting him, Olenin notes his intelligent and expressive face, but during the hunt he reminds Olenin of a predator, his eyes glistening unusually, his mouth open with ferociously protruding bad yellow teeth. Eroshka's short invocation "In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost" before he shoots sums up his conflicted and contradictory nature (many Cossacks say the same before firing at Chechens). Yulii Aikhenval'd explains Eroshka's complexity by conflating his identities of a hunter and a "noble savage": "[…] there is no contradiction, because in a hunter's soul, a primeval human's soul there are only immediate desires, and, confident in nature's inexhaustibility, he calmly directs his desires at both – killing and saving some of its creatures" (574). Orwin, on the other hand, notes that while originally Tolstoi conceived of the work as a "celebration of the 'savage state'," as his views evolved through the fifties, he began to see the "savage state" as worse than a "civilized" one because it

lacked love of others – the basis of true morality (*Tolstoy's Art and Thought* 85). Building on Aikhenval'd's and Orwin's insights, I would like to note that while Eroshka-the-primeval hunter kills enemies and animals, he is no longer calm about it: he shows awareness of the subjectivity of both and unease about killing them, revealing at least some degree of moral sense. Thus, the conflicted character of Eroshka reflects Tolstoi's evolving views on killing of both, humans and animals.

Placed at the center of the work, Olenin's experience at the stag's lair tests Eroshka's vision of universal brotherhood based on natural law. The day before Olenin and Eroshka came upon a stag's lair and frightened the animal away, and now Olenin returns there while hunting pheasants. The day being hot, myriads of mosquitos are sticking to his face, back and arms. His black dog turns blue – mosquitos cover her entire back. At first, Olenin wants to run away from the mosquitos, but then he stays and lets the mosquitos eat him. Strangely enough, by noon that sensation becomes even pleasant, and he begins to think that these myriads of insects constitute a single whole with the wild plants, animals and surrounding landscape. Because of the heat and the seven shot pheasants weighing him down, he lies down in the lair, and as he lies there thinking about nothing and wanting nothing, Olenin is "suddenly overcome with such a strange feeling of happiness without cause and of love for everything that by old childish habit he begins to bless himself and give thanks to someone" (6:76). In his moment of sudden "happiness without cause" and "love for all," he suddenly realizes "with special clarity that I, Dmitrii Olenin, a being distinct from all other beings, am lying here alone, God knows where, in that place where the stag lived" (ibid.).

In this moment he begins to see animals as God's creatures just like himself (as Eroshka told him): "pheasants are bustling near me and, pushing each other, perhaps, sense their dead brothers. […] And, perhaps, jackals, too, sense and with upset faces move to the other side. […] and a million mosquitos are buzzing around me for their own reasons, and everyone of them is the same Dmitrii Olenin distinct from all, like I" (6:77). He imagines that mosquitos are telling each other: "Here, here, guys! Here is someone we can eat," and it becomes clear to him that he is neither Russian gentry nor a member of the Moscow elite, but simply the same mosquito, or the same pheasant, or stag, just like those who now live around him. Like them, like Uncle Eroshka, I will live and die. He speaks the truth: 'only the grass will grow'" (ibid.). Unlike Eroshka, who lives for himself, however, Olenin comes to the realization that happiness lies in living for others (ibid.). Olenin builds on Eroshka's ideas that lead him not only to an awareness of his finitude and vulnerability, but also to finding "in his mortality […] kinship with all living beings" (Gustafson 57). Orwin interprets this episode as a "complete acceptance of […] the harshest law of nature"(*Tolstoy's Art and Nature* 87): Olenin becomes "at home in nature" and in accepting mosquitos he "embraces pain and with it the natural principle that legitimates his own love of hunting," because "in nature, living things mingle without regard for individuals. They eat and are eaten. The mosquitos feed on Olenin as he hunts and shoots pheasants, whose brothers – in Olenin's imagination – sense their dead fellows without grieving for them" (ibid.). Newlin views Olenin being bitten by mosquitos as a "primal physical exchange with nature that leads […] to an epiphanic flash of insight in which he fully suspends his homocentric egotism," adding that it also

carries "an element of masochism" [that] portends Tolstoy's increasingly tortured and extreme views on sex and the body" ("At the Bottom of the River" 85).

Building on these scholars' insights, I would like to question Olenin's "imagination," including his mingling with mosquitos and his acceptance of natural law. While he chooses to be bitten by mosquitos he never thinks about his dog, who did not choose to expose herself to the mosquito attack. Oblivious of his dog's discomfort to which he subjected her in his anthropocentric egotism, he indulges in a romantic self-absorbed merging with nature similar to that of Turgenev's narrator in *The Journey into the Woodlands* and "Kas'ian from the Beautiful Lands." And just as Turgenev challenged those seemingly epiphanic moments of accepting natural law, so too does Tolstoi.[105]

Olenin's willingness to be "eaten" by mosquitos to honor their natural desire to drink his blood as a token of his acceptance of natural law and merging with nature is his self-indulgent illusion. The fact that any healthy animal will try to avoid mosquitos and within nature's harsh law of survival prey animals will always flee their predators shows that under natural law Olenin's submission to mosquitos is actually unnatural and absurd. Faced with a predator, pheasants fly away, the stag fled, and Eroshka's pig ran away with her piglets. As Tolstoi would write in *On Life*, self-preservation is fundamental to animal life: predators hunt to sustain themselves while prey flee to remain alive. Furthermore, if subjecting himself to mosquito bites means accepting the law of nature, then in the human context Olenin's "acceptance" of the natural law "of eat and be eaten" would mean non-resistance to being "eaten" by his human enemies as well.

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[105] Wasiolek writes that while Olenin's being bitten by the mosquitoes in the stag's lair represents the idea that happiness lies in one's self-sacrifice to others, Tolstoi does not share this idea and shows it in how quickly Olenin's supposed epiphany disappears (*Tolstoy's Major Fiction* 54).

It becomes clear, however, that when the same natural law only in human terms confronts Olenin on his way home from the lair, he fails to accept it. As he gets out of the woods and heads home, the weather grows overcast and the whole atmosphere – menacing. As he calls his dog and his voice echoes emptily, suddenly he feels terribly scared:

> He began to feel cowardly. Abrecks and murderers that people told him about and which he expected, came to his mind: there is a Chechen just about behind every bush ready to jump out, and he [Olenin] would have to die fighting for his life or as a coward. He remembered God, and the life ahead of him as he never had before. But all around there was the same gloomy, strict, wild nature. […] Very cautiously, almost in horror, he looked at every bush and tree, expecting to part with his life any minute to part with his life (6:78).

This war with Chechens is a human version of the harsh natural law of "eat and be eaten," but now that he risks losing his life, Olenin is no longer happy to shed his blood and be "consumed." Feeling and acting like a prey animal, watching every bush and listening to every sound, he hurries home, fleeing his potential predators, preparing to fight for his life if needed. He is so frightened that even his dog's comradeship does not dispel the increasing gloom, but still it is his loyal dog who leads him home and out of this dreary and grim place. And another animal graphically reminds him of what this law of nature really means: "He touched his pheasants in the back and discovered he was missing one. That pheasant's body ripped off and was lost, and only a bloodied little neck (*sheika*) and little head (*golovka*) stuck out from behind his belt. Never had he been so terrified. He began to pray to God, and was afraid of one thing – that he would die not having done anything good, kind; but he so wanted to live, to live to commit a heroic act of self-abnegation" (6:79). His fear of "being eaten," a desperate desire to live and his terror at the sight of a bloodied head of another once "distinct" being whom he had

reduced to two body parts confirm that he does not accept this natural law.[106] In the context of the ethics of self-sacrifice for others of which he has just become aware, Olenin's desperate prayerful bargaining for life begins to sound somewhat ironic.[107]

Tolstoi continues to draw parallels between hunting and killing people. Olenin regains his composure when he hears Russian speech and sees Lukashka and other Cossacks meeting with a group of Chechens who had come to pick up the body of one of their own whom Lukashka had shot the day before. The description of Lukashka's shooting of the Chechen is reminiscent of the language of hunting. Even before the military action started, Uncle Eroshka's remark to Lukashka and others that while they are going to "wait" for the Chechens, he will "wait" for boars already suggests similarities between shooting people and animals. After Lukashka spots and shoots the Abrek, all the Cossacks wake up and together with other Russian soldiers, they begin to search for the remaining Abreks.[108] The narrator again uses the same verb—in this case "*uiti*" (to leave, get away)—for the boar and Abrecks, further cementing the parallel: "Just like the boar who got away yesterday, Lukashka was vexed that the Abrecks would get away now" (*Kak na kabana, kotoryi ushel vecherom, dosadno bylo [Lukashke] na abrekov, kotorye uidut teper'*) (6:34).

As Lukashka tells other people how he killed the Chechen, the difference between killing people and killing animals becomes increasing blurred. Lukashka tells Eroshka

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[106] As mentioned above, Orwin points to Tolstoi's intention to show the "savage man" morality as inferior because of the absence of the love of others. The natural law reflected in the "savage man" lacks such love and, therefore, cannot be accepted. Newlin notes that "as early as the 1860s, [Tolstoi] was questioning the 'zoological laws' that determined the life he was living and celebrating" (*Swarm Life* 363).

[107] The sad irony becomes real because Olenin fails to commit one truly self-sacrificing act of choosing not to cross Lukashka's path in pursuing Mar'iana. Andrew Kaufman provides an insightful analysis of Tolstoi's ironic treatment of Olenin in *Existential Quest and Artistic Possibility in Tolstoi's* "The Cossacks" (2005).

[108] Abrek – an outlaw

that he killed "a beast," but Eroshka's face becomes solemn and as if with regret, he replies: "you killed a *djigit*" (*djigit* – a warrior/man) (6:35). When Lukashka looks at the Chechen's body, the narrator notes that he could not take his eyes off his "prey" (*dobycha*). And after they pull the body out of the river, one Cossack comments: "What a carp you caught," and another replies: "And a really yellow one" (6:36).

Tolstoy continues to point out the similarities between hunting and warfare in *War and Peace* (1867-69), most notably in the Rostovs' famous wolf hunting scene. Gustafson writes that this hunting episode "moves from high hope to moral failings to repentance to triumphant harmony, and thus imitates the action and embodies the meaning of *War and Peace.* The theme of the hunting scene is the triumph over alienation" (42). Although Gustafson insightfully points to the positive meaningfulness of the hunt for its human participants, the animal victims challenge the human harmony. Similarly to Nikolen'ka in the hunting episode in *Childhood* and Cossacks who mutter "In the name of the Father and Son" before shooting both Chechens and animals, Nikolai Rostov prays passionately that the wolf be sent towards him and so that his dog Karai could grab the wolf by the throat in a deadly grip (10:252/499). But when the wolf appears, the narrative perspective changes to that of the wolf:

> The wolf ran on and jumped heavily over a hole that lay in his path. He was an old beast, with a gray back and a well-stuffed, reddish belly. He ran unhurriedly, obviously convinced that no one could see him. […] Suddenly the wolf's entire physiognomy changed; he shuddered at the sight of human eyes, which he had probably never seen before, directed at him, and turning his head slightly towards the hunter, stopped – go back or go on? "Eh! it makes no difference, I'll go on!" he seemed to say to himself and started forward, not looking around now, at a soft, long, free, but resolute lope. (10:252-253/500).

As Rostov screams and sends Karai after the wolf and other dogs joining the chase, the narrator continues describing the wolf's experience as he fights for his life. Thus, when

Karai is on his way to cut off the wolf's path, "as if sensing the danger, [the wolf] gave Karai a sidelong glance, tucked his tail still further between his legs, and increased his pace" (10:255/501). When Karai grabs the wolf by the throat, the narrator notes the wolf's frightened and gasping head with its ears laid back (ibid.). And when the dogs and Danila finally catch up with him, "the beast, his ears laid back fearfully, tried to get up," as Danila collapsed upon him, seizing him by the ears (10:255/502).

If at the beginning of the hunt "a wolf" was something generic, abstract and impersonal everyone gathered to kill, in this episode the wolf becomes a specific individual – a distinct being (as Olenin would say). This wolf has a past – he is old, possibly ill (he "turned his head as if ill with quinsy") and no longer physically strong enough to jump over a ditch swiftly, and he may not have had any experience with humans. And this wolf has a consciousness – he feels fear and wants to live. McDowell notes that in this hunting scene Tolstoi "stresses the cruelty of the hunting act by unexpectedly entering the targeted animal's mind, thereby individualizing the victim of violence." Afraid to miss the wolf, Nikolai thinks that "he won't have such happiness" as capturing the animal. Then, when Nikolai spots the wolf, "the greatest happiness has come to pass," while when he saw Karai gripping the wolf's throat, it was "the happiest minute of his life" (10:252-254/501).

Analyzing Rostov's "happy feelings" about capturing the wolf, Gary Saul Morson observes:

> We recognize as Tolstoyan an absolute assurance about details whose significance is unfathomable and whose existence might not even have been noticed [...] Tolstoy is absolutely certain: it is not just a happy moment, not even "one of the finest moments," but, without qualification, it is the happiest moment of Rostov's life. [Moreover,] [i]f at some future time, Rostov was asked to name the happiest moment of his life, he would probably not even think of this one [...] The

> happiest moment of his life lies outside of all imagined narratives or patterns. It is perceptible only to God and the author, who knows that plots and plotting exclude the unnoticed, unplottable events, hidden in plain view, that are truly important in all their exceptional richness (*Hidden in Plain View* 156-157)

Building on Morson's penetrating insight, I would like to suggest that Tolstoi somewhat complicates what passes unnoticed and hidden in plain view during the hunt. As the narrator reveals the wolf as an individual who feels fear and pain, his descriptions of Rostov's "happiness" begin to sound ironic. McDowell observes that "the narrator lightly mocks young Rostov" who fervently prays to God to send the wolf his way: he prayed with that passionate and conscientious feeling, with which people pray "at a moment of strong agitation arising from insignificant (*nichtozhnye*) causes" (10:252/499).[109] The word '*nichtozhnyi*' means not only "insignificant" or very small in Russian, but also "worthless, paltry." And if at first Rostov's "passionate feeling" and prayer seem to be about "insignificant" things, towards the end of the hunt, these "things" border on worthless.

The usage of such a strong notion as happiness (*shchast'e*) in relation to an essentially habitual, frequent and repeated activity that involves violence not only to the prey but also one's own loyal dogs creates a somewhat unsettling effect that is difficult to notice initially.[110] The more the narrator reveals the wolf as a distinct being, the more the word "happiness" describing Nikolai's feelings gains a potential irony. Rostov's inordinate "happiness" as his dog is risking his life to capture another canid to be killed is

[109] In Pevear and Volokhonsky it is "passionate and guilty feeling," but the word "conscientious" is closer to the Russian word *'sovestlivyi'* that Tolstoi uses: *'so strastnym i* ***sovestlivym*** *chuvstvom.'*

[110] Usually, in the Russian language the word *schast'e/schastlivyi* (happiness/happy) is used for very significant moments. Its usage to speak of essentially mundane, even if exciting, events, somewhat trivializes it (especially repeated and insistent as in this episode); and when used in the context of violence there is a sense of incongruity, as if something is "off."

striking.[111] What seems to be hidden here is the narrator's irony (or "light mockery" to use McDowell's expression) and certain ambivalence about the event and the characters' excitement about it. The narrator's hesitation is especially difficult to discern because it would be unexpected, as the author, himself, was a hunter.

The subtle parallels between the wolf hunt and some episodes of killing in Tolstoy's other works may help bring into focus the narrator's hidden ambivalence about hunting. Some of the most powerful parallels between killing humans and animals appear when one compares the descriptions in *The Cossacks* and *War and Peace*. The contrast between an act of killing and a word "happy" ascribed to it is applied foregrounds the violence and is reminiscent of Uncle Eroshka's and Olenin's comments on Lukashka's killing of the Chechen in *The Cossacks*. Olenin thinks to himself: "A human killed another, and is happy, content, as if he has done a good thing," while Uncle Eroshka tells Olenin: "He killed a human; and and now rejoices over it. And what is he rejoicing about? Fool, fool (*durak, durak*)!"

The body of a slain Chechen has many similarities to the captured wolf in *War and Peace.* The Chechen's leg "trembled lifelessly" after he was dragged from the river, just like the wolf the wolf, "when touched, […] jerked his bound legs" (6:37; 10:255/502).[112] Surrounding the Chechen, the Cossacks looked at him silently: "His muscular arms were lying straight, along his ribs. A bluish freshly-shaved head with a bloodied wound in the side was hanging back '*otkinuta,*' His smooth, tan forehead looked distinct from the shaved part" (6:38). Similarly, after the hunt, "the hunters came together with their quarry and their stories, and everybody went to look at the seasoned, old wolf,

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[111] "Canid" – mammals of the dog family (canidae) that includes dogs, wolves, foxes, coyotes etc.
[112] It may be lost in translation that Tolstoi uses the same verb '*vzdrognut*'' for both the shot Chechen and the captured wolf.

[…] lolling his big-browed head with the stick gripped in his mouth" (10:255/502). While the Chechen's "glassy open eyes with stopped pupils were looking up – seemingly, past everyone," the wolf "with his big glassy eyes was looking at the people and dogs around him" wildly and at the same time simply was looking at everyone" (6:38; ibid.). Later, when the Cossacks defeated the Chechens, the brother of this Chechen remained the last man standing. Severely wounded, like a shot hawk, "he understood that it was over," and "all covered in blood (blood flowed from his right eye), […] he was squatting and looking around with huge, irritated eyes," when one Cossack shot him in the head (6:145). This brother's gazing around at the Cossacks and Russians, is analogous to the wolf's looking at the hunters and dogs around him. As this brother is squatting, surrounded by his enemies, he "understood that he was done for" (*ponial tol'ko, chto **vse konchilos'***) (ibid.). Likewise at the wolf hunt, as the dogs and Danila jump on the wolf, "Danila and the dogs, and the wolf understood that it was over" (*ochevidno bylo i dlia sobak, i dlia okhotnikov, i dlia volka, chto teper' **vse koncheno***) (ibid.).

The captured wolf's terrified glassy eyes mirror the eye of a French soldier whom Nikolai defeats on the battlefield. Chasing the soldier and feeling as he had when galloping to head off the wolf (*s chuvstvom, s kakim on nessia napererez volku*) Nikolai hits him with his sabre (11:63-64). But as the Frenchman looks up at him, Nikolai sees his terrified light blue eyes (light blue being similar to glass). Later Tolstoi intensifies this focus on the eyes when Pierre witnesses the execution of some Russian captives by the French. The first two to be shot "looked silently around them, like a wounded animal looks at an approaching hunter," while the next two look at everyone with "the same eyes […] looked at everyone, […] silently begging for protection and clearly not

understanding and not believing what was going to happen," and the last one looks around "like a wounded animal […] with glittering eyes" (11:64/966-967).

In this "labyrinth of linkages" between an irresistible voyeuristic impulse, organized collective viewings of public execution and the look in the captives' eyes, Tolstoi disregards species differences and sees humans and animals equally as suffering and dying beings.[113] From the Chechens to the old wolf, to the French soldier and Russian prisoners of war, the other – human and non-human – is looking. But while at least some onlookers eventually acknowledge the human other—making Nikolai Rostov unable to kill the French solider and Pierre feel sorry for the executed—the suffering animal's gaze "in plain view" goes unnoticed by the other characters.[114]

In Tolstoi's fiction, the old wolf (or any of the other prey) is not the only animal to suffer because of the violent activity of hunting. The practice of breeding and training dogs that become human tools to hound and kill wild animals results in many victims taken for granted. While sometimes hunters do develop bonds with their favorite dog, most of the hunting dogs are simply a means to human ends and, as a result, are treated as objects. Similarly to the beginning of the hare-hunting scene in *Childhood*, during the preparation for the wolf hunt in *War and Peace* a hound-master hits straggling dogs with an *arapnick* (a whip): "Now and then came the whistle of a hunter, the snort of a horse, now a strike, the crack of a whip, or the squeal of a hound strayed from its place" (10:247/495). The word used for squeal – '*vzvizg*' – suggests a sudden sharp pain.

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[113] "Labyrinth of linkages" is the expression Tolstoi used in a letter to Strakhov to refer to interrelated thoughts, which critics and readers should explore instead of isolated situations and episodes in *Anna Karenina*. The "labyrinth" is the "essence of [his] art."

[114] Miller, too, notes the "striking similarities" between the wolf's hounding and Rostov's defeating the French soldier: "In each case Rostov watches the suffering of a living creature. Yet Rostov in hunting down his human prey experiences moral revulsion, and a sudden loss of animation, whereas in hunting down the wolf he feels utter, complete, albeit unconscious happiness" (*Tolstoy's Peaceable Kingdom* 63).

Just as he gradually reveals the wolf as a distinct individual, the narrator fleshes out the one-hundred-thirty-dog pack by isolating certain individual dogs with a past and a consciousness, like Trunila, who recognizes Natasha, and the two old wolf-hounds who are smart and as fat as their owners. When the hound Milka begins to approach the fleeing wolf, the narrator emphasizes her personal style of hounding by observing: "instead of pushing on, as she always did, Milka, raising her tail, suddenly began breaking with her forelegs" (10:253/500). But the most vivid portrait is that of Karai, who runs as a counterpoint to the wolf. Like the wolf, Karai is old, and just as the wolf's old age makes jumping over a ditch difficult for the wolf, Karai "with all his aged strength, stretching out as much as he could, looking at the wolf, galloped heavily alongside the beast" (10:254/501). The narrator uses the same word *'tiazhelo'* ("heavily") for both, emphasizing the parallel. Just as the old wolf put on a sudden burst of speed as the dogs were closing in on him, so too did Karai, who was "instantly on top of the wolf and rolled head over heals with him into a ditch" (ibid.).

The narrator continues to treat Nikolai ironically by contrasting Nikolai's overly ecstatic emotional exclamations with dogs getting wounded and maimed, thus exposing his complete obliviousness to the dogs' suffering. When the wolf rips a dog's belly open, and the bloodied dog, with a piercing squeal (*pronzitel'no zavizzhav*), tumbles head down, Nikolai weeps (ibid.). Nikolai's "weeping" immediately following the dog's injury, seems to imply compassion for the dog, but he is simply upset the wolf got away. Then, when the wolf broke free again, and Karai was scrambling out of the ditch with difficulty, hurt and wounded, Nikolai's screams: "Oh my God! Why?..." as if about Karai's getting wounded, but again, he is simply disappointed that the wolf is still free

(ibid.). After the wolf is captured, nothing is said about the fate of the dog with a ripped belly and wounded Karai.

With the examples of Turnola, Milka, Karai and later the uncle's Rugai, who captures a hare, the narrator shows dogs as conscious and loyal, but there seems to be a lack of genuine affection for the dogs n the part of most of the humans present. Granted, the hunters value their hunting dogs' prowess, take good care of them and brag about them in front of each other, but they appear to be interested in the dogs primarily as hunting tools. One aging dog, risking his life, attacks another aging animal because that is what humans want. Once the wolf hunt is over, as a tool intended for a specific purpose, Karai is no longer needed and disappears from the narrative.

In addition to the episodes with dogs, there are other small instances of humans' disregard for their faithful animals scattered throughout the hunting episode. For example, as Natasha and Petia follow their Uncle and Nikolai, Petia laughs for some reason, and hits and pulls on his horse. A few moments later when the count and Semyon miss the wolf, Danila, unable to yell at the count, "whipped the hollow, wet flanks of his brown gelding with all the anger he had prepared for the count" (10:251/499). And after all the hitting of domestic animals, killed wild animals and dogs squealing in pain, Natasha's exultant piercing squealing at the end of the hunt exposes a complete lack of awareness of the multi-level violence and cruelty of the activity in which she has indirectly participated. The effect is especially unsettling because the narrator uses the same words "piercing squealing" (*pronzitel'nyi vizg*) to describe her squealing and the

squealing of the dog with a ripped belly, and thus, even though nothing is said about that dog's fate, Natasha's squeal makes this absence almost palpable.[115]

This tangible, unsettling absence that also implicates the readers is reminiscent of Justin Weir's concept of a "narrative alibi": a "meaningful absence in the text" indicating that the author 'purposely bypassed or concealed" something, which also helps reveal the "hidden in plain view." The narrator's all too insistent focus on Nikolai's excessive excitement, repeated references to "happiness" and total self-absorption, and Natasha's final continuous piercing squeal, on the one hand, drown the maimed and wounded dogs' cries, and, on the other – result in a negative space that foregrounds the absence of the humans' ethical concern for the dogs.

Human-Animal Companionship and the Animal's Perspective

Leaving the stories of the animals of the hunt unfinished, Tolstoi focuses on another type of human-animal relationship: their companionship (indispensable to his vision of a harmonious being with All). An expert horseman himself, throughout his career Tolstoi masterfully depicted the bond and understanding between a horse and its rider. In *War and Peace* when called upon to ride before his idol, the Tsar, Nikolai Rostov, "an excellent rider, spurred Beduin, and set him on a mad allure: Having bent his foaming muzzle to his chest, separated his tail and as if soaring in the air and not touching the ground, […] Beduin, also sensing the tsar looking at him, passed

[115] The description of the dog's injury reads: *okrovavlennyi, s rasporotym bokom kobel', **pronzitel'no zavizzhav**, tknulsia golovoi v zemliu*. The description of Natasha's squeal: *Natasha, ne perevodia dukha, radostno i vostorzhenno **vizzhala** tak **pronzitel'no**, chto v ushakh zvenelo.* And there is also the squeal (***vzvizg***) of dogs whom Danila would hit with an arapnick. The fact that the narrator uses the same word *vizzhat'/vzvizgnut'* to describe all of them may become lost in the English translation because Pevear and Volokhonsky translate Natash's "sound" as a "shriek" (506).

wonderfully." Rostov, having sucked in his stomach, rode before the tsar feeling like "one piece with the horse" (9:302).

There are many other moments in the novel when amidst the human drama, the narrator shifts his attention to its non-human participants. For example, when the Tsar, Emperor Franz and their entourages meet with General Kutuzov to talk about important details of the upcoming battle, the narrative focus moves from their conversation to the Tsar's horse, who was enduring 'the distracted nudges of his left foot, pricked up her years at the sound of gunshots, […] understanding neither the meaning of the shots she heard, nor the presence of the emperor Franz's black stallion, nor anything of what her rider said, thought, or felt that day" (9:340/278). Later, as Napoleon is riding across the Borodino battlefield, the narrator observes that "horses and men lay in pools of blood, alone and in heaps" (11:246/804). In addition to naming the horses first, the narrator describes "such horror, such a number of lives lost on such a small space" and so subsumes the horses in the "number of the killed," acknowledging their deaths equally, and the horses' and riders' shared mortality (ibid).[116] Similarly, humans and horses are often described in the same sentence, closing the gap between them. For example, Denisov is "like his horse, who kept moving its head and laying its ears flat, […] winced from the slanting rain and peered ahead" (12:126/1037). Observing esaul Lovaiskii, who was riding next to Denisov, the narrator notes: "Though it was impossible to say what made for the particularity of the horse and rider, from a first glance at the esaul and at Denisov, one could see […] that Denisov […] was a man sitting on a horse; whereas

[116] In the original it is: "*takogo kolichestva ubitykh*." Pevear and Volokhonsky translate it as "so many men killed," which excludes the horses. That is why I modified their translation using "a number of lives lost" that is closer in meaning to the original.

esaul [...] was not a man sitting on a horse, but a man who was one with the horse, a being of twice-increased strength" (12:126-127/1038).

In *Anna Karenina* (1878) Vronsky's fateful race exemplifies such this oneness between rider and horse.[117] A number of scholars, like Priscilla Meyer, view the dynamic between Vronsky and his horse Frou Frou as symbolically representing and foreshadowing his relationship with Anna. For example, R.P. Blackmur interprets Vronsky's falling out of sync with his horse as a sign of the breakdown in communication between Anna and Vronrsky. Martin Stevens compares Anna's and Frou Frou's descriptions and sees the horse as the embodiment of Anna's sexual energy, while the race becomes "at once a symbolic enactment and the public revelation of his love affair" (64).

Other scholars, while acknowledging the similarities between Anna and Frou Frou, find such interpretations of Frou Frou as a symbol of Anna limiting. For instance, while Merezhkovskii analyzes the similarities between Anna's and Frou Frou's looks and personality, he is open to seeing Frou Frou as a horse, not just a symbol: "[similarly to Anna], perhaps we see with as much clarity Frou Frou's body and soul, even her 'personality,' because Vronsky's horse has her own 'soul,' her own elemental-animal face, and this face – is one of the characters in the tragedy" (121). Morson states, "the horse race does not constitute an allegory of Anna's story, and the death of Frou Frou does not foreshadow hers. […] Tolstoy offers just enough resemblance between Anna and Frou-Frou to tempt us to allegory, but if we yield we will miss his point" (123).

[117] Translation and transliteration of names in *Anna Karenina* is from L. Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (Penguin Books), 2000.

I would like to suggest that one of the things missed in equating Anna and Frou Frou is Tolstoi's continuous attention to animals' "personality and soul" (in Merezhkovskii's words) and the intricacies/complexities of the human-animal relationship. The fact that representations of the horse-rider dynamic are found in a number of Tolstoi's works also affirms Frou Frou as an animal character in her own right. Tolstoi realistically depicts the intuitive mutual understanding between Frou Frou and Vronsky. For example, he and Frou Frou begin riding as "one piece" as the race intensifies:

> At the very moment, when Vronsky was thinking that they now had to get ahead of Makhotin [another rider], Frou-Frou herself, already knowing his thought, speeded up noticeably without any urging and started to approach Makhotin from the most advantageous side. Makhotin would not let her have the rope. Vronsky had just thought that they could also get round him on the outside, when Frou-Frou switched step and started to go ahead precisely that way (18:209/198).

While Frou Frou understands Vronsky's cues and knows when to speed up or pass a rival, Vronsky is careful not to overexert her, sensing her energy level. Their minds are in sync when they "together [see the next barrier] and in both of them there arises the same doubt." When he notices indecisiveness in Frou Frou, he raises a whip, but "feels at once that his doubt was groundless: the horse knew what was needed" (ibid./199).

In his later *Kholstomer* and *Master and Man* (1895) Tolstoi continues to explore human-animal relationships: while in *Kholstomer* Tolstoi tries to understand the horse's point of view, in *Master and Man* the peasant Nikita demonstrates a sense of kinship with and respect for animals. In *Kholstomer*, begun in 1861 and published in 1886, a horse tells his life story to other horses over the course of five nights.[118] As one of Tolstoi's most well-known stories, *Kholstomer* has lent itself to a number of diverse readings.

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[118] Translation for *Kholstomer* mine.

McDowell notes that frequently scholars and readers see *Kholstomer* as a didactic animal fable that presents Tolstoi's views on property, authority labor and class (16-18). While Donovan focuses on the juxtaposition of the animal's point of view and that of his human masters, drawing parallels between *Kholstomer* and Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Miller finds the short story reminiscent of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Scholars such as Miller, Donovan and McDowell also draw attention to Tolstoi's sensitivity to the animal which can be seen, for example, in descriptions of Kholstomer's aged and battered physical appearance: "the expression of his face was one of […] stern patience, thoughtfulness, and suffering… Yet in spite of the hideous old age of this horse one involuntarily paused to reflect when one saw him … (26:7-8).

When he recounts his life as Prince Serpukhovskii's horse, Kholstomer gives an example of what the mutual understanding of horse and rider is like from a horse's perspective. Kholstomer begins by mocking some common commands humans use with horses. For example, he recalls that back then people did not have the stupid habit of saying: "Forward," as if he, Kholstomer, did not know that one rides forward, not backwards (26:25). In addition, in those days coachmen had not yet acquired another stupid of yelling "Oh!" at pedestrians as if the coach were in pain,[119] but instead they yelled an easily understandable: "Watch out!" or "Out of the way" (ibid.). The coachman Feofan only had to say: "let's [go]!" (*pushchaï*), and Kholstomer would set out of the gates and wait for the Prince. Feofan could simply smack his lips for Kholstomer to lean into the harness and march up to the entrance. And as soon as Feofan moved the harness in a way which was barely noticeable for others, but understandable for Kholstomer, the horse would take off. (ibid.).

[119] In Russian, the interjection "Oh!" can be a reaction to pain similar to the English "ouch."

Kholstomer demonstrates the verbal and nonverbal cues that allow for such a close relationship with the coachman who controls the harness. But he has a similar relationship with the passenger in the carriage – the Prince. As they ride impressively, people turn their heads at the "handsome horse, handsome coach and handsome owner." Kholstomer continues:

> I loved to pass another horse. When, sometimes, we with Feofan would notice a carriage worthy of our effort, and we, flying like the wind, would slowly begin to get closer and closer, I'd reach the passenger, snort over his head […] and in a moment they'd sound far behind.[120] But the Prince, and Feofan, and I – we would all be silent and pretend that we were simply about our own business, that we did not even notice those who were riding slow horses. I loved to pass, but I also liked to meet a good horse; one moment, sound, look, and we had already parted and flying in opposite directions (26:25-26).

Kholstomer's "we" includes Serpukhovskii, Feofan, himself and even a passing horse as a single group disregarding class and species differences. Also, Kholstomer's self-perception as "we" with his owner the Prince reveals his sense of closeness and loyalty to the human. At first, the Prince seemed to feel the same way about him; when others offered thousands for Kholstomer, the Prince would refuse by saying that the horse was a "friend" and that he would not sell him for "mountains of gold" (26:26). But despite all these beautiful words, when the Prince's lover elopes, he sets out on a chase and ruins his "friend": "Something that had never happened before – I was whipped and forced to run. For the first time, I faltered, but then felt ashamed and wanted to correct my mistake, but heard how the Prince yelled: 'Go!' And whistled, and cut me with a whip" (26:27). Having destroyed Kholstomer's health irreversibly, the Prince sells his "friend."

But even before Serpukhovskii's elopement, Kholstomer had already experienced abuse from humans many times. The story opens with the shepherd Nester riding and

[120] Although it is correct to say "Feofan and I," I keep the Russian structure "we with Feofan" to preserve Kholstomer's inclusive thinking of himself, Feofan and the Prince as "we."

taking care of him. While at first Nester seems to be kind to the horse, he occasionally hits him for no reason. For instance, as Nester rubs Kholstomer's neck, the horse closes his eyes as if in pleasure and gratitude, even though he does not like it and pretends out of politeness. But then, completely unexpectedly, just in case the horse does not forget its place, Nester pushes his head away, painfully whips him with a harness and leaves (26:6).

Besides being rejected for his colour and separated from his mother, castration is the first violent human act that changes his life. A number of scholars viewed Kholstomer's castration as positive for him. Alexandr Etkind, who analyzes Tolstoi's association with the Russian sect *Skoptsy* (self-castrators), writes: "A complex play on words, which has been totally ignored by commentators, arises in the story's two titles: '*Khlystomer*' is connected with both meanings of the word *khlyst* [whip]: it is a measure both of suffering and of being a member of the self-flagellant sect [*khlystovstvo*]. '*Kholstomer'* is connected with the verb 'to castrate' [*kholostit*]. In this final version, the nickname of the hero, and the title of the story, signifies a measure [*mera*] of castration" (98). Etkind concludes that if not for the castration, "it is unlikely that he would have come to the moral insight that he does" (99). Olga Matich states that, similarly to the sect of self-castrators, Tolstoi "worshipped [castration], as if suggesting that only through castration can one achieve the ideal state of sexual continence" (41).

Other scholars interpret Tolstoi's depiction of Kholstomer's castration as an act of violence. LaRubia-Prado draws a parallel between Rousseau's and Tolstoi's views on "human aggression to nature" (68). He quotes from Rousseau's *Émile*: "God makes all things good; man meddles with them and they become evil. He destroys and defaces all things […], he will have nothing as nature made it, not even man himself, who must learn

his paces like a saddle-horse, and be shaped to his master's taste like the trees in his garden" (I:5). Referring to *Kholstomer*, LaRubia-Prado suggests that "Tolstoi thought to illustrate the attack on nature […] by evoking the motif of horses [and] the mutilation" that Kholstomer undergoes, because despite being "a fine colt," "the social convention regarding the color of a horse's coat leads to his being gelded" (ibid.).

Building upon the insights of these scholars, I would like to suggest that Tolstoi presents Kholstomer's castration as a violation of the horse's God-given nature and sense of self. Although Tolstoi was in contact with *Skoptsy*, he disagreed with their practices because he considered it a disfigurement of God-created nature. In *On Life* (1886-87), Tolstoi points out that animals live a blessed life because they live the way God intended for them, according to their God-given law, unlike humans. Moreover, he believed that virtues are such only when they are attained through resisting sin and overcoming one's temptations. In his correspondence with G.P. Mer'shenin, a member of a local sect of *Skoptsy*, Tolstoi wrote: "Christ preaches chastity, but chastity, like every other virtue, is meaningful when it is achieved by an effort of will, supported by faith, not when it is achieved by the impossibility of sinning" (70:224).[121]

Kholstomer's introspection and moral insight deepened not because of the cessation of "carnal desires" as a result of castration, but because castration was his tragedy (and grief tends to turn one inward). As quoted earlier, Tolstoi viewed animals' life as "blessed" and according to God's law for them, as he would explain in *On Life* (26:340). Pondering the difference between humans and animals, Tolstoi pointed to the

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[121] Vladimir Chertkov wrote that in a conversation with a *skopets*, Tolstoi stressed the importance of struggling against temptations as a way to virtue: "For if a drunkard does not get drunk because he has no money or because no tavern is nearby, then he is not so virtuous. No, you must abstain from sexual relations when there is a possibility of sinning" (qtd. in Mark Aldanov, *Zagadka Tolstogo*, 82-83).

primacy of '*zhivotnoi'* personality in animals as opposed humans who are supposed to possess a consciousness of a higher order ("reasonable consciousness" – '*razumnoe soznanie'*). Usually, the Russian word '*zhivotnye'* is translated in English as "animal" or "animalistic," but besides referring to animal characteristics, it also connotes "physiological" without any derogatory meaning for animals ('*zhivotnye'* has the same root as the word '*zhizn'* ["life"]). He believed that when animals focus on satisfying their physical/physiological needs, such as eating, propagating and seeking their "personal good," these activities fall under God's law for them (unlike humans who are expected to rise above their immediate physiological needs).[122] Consequently, whatever "carnal" or physiological desires Kholstomer would have had if he had not been violated, would not have made him any less "virtuous" and would not have impeded or clouded his moral insight. Quite the opposite – they would be harmonious with God's law for horses.

Kholstomer's own words clearly show that castration is a "strange sudden misfortune" for him that only deepened his already introspective nature. He shares: "I had already before evinced a tendency to seriousness and deep thinking, but now there occurred a decisive change in me" (26:18). What he describes also resembles a grieving process and depression: the whole world changed in his eyes, he was unable to find pleasure in anything, he turned inward and began to ponder. "At first nothing mattered. I even stopped drinking, eating and moving, let alone playing. Sometimes I thought of

[122] The "animalistic" or physiological personality is part of human psychology, but it acquires a negative meaning only when humans build their lives around gratifying these physiological desires and do not strive for moral perfection, thus violating God's law for them. Tolstoi develops these ideas throughout *On Life* VII – In the world all the abilities all living beings have are necessary for them and for their good. Plants, insects, animals, following their law, "live a blessed, joyful and calm life" (26:340). "Reason (*razum*) – is the law of human life, just as the law of animal life governs their nourishment and propagation, just as the law of plant life makes the grass and trees grow […]"(26:348). "The law of human life is the submission of our animal body to reason" (ibid.). "The law of reason for animals is the law of the organism, and they should obey it" (26:357)

jumping and neighing, but right away a question would arise: why? What for? And my last energy would disappear" (ibid.).

Castration significantly lowers his self-esteem and, most importantly, destroys his sense of belonging, both issues echoing Tolstoi's personal struggles. As Orwin states, all of Tolstoi's works are autobiographical to some extent. As mentioned earlier, Gustafson points out that a sense of belonging, of loving, being loved and being part of God's universe was something Tolstoi sought his whole life. The theme of belonging is central to most of his works, from *Childhood* to *Master and Man*. In view of Tolstoi's thoughts about animals and a sense of belonging, as well as Kholstomer's own feelings, castration becomes especially evil because it severs young Kholstomer's connection to other horses: "No one responded to my neighing, everyone turned away from me. Suddenly, I understood everything, understood how far from them all I had forever become" (26:18). The other horses' rejection of Kholstomer helps Tolstoi draw a parallel between humans and animals, because just as humans tend to ostracize others based on prejudice, animals, too, can reject one of their own who is fundamentally deficient in some way. The horses' unkindness towards Kholstomer is an example of Tolstoi's aversion to sentimentalizing animals.

In addition to a sense of belonging, acceptance and love by others, castration affects Kholstomer's self-acceptance: he feels insecure and alienated from himself; he thinks other horses find him funny looking, with his thin and long neck, big head, long and awkward legs, and stupid allure (ibid.). Even being labeled "piebald" by humans at birth did not have such an effect on him because unlike humans, the other horses liked his coloring, and he began to forget human words about it and felt happy. He comes to see

being piebald as a flaw because as LaRubia-Prado (quoted earlier), points out, his colour "leads to his being gelded." Kholstomer summarizes himself: "I was thrice unhappy: I was piebald, I was a gelding, and people imagined that I belonged not to God, as all living beings, but [to them] (26:21).

As he muses about the human concept of property and ownership, the horse shares how he came to learn that he belonged to the Master of Horses after the Master whipped a drunk groom who did not feed Kholstomer all day. When the groom returned to the stables, looking pale and sad, arousing compassion, Kholstomer tried putting his head over the groom's shoulder, but the groom hit him with a fist and kicked him in the stomach with his boot. "[The Master] feels more sorry for the animal than a a human being. He has no Christian soul" – the groom complained (26:19).

The question of Christianity and abuse is raised again when Kholstomer briefly lives with an old woman. While most of his life he was a victim of human cruelty, during this period of his life he becomes a witness of human cruelty towards other humans: "She used to go to Saint Nikolai and whip her coachman regularly. The coachman would cry in my stables. And that is how I learned that tears have a pleasant salty taste" (26:27). This is Kholstomer's last story where the reference to Saint Nikolai answers the bitter abusive groom's charge that punishing a human for neglecting an animal indicates no Christian soul, implying that humans have a higher moral status than animals. [123] Saint Nikolai the Wonderworker, whom the old woman visited regularly, is a patron of farm animals in ancient Russian texts, and in some instances, he is closely associated with horses (Uspenskii 44). Constantly reminded of Saint Nikolai's patronage, neither the old woman

[123] According to the Old Testament: "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast" (KJV Bible, Prov. 12:10)

nor her coachman abuses Kholstomer. Moreover, unlike the angry groom who, having been whipped, hits and kicks the innocent horse who showed him trust, the constantly whipped coachman does not redirect his pain at the horse, but instead weeps "on his shoulder." He, who is kind to animals, has a Christian soul, while the whipped groom, who starves the horse jeopardizing the animal's health and is rightfully punished, does not. The description of Kholstomer's life with the old woman is reminiscent of Dostoevskii's memory about a coachman who cruelly whipped a horse after himself being hit over the head by the courier. But unlike Dostoevskii's episode—or Kholstomer's earlier experience with the beaten groom—the old woman's coachman does not take out his own abuse on the innocent horse, but instead comes to the animal for consolation.

Although the most well-known of his animal stories, *Kholstomer* is not the only example of Tolstoi trying to convey an animal's point of view. A brief, but intense episode of Levin hunting with his dog Laska in *Anna Karenina* demonstrates not only Tolstoi's knowledge of a hunting dog's behavior, but also the author's talent for "penetrating others' minds, even those of animals" (Gustafson 16). Tolstoi begins with Levin's walk to the marsh – this is a description of a very visual being's perception (19:166/592).[124] As he follows Laska, Levin *glances at* the sky, noticing that if the moon was *shining* at the start of their walk, now it "merely *gleamed* like a bit of quicksilver." If he could not have *missed* the morning star before, now he had *to look for* it; and "the spots on the distant field, *indistinct* before, were now *clearly visible*" (my italics). As he hears bees whizzing by, he *looks closer* and sees many of them. And by the steam rising from the marsh he can *recognize* it. Italicizing the words that convey a human's

[124] 90% of the information transmitted to the human brain is visual.

perspective further emphasizes that this is the world as seen by Levin and not Laska. Full of specifically human similes, such as “moon like quicksilver,” “bees [whizzing by] like bullets,” and “small willow bushes, like islands,” the description also conveys a human-height perspective when “still invisible without the sun’s light, the dew on the tall, fragrant hemp, […] wetted Levin’s legs and his blouse above the waist” (ibid.).

Subtly yet suddenly, the narrative shifts so that the readers are immersed in the dog’s world rich with all kinds of smells. As the narrative follows the dog, the readers learn what it is like to search for something by smell, not by sight:

> Running into the marsh, Laska at once picked up, amidst the familiar smells of roots, marsh grass, rust, and the alien smell of horse dung, the bird smell spread all throughout the place, the same strong-smelling bird that excited her more than anything else. Here and there over the moss and marsh burdock this smell was very strong, but it was impossible to tell in which direction it grew stronger or weaker. To find the direction, she had to go further downwind. […] Laska ran to the right, away from the morning breeze blowing from the east, and then turned upwind. Breathing in the air with flared nostrils, she sensed a once that there were not only tracks but *they* themselves were there, and not one but many (19:167/593).

Although Tolstoi could not completely avoid naming at least very loosely things like “marsh grass,” “rust” and “horse dung,” he does not name the prey birds’ species, thus creating an even more realistic dog’s perspective, who neither knows the birds’ name nor calls them “birds” – Laska simply thinks of the birds as “they”: “They were there, but precisely where she was still unable to tell. […] *Their* smell struck her more and more strongly, more and more distinctly, and suddenly it became perfectly clear to her that one of them was there, behind the hummock, five steps away from her” (italics in the original). Focusing on the dog’s world of smells, Tolstoi minimizes the importance of sight and allows the readers to experience Laska’s search from her dog’s height.

> […] she knew what to do, and not looking where she put her feet, stumbling in vexation over high hummocks and getting into the water, but managing with her strong, supple legs, she began the circle that would make everything clear to her. […] On her short legs she could see nothing ahead of her, but she knew from the smell that it was sitting no more than five steps away (ibid.).

As Laska senses the birds, she even breathes cautiously and “still more cautiously she turned more with her eyes than her head to look at her master” – this detail also suggests a dog’s height because the only thing that Laska can see well is her human master who is taller than hummocks. In addition, the narrative modifies the perception of time and speed: “He [Levin] […] was coming, stumbling over hummocks, and extremely slowly as it seemed to her. It seemed to her that he was moving slowly, yet he was running” (19:168/594). Tolstoi nicely summarizes the physical species-specific differences when Levin, having realized the dog has sensed the birds, comes up to her and begins “looking in front of him from his height and saw with his eyes what she had seen with her nose” (ibid.).

Besides contrasting the human’s and the dog’s physical/sensory perspective, Tolstoi shows the difference in their understanding of hunting. Similar to the useless human commands that Kholstomer comments on, Levin’s commands only interfere with Laska’s search for the prey. Trying to locate the birds, Laska begins “a circle to find the place when her master’s voice suddenly distracted her” (19:167/594). Upon hearing his command, she paused “as if to ask, if it would not be better to finish what she had begun” (ibid.). But when he repeated the command angrily, pointing to a spot “where there could not be anything,” she pretended to search “to give him pleasure,” but then returned to her original spot, and without him “hindering her, she knew what to do” (ibid.).

While Levin can read Laska's body language, as when he understood that she was after the great snipe based on her stance, Laska's short internal monologue in response to his persistent commands "to flush it" demonstrates that his decisions make no sense to her:

> 'But I can't flush anything,' thought Laska. 'Where will I flush it from? I can sense them from here, but if I move forward, I won't be able to tell where they are and what they are.' Yet here he was nudging her with his knee and saying in an excited whisper: 'Flush it, Lasochka, flush it!'
> 'Well, if that's what he wants, I'll do it, but I can't answer for myself anymore,' she thought and tore forward at full speed between hummocks. She no longer smelled anything, but only saw and heard without understanding anything (19:168/594).

Although this hunting episode appears to be a positive experience overall, the descriptions of the prey birds' consciousness and intentionality reveal a hidden tension. Aware of the human's and the dog's presence and acting cautiously "[one snipe] was listening, its head turned. Then, fluffing its wings slightly and folding them again, it wagged its behind clumsily and disappeared around the corner" (19:168/594). The narrator further individualizes both birds: when Laska flushes them, one snipe flies up right away and is shot, while the other acts differently: it does not wait for the dog, but flies behind Levin, getting shot from a distance (ibid.). So, when the once feeling and thinking birds are described as "doubled up and dry, caked with blood, their heads twisted to the side, no longer looking as impressive as when they flew," the effect is disconcerting. The image of a once "impressive-looking," but now lifeless being will recur in another form when Vronsky rushes to the train station: "on a table in the shed, sprawled shamelessly among strangers, lay the blood-covered body [of Anna], still filled with recent life; the intact head […] was thrown back" (19:362/780). And while the

causes of Anna's death and the birds' death are different, the violent nature of both emphasizes the senseless loss of life.

Human-Animal Companionship and the Meaning of Life

Levin's hunting episode is not the first time Tolstoy conveyed a dog's perspective. Already in *War and Peace* there is a brief moment when the readers see the retreat through the eyes of Platon Karataev's bow-legged dog whom he calls Gray: "Gray was sleeker and merrier than in Moscow. On all sides lay the flesh of various animals – from men to horses, in various stages of decay. The walking men kept the wolves from coming near, so that Grey could eat as much as he liked" (12:154/1061).[125]

Platon Karataev and Gray reveal to the reader the kinship and interconnectedness of humans and animals not only as bodies, but also as beings who feel and suffer. Platon meets Pierre when the latter, traumatized and demoralized after watching an execution, is in a state where, although he was not yet aware, "his faith in the world's good order, in humanity's and his own soul, and in God, was destroyed. […] And he felt that to return to faith in life was not in his power" (12:44/968-969). Platon not only helps Pierre find faith again, but also shows him the secret to true happiness: loving others and accepting God's will. The narrator repeatedly emphasizes that Platon not only loves animals, but is also close to them. For instance, when the little bow-legged dog appeared among the captives, she chose Platon and stuck with him, and "he loved her." Moreover, Platon is often compared to an animal by characters and the narrator himself. Some soldiers lovingly call

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[125] Ilya Vinitsky sees in the happy dog feeding on the horses and humans alike "an echo of general Tushin's reflections, which are reworkings of Herder's theory of metempsychosis: "How are we better than dogs or these organisms?" (132). Vinitsky insightfully notes that Karataev's dog represents Tolstoi's "rejection of homocentrism" (ibid.).

him "falcon" (*sokolik*), and he even sings "like birds" (19:49/970, 973). In his daily prayers, he prays for both humans and horses: "The Lord Jesus, Nikola Ugodnik, Frola and Lavra! The Lord Jesus, Nikola Ugodnik, Frola and Lavra! The Lord Jesus! – have mercy and save us!" (19:48/971-972). And when Pierre cannot understand what he means by "Frola and Lavra," Platon explains: "It's a horse's feast. Beasts should also be pitied," and checking on the dog who curled up at his feet, falls asleep. After Platon's explanation Pierre feels that the heretofore destroyed world "was arising in his soul with a new beauty, on some new and unshakeable foundation" (ibid.).

Platon's dog Grey is reminiscent of the prison dog, Zhuchka, who became Gorianchikov's "best friend" in Dostoevskii's *Notes from a Dead House* and Levinas's dog, Bobby, who befriended him and his fellow prisoners at the concentration camp.[126] The little dog belonged to no one and had no definite name: the French called her Azor,[127] another soldier called her Femgalka, while Platon and others called her Gray, sometimes Floppy. Not belonging to anyone, her lack of name, breed, and even definite color did not trouble the dog and she, very much like Platon, went with the flow, present in the moment because "everything was the source of enjoyment for her. Now, squealing with joy, she was wallowing on her back, now she was basking in the sun, looking pensive and significant, now she was frolicking, playing with a piece of wood or a straw" (12:92/1009). Friendly with both French soldiers and their Russian prisoners of war, she ignores artificial human boundaries that separate French from Russians, captors from

[126] There is another loose similarity between Gorianchikov's and Pierre's situations in captivity: just like peasant prisoners did not accept Gorianchikov because he was from nobility, the captive Russians with whom Pierre was placed were of the lowest rank, and stayed away from Pierre and even mocked him because he was a'*barin*' [gentry] and spoke French. But unlike Gorianchikov, Pierre does not find a friend in a dog, Karataev does.
[127] In Dostoevskii's *The Humiliated and the Insulted* the dog's name is Azor, too.

captives. In this she and Platon are alike: after Platon sews a shirt for a French soldier, the latter first demands the leftover scraps of material, but then feeling embarrassed returns them, and Platon says: “They say they are heathenish, but they’ve got souls, too. […] He’s naked himself, and here he’s given them to me” (12:96/1012). In another episode Pierre witnesses a French soldier push away a Russian prisoner, and a bit later he sees the same prisoner sitting by the fire and stroking something – peering closer, Pierre recognizes the little purple dog who was sitting next to the Russian and wiggling her tail. Like Zhuchka and Bobby, this dog is the prisoners’ source of the warmth and humaneness of which they are deprived.

And in the episode of Platon’s death the little dog is the only being who shows an empathetic reaction. The French shot prisoners who became ill and/or physically unable to continue the march – a fate similar to that of broken-down horses who are shot when they become ill or are no longer able to walk. Having fallen ill, Karataev became too enfeebled to continue marching, and when a French Marshall was passing by, Pierre saw Platon sitting, leaning against a birch tree. “He looked at Pierre with his kind, round eyes, now veiled with tears and was evidently calling him over, wanting to say something. But Pierre was too afraid for himself. He pretended that he had not seen his look and hurriedly walked away” (12:157/1063-1064). The last thing Pierre saw was two French soldiers standing next to Platon, then he heard a gunshot, and the dog began to howl from the spot where Karataev was sitting. And Pierre’s thought is: “what a fool, what’s it howling about?” He continues walking without looking back, just as Vronsky too would walk away from Frou Frou when she was shot.

Gustafson offers a very positive interpretation of Pierre's reaction to Karataev's killing, suggesting that it was his lesson on "the love of death. […] Karataev dies and Pierre is as detached from the event as Karataev himself. Even death cannot destroy that happiness within. Pierre's 'image of the whole universe' is complete" (80). Gustafson refers to Pierre's dream in which his old teacher showed him a globe:

> The globe was a large wavering sphere without any dimension. The whole surface […] consisted of drops pressed densely together [that] were all moving, shifting. […] Each drop was striving to expand, to seize the most possible space but the others striving for something were trying to compress it, sometimes destroying it and sometimes merging with it. "That is life," said the old teacher. God is the center and each drop strives to spread out in order to reflect Him to the greatest extent. It grows, merges, is compressed and destroyed at the surface, sinks to the depths and floats up again. Like [they] Karataev expanded and disappeared. (12:158-159/1064-1065).

Gustafson insightfully points out that this dream "is the culmination of Pierre's metaphysical quest, [and] also one of Tolstoy's most important fictional images of his metaphysics of life" (81). Yet while Pierre, with Karataev's help, discovers the essential truths about loving life, others, God and accepting God's will in life and death, he misses one other subtle but fundamental lesson – that of responding to the suffering of others that Karataev and the little dog taught him.

Pierre's failure to show compassion towards and moral support for Karataev reveals his self-centeredness. When Platon fell ill and was becoming weaker and weaker, Pierre "did not know why, […] but he had had to make an effort to approach him" (12:152/1060). Although Pierre "did not know why," the description of his thoughts and actions reveals the "why." Despite the narrator's reassuring comment that Pierre "did not think about himself" and his repeated descriptions of Pierre's newly found awareness about the importance of death, pain and loving life, there are three details which show

that Pierre did not learn how to respond ethically to another's suffering. First, in all the descriptions of Pierre's thoughts from the time he met Platon to the time of Platon's death, Pierre focuses only on himself. Second, when Pierre heard Platon's weakened sickly voice one night and saw his pitiful face, Pierre "felt something stab his heart unpleasantly. He was *afraid* of his pity for this man and wanted to go away" (italics mine) (12:154/1061). Third, when he saw enfeebled Platon under the birch tree, his eyes beckoning him, "Pierre became *too afraid for himself*" and pretended not to see him (italics mine). For all his new insights about the flow of life, and the necessary order of death and pain, Pierre shrinks from the emotional pain of co-suffering with the other. He may have mastered the physical discomfort of his sore feet, but the pain of ethical disruption at the sight of another's destitution was too much for him to bear.

In *On Life* Tolstoy tries to articulate his thoughts on suffering and its causes, differentiating between mental torture or anguish (*muchenie*) and physical pain (26:427-430). He points to lack of faith and resultant sin as the sources mental anguish for human adults. Suffering for animals and little children is primarily physical pain without the mental torture. Moreover, for rational human adults, suffering becomes torturous when they do not understand how their lives and actions are connected to the lives of other people because such an individualistic mindset prevents them from seeing their own sins and the suffering they inflict on others. Focused on themselves, they see their own suffering as unfair and meaningless, feeling bitterness and despair. Only when people understand that their errors and sins affect others' lives—as in Father Zosima's formulation that "everyone is guilty for everyone" in *The Brothers Karamazov*— do they

begin to see their suffering as meaningful and just, only then do they become inspired to liberate themselves from their misbeliefs and sins (ibid.).[128]

This is what Pierre learns from Platon when the latter tells a story about a wrongfully convicted man who accepts his suffering as a punishment for his own sinful life.[129] And further, he learns that the key to happiness is to love God and to love All. But despite understanding the reasons for suffering, its place in life and learning to accept one's own suffering humbly, Pierre misses the lesson that it is one's duty to show compassion and to strive to alleviate the suffering of others. In *On Life* Tolstoy continues:

> The whole world of people and animals suffers and has never stopped suffering. Wounds, injuries, hunger, cold, illnesses, accidents, and, most importantly, giving birth […] – all of these are essential conditions of existence. All of this is the very thing the lessening of which and the aid for which constitute the meaning of the rational life of people – the very thing at which the true work of life is directed. (26:433-434)[130]

Referring to these thoughts from Tolstoy on suffering, Gustafson concludes that just as pain preserves life because it signals "a deviation from the law which governs life," so too does suffering on the spiritual level signal "the absence of and need for love. Therefore, "in the face of the suffering of others, apparently, there can be only one appropriate response: "aid" for the sufferer and "alleviation of the suffering" (151). Pierre's walking away from the ailing Platon under the birch tree is not an act of acceptance of death, but an act of moral cowardice.

While Pierre fails to respond to Platon's suffering ethically, with the actions of Platon's little purple bow-legged dog who stays with him till the end and howls over him

[128] Tolstoi loved the section about Zosima in *The Brothers Karamazov*.
[129] Tolstoi wrote a separate story about this, "*God Sees the Truth But Waits,"* that he considered one of the few of his works as good art (after his views on art changed). See Caryl Emerson in *Cambridge Companion to Tolstoy*.
[130] Translation mine.

when he is shot. And while Pierre sorts out his newly acquired important insights, the little dog continues greeting and cheering exhausted captive soldiers. This little dog exemplifies "loving others" and "participating in the lives of others" that are essential to Tolstoi's conception of "reciprocal belonging" (Gustafson 8). Her howl evokes Petia Rostov's death a few chapters earlier. When Denisov dismounted the horse to look at motionless Petia, the Cossacks [standing nearby] turned around in surprise upon hearing the sounds, "similar to a *dog's barking*, with which Denisov quickly turned away"[131] (italics mine) (12:150/1058). The parallel between Denisov's reaction to Petia Rostov's death and the little dog's howl further underscores Pierre's moral failure to respond to the sickly Platon's beckoning and death, and the dog's moral superiority.

In *Anna Karenina* as Levin searches for answers to the questions most important to him: "What am I? And where am I? And why am I here?" he explicitly includes animals as beings who share with humans the same finitude:

> 'Why are they all bustling about and trying to show me their zeal? [he thinks as he looks into the threshing barn] Why is this old woman toiling so? [When a beam fell on her] she recovered, but today or tomorrow, or in ten years they'll bury her and nothing will be left of her, nor of that saucy one in a red skirt […]. She'll be buried, too, and so will this piebald gelding – very soon,' he thought, looking at the heavy-bellied horse, breathing rapidly through flared nostrils, that was treading the slanted wheel as it kept escaping from him. 'He'll be buried, and Fyodor, the feeder, with his curly beard full of chuff […], will also be buried. And above all, not only they, but I, too, will be buried and nothing will be left. What for?' (19:374-375/793).

Eventually, a peasant—also, significantly, named Platon—provides Levin with the answer: "to live for God, for the soul, for others" (19:376/794). As Levin tries to sort out all the thoughts that this revelation "sparked" in his mind, he comes in contact with another non-human being:

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[131] Denisov wore an icon of Nikolai the Wonder-Maker – a patron of farm animals, especially, horses – whom Kholstomer's old mistress visits regularly.

> "Yes, I need to think it over, - he thought, […] watching the movements of a green little insect, crawling up a blade of grass and being obstructed by a leaf. – From the start, - he was saying to himself, moving away the leaf so that it would not impede the insect, and bending another blade of grass for the insect to move on it. – What brings me joy? What have I discovered?" " Before I used to say that in my body, in the body of this grass and this insect (look, she did not want to move onto this blade of grass and flew away) an exchange of matter happens according to physical, chemical, physiological laws. And in all of us, together with aspens, and clouds, and foggy spots, a development is happening. Development from what? Into what? Infinite development and struggle?... As if there could be any direction and struggle in infinity! And I was surprised that, despite the greatest exertion of thought in this direction, the meaning of life, of my strivings and impulses would still not be revealed to me. But the meaning of my striving in me is so clear that I always live according to it, and I was surprised and glad, when the muzhik expressed it: to live for God, for the soul" (19:378/796).

Paying attention to and including the little insect in his thoughts, Levin makes room in his newly discovered meaning of life for non-human beings, and even plants.

"Living for God, for the soul, for others" includes selfless service to others, and those who live such a meaningful life do not have to fear death. Once again Tolstoi uses animals – and in particular horses – as examples of selfless service to others in life and even death. The best example is Kholstomer, whose innate faith convinces him that he, "as all living beings, belongs to God only" (26:21). While it may seem that Kholstomer serves others because he has no choice since people force him to work for them, Kholstomer lives for others by freely showing compassion for them. Unlike so many humans in the story, Kholstomer closes the gap between humans and animals as he calls people "a strange breed of animals" and talks about "animal human instinct" (26:18). Tolstoi poetically conveys Kholstomer's selfless essence in the scene of the horse's dead body nourishing dogs, crows, hawks and a mother wolf with her five cubs. Even his remaining bones were put to good use by a peasant. Tolstoy contrasts the "rightness" of Kholstomer's life with Serpukhovskii's wasted life, describing the Prince as a "dead body

that ate, drank and walked the earth" and ending the story with a famous description of the way "dead people who bury dead people dressed this bloated rotting body in a uniform, put it in a casket, and covered it with dirt (26:37).[132] Most likely, as in the case of Kholstomer, Platon Karataev's body, shot and left in the road, will serve as food for some animals, too.

Master and Man (1895) is one of Tolstoy's last stories that illustrates the right way to live.[133] It is about a rich man, Brekhunov, and his peasant servant, Nikita, who become stranded in the blizzard on their way to another village for business. Initially calculating and greedy, Brekhunov experiences a spiritual regeneration and freezes to death saving Nikita. Unlike his master, Nikita embodies a life lived for God, for the soul and for others from the start of the story. When the narrator describes him, he emphasizes that most of his fifty-year life Nikita lived not at home, but "among the people" (*ne doma, a v liudiakh*), and everyone, including Brekhunov's wife and little son, love him (29:4). His only weakness is his alcoholism, but he finds enough strength to quit and resists the temptation to drink during the trip. In a way he is reminiscent of Platon Karataev in his cheerful disposition, acceptance of God's will and love for animals – one of Nikita's qualities that Brekhunov values.[134] The narrator notes that Nikita was patient like "all people living with nature" (29:36).

The fact that the narrator describes in detail Nikita's interactions with animals emphasizes the importance of this aspect of Nikita's personality. For instance, the

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[132] Already in *War and Peace* there is the idea of horses, similar to Kholstomer, serving others even after death: horse meat is virtually the only nutritious food available to the Russian prisoners of war, including Pierre.

[133] Translation of *Master and Man* mine.

[134] Elizabeth Trahan observes that when, having realized that they were lost and would have to spend the night in the blizzard, Nikita "was ready for death, without any reproach toward his master or God" (261).

episode when Nikita comes to prepare the horse Mukhortyi for the trip is reminiscent of the opening moment when Nester comes to put the reins and saddle on Kholstomer. But if Nester is rough with Kholstomer, calling the horse '*drian*' [rubbish] because he thinks Kholstomer does not like having a saddle put on him, Nikita responds to the horse's "greeting neigh" by asking gently: "What, missing me, silly?" (29:5). The narrator takes time to describe in detail how Nikita talks to the horse "exactly the same way one talks with creatures who understand words," how he and Mukhorty have their own jokes and how Nikita in all seriousness explains his actions to the horse (ibid.). As they leave, Nikita asks Brekhunov's wife to ensure that they feed the horses.

Nikita feels compassion for all animals, not only those he takes care of at Brekhunov's. He is upset to see peasants yelling at and whipping the horse attached to a carriage they pass: "the horse with a big belly, breathing heavily, was apparently mustering all of her strength in vain trying to run away from the whip, hobbling on her short legs, […], her nostrils flared and ears folded in fear" (29:16). While Brekhunov finds this encounter entertaining, Nikita thinks: "What wine can do. Completely tortured/ground down the poor horse" (ibid.). The drunken peasants whipping the horse echoes the scene of the bludgeoned horse in Dostoevskii's *Crime and Punishment*. And similar to Dostoevskii's emphasis on the bludgeoned horse's head that the little boy Raskolnikov embraces, in Tolstoy's story, the poor horse's head with "flared nostrils and ears folded in fear" lingers for a few seconds at Nikita's shoulder level, and he can hear the "breathing of the tortured horse" (ibid).

Nikita's love for and intuitive understanding of all animals, not only Brekhunov's, is obvious when they stop at someone's house for a short break. When Nikita moves

Mukhortyi under the shed as directed by the servant of the house, he finds there hens, a rooster and sheep, and since it is winter and Nikita and Brekhunov were looking for a place to stay briefly, a traditional Christmas manger comes to mind. When the animals became upset, "Nikita talked to them all: apologized before the hens, promising not to disturb them anymore; reproached the sheep for getting scared of what they know not; and continued calming down the little dog who kept barking" (29:18-19). This subtle reference to the circumstances of Christ's birth with animals significantly strengthens Nikita's links to Christ.[135] Even when Nikita and Brekhunov become completely lost and decide to spend the night out in the open, Nikita worries about Mukhortyi and ensures that the horse is well covered before he lies down himself.

While all these details about Nikita's care for and organic interactions with animals show how important love of animals is for a God-centered life, the story about such a life would be incomplete without a description of the animal's way of life. While Mukhortyi does not tell his side of the story like Kholstomer does, the narrator provides many details revealing him as a distinct individual with his own personality: Mukhortyi has his own jokes along with which Nikita plays, he is very intelligent, with a mind of his own: sometimes he is reluctant to move, other times he seems to be thinking about something. And just like Nikita, Mukhortyi, too, is loyal and stays with his humans till the end, freezing to death.

As with Kholstomer, it may appear that Mukhortyi had no choice but to stay with Brekhunov and Nikita, but the narrator demonstrates that Mukhortyi can exercise his agency. For example, he refuses to move when he does not want to: when the blizzard worsened, and it got very dark, Mukhortyi stopped abruptly, "apparently sensing

[135] Examining biblical parallels in the story, John Hagan views Nikita as a Christ figure.

something wrong" – when Nikita gets out of the sleigh to check, he falls into a ravine (29:26). In addition, Mukhortyi could have run away as horses sometimes do, especially in a stressful situation. In an early story, *The Snowstorm* (1856)—similarly about people getting lost in a blizzard—the frightened horses run away when two sleighs almost collide. In Tolstoy's own personal experience, on which *Master and Man* is based, his horse ran away, too.[136] The episode when Brekhunov mounts Mukhortyi to ride away leaving Nikita behind alone also demonstrates the horse's agency: Brekhunov kept directing the horse to the left, but Mukhortyi continued turning to the right, and eventually lead back to the sleigh and the freezing Nikita.

The depth of the harmonious intuitive companionship between Nikita and Mukhortyi that opened the story becomes especially apparent when they are trying to survive. The horse remains loyal to Nikita, just like Nikita continuously shows his concern for Mukhortyi. Calling the horse by various terms of endearment "dear heart, buddy, little fool" (*serdechnyi, druzhok, durachok* etc.), Nikita tries to cheer him up and make him as comfortable as possible. As they settle to spend the night in the blizzard, Nikita first covers Mukhortyi, ensuring he is protected as much as possible. Moreover, Nikita repeatedly calls Mukhortyi "brother" (*brat*) and "friend" (*druzhok)* closing the gap between humans and animals. When he begins to fall and slide down the ravine, he yells to himself "whoa" (*tpru*)– the command used to stop horses, and when he is sitting abandoned by Brekhunov, "he felt as tired, as a horse when it cannot move forward anymore despite whipping" (29:36). These details reveal Nikita's understanding of the human-animal relationship as one of kinship.

[136] Trahan references Mme Raevskaia's memories about Tolstoi's long absence in a blizzard on February 15, 1892: "they set out after him and found him crossing a snowy field on foot, left behind by his horse" (260).

In the context of this interspecies affection, even the description of Brekhunov's frozen body as a "frozen carcass" acquires a positive meaning. Although he never demonstrated Nikita's love of animals and principle of "living with nature" while alive, he did sacrifice himself trying to keep Nikita warm, experiencing spiritual regeneration as a result.[137] And the fact that his dead body with arms spread out resembles at the same time the body of Christ and that of a frozen animal bears to the significance of animals in Tolstoy's idea of "living for God, for the soul, for others."[138] There is another subtle parallel between Brekhunov and Mukhortyi: when the former undergoes an inner transformation realizing that he is saving Nikita's life, 'tears appear in his eyes." Later, when the peasants finally dug out the three, Mukhortyi's "nostrils were covered in icicles, his eyes were frosted and were covered as if in tears"(29:45). And in his description of Brekhunov's frozen hawk-like bulging eyes, the narrator uses the same verb '*obmerzli'* that he uses to speak of Mukhortyi. Although he failed to love animals when alive, Brekhunov acquires something in common with them in his meaningful, selfless death.

Taking up my premise that Tolstoi's later works clarify the earlier ones, I would like to conclude this examination of his literary animals by briefly analyzing the early story *The Snowstorm* (1856) that resembles *Master and Man*.[139] Like the later story, *The Snowstorm* is about several men, including the narrator, who ride through a winter blizzard. While the horses in this story do not have names and do not speak, Tolstoi

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[137] When he saw that the horse's covers fell off, he understood that he should go and cover the horse, but he did not want "to leave Nikita for a minute and disrupt that joyous mood he experienced." So, even in his epiphanic moment, his human egoism is still strong: he could not sacrifice his feelings to cover the animal. And nothing would have happened to Nikita in those couple of minutes it would have taken him to fix the covering. This detail shows that while he did transform spiritually and saw Christ, he still did not reach Nikita's level of awareness that encompasses animals together with humans.

[138] For Brekhunov's frozen body position as a symbol of the cross see Elizabeth Trahan, *L.N.Tolstoj's Master and Man – A Symbolic Narrative,* 264-265.

[139] Donovan calls *Master and Man* "a more mature and more fully developed version of *Snowstorm* (47).

describes them in such detail that they emerge as distinct feeling beings each with a personality of its own: Thus, one "piebald horse, stretching its neck and straining its back, went evenly along the completely snow-ridden road, monotonously shaking its shaggy head […] and pricking one snow-covered ear" (3:136).[140] Another horse slackened "and required the whip, but from habit as a good and even mettlesome horse seemed vexed at its own weakness, and angrily lowered and tossed its head at the reins" (ibid.).

As the lost riders try to find their way, Tolstoi empathetically draws the readers' attention to how tired the horses are: "the off-horse […] kept running, only the sunken, heaving belly and drooping ears showing how exhausted she was" (3:142). When the riders find a fresh trail, they see there "pink spots of blood, probably from a horse that had overreached itself," and when they finally arrive, there stood near the inn, "a troika of grey horses, their coats curly from sweat, their legs outstretched and their heads drooping wearily" (ibid.). Similar to Nikita, the coachmen and the narrator trust their horses to lead them because "an intelligent horse knows herself: can't lead you her astray off the road" (3:123).

The narrator's dream about a drowned peasant presents an ordinary man, Fyodor Filippych, a servant on the narrator's estate who is kind to animals, as an example of living "for God and for others." The dream begins with the narrator in his youth in a state of Romantic longing near a pond at his family estate. Tolstoi's ironic treatment of the narrator's Romantic self-absorption in nature somewhat anticipates Olenin's experience at the stag lair. But if Olenin pretends to "merge" with nature by letting mosquitos bite him, here the vibrant, buzzing and chirping non-human presence interferes with the narrator's longing: "but the flies, unbearable flies, do not leave me alone here, start

[140] Translation for *The Snowstorm* mine.

gathering around me and stubbornly, like little fruit pits, jump from my forehead to my arms" (3:129). A passing woman's concern that someone has drowned disrupts his contemplative mood, his self-centered preoccupation with the crowd's potential surprise at him had he rescued the peasant is no longer ironic, but ethically wrong.

The only person who rushes into the pond to pull out the the drowned man is Fyodor Filippovich. He actively participates in all household activities, prompting the narrator to pose questions similar to Levin's: "And what is it? […] does he think that he is useful, necessary for the common cause, or is he simply glad that God gave him this confident, convincing eloquence which he is using with pleasure? Must be so" (ibid.). Fyodor Filippych's rescue attempt answers this question. The narrator describes how Trezorka—the dog he is friends with—loyally follows him as he takes off his cross and swims. Thus, the person who anticipates the answer to Levin's question of living "for God, for the soul, for others" is a servant who wears the cross, has a dog for a friend and is ready to risk his life for another.[141]

ON LIFE (1886-1887): Living According to God-given Law[142]

In a diary entry from September 15, 1904 Tolstoi wonders how a dog or wolf sees the world: "it does not picture a human as a brunette, bald, white, and generally as a visual image, but smell: bitter, sour, sweet etc. For a dog a human's appearance is the same as for us a human's smell. And how does a fly see the world? Very difficult to

[141] In "the exuberant liveliness of the dog in the face of death" Donovan sees the theme Tolstoy was to continue in *Three Deaths* (1859): "the conclusion of which describes the exuberant thriving of vegetation, signifying the eternal resurrection of life, in the face of the deaths the story depicts" (47).
[142] Translation for *On Life* mine.

guess and imagine even a little bit" (55:89).[143] *On Life* demonstrates Tolstoi's attempt to understand and articulate the differences and similarities between humans and animals as he ponders the meaning of life, the right way to live and suffering. Although the same life force permeates and unites human and non-human lives, each group of beings receives a special God-appointed law, and a life guided by the law leads to harmony and happiness.

Initially, *On Life* began as an idea for an article about life for L.E. Obolenkii's journal *Russian Treasure* (*Russkoe bogatstvo*). In a letter to G.A. Rusanov from April, 1887, Tolstoi writes about working on "thoughts about life and death. […] This elucidation of what life is exactly seems important (Christ explained it), Christ's elucidation for the people who do not want to understand the Gospel – it is very important, necessary, will add happiness" (64:32).[144] By the time he finished the work, he removed "death" from the title, because the word lost the meaning that Tolstoi had in mind initially. In this section I will focus on the key points Tolstoi makes about human-animal relationships.

Tolstoi presents life as an orderly hierarchy: while common Reason ('*razum'*) or God underlies the existence of all forms of life, each category of beings – humans, animals, plants, and even inorganic things like rocks – have their own God-appointed law designed specifically for them. Living in accordance to their God-given law brings harmony and happiness to each group of beings. The law for animals manifests itself in what he calls the "animal personality" (*zhivotnaia lichnost'*) or animal life (*zhivotnaia zhizn'*) which he defines as a life oriented to seeking one's personal good (*blago*) and satisfying one's "animal" or physical and physiological needs and desires: eating, mating,

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[143] Translation mine.
[144] Translation mine.

taking care of one's young etc. Human life subsumes the "animal personality" and also has what he calls "reasonable consciousness" (*razumnoe soznanie*) that can help humans rise above their "animal personality" and reveal to humans their higher law of living for "God, for the soul, for others" (as Levin understood it). Pointing to the similarities among Buddha's, Lao Tsi's and Confucius' views on life, Tolstoi states that Christ's teaching of "life as love for God and one's close one" subsumes all the preceding ideas (26:328).

Tolstoi emphasizes the importance of living according to one's God-appointed law for happiness:

> if an animal did not acknowledge its own personal law, but instead accepted the moving of matter as its life and saw its life in submission to this moving of matter which happens without any effort on the animal's part, this animal would experience a painful inner conflict. According to the law of the matter the animal would view the purpose of its life in lying and breathing, but its personality would demand very different things: feeding itself, propagating – and then the animal would feel the conflict. "Life," the animal would think, is about submitting to the laws of gravity, i.e., lying about, not moving and submitting to the chemical processes happening in my body. (26:344-345).

Likewise, when humans fail to live according to their "reasonable consciousness" and seek only their individual good, indifferent to others and focused exclusively on the physiological, they experience discontent, unhappiness, and inner discord (ibid.). When Tolstoi negatively refers to people who live like "animals," he does not imply anything derogatory about animals as beings or about their "law" of life. The negative connotation of the words "animal" and "animalistic" when applied to people only suggests that these people live below their God-given law, focusing on their physical and physiological needs; they do not master these needs by reasonable consciousness and do not seek spiritual truths.[145] His usage of the words '*zhivotnoe telo*' ("animal body") to refer to

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[145] As mentioned earlier in this chapter, in Russian the word '*zhivotnyi*' derived from the same root as 'zhizn' (life) and usually translated as "animalistic" also refers to the physical/physiological aspect of life,

humans' "animalistic" life not guided by reasonable consciousness further clarifies that "animal life" for humans implies living by biological/physiological needs and desires and does not demean animals and their non-human lives (26:341-348). Tolstoi explains the same idea in his letter to M.L. Tolstoi, from October 1895, writing that a human combines two aspects: animal/bodily and reasoning/spiritual; and it is the latter, the spiritual, which should guide and direct the former, the animal aspect. He emphasizes that when "reason does not guide the animal life, as it happens in people who yield to temptations, that is how the correct movements of animal life become broken," and this "destructive path deprives such people even of the joys animals experience." Thus, the people who neglect their spirituality do not even live a real, pure animal life as God created it, but degrade it and simply live according to the biological/physiological aspect of their nature.

The notion of "reasonable consciousness" as part of human "law" for life helps clarify Tolstoi's thoughts on animals and suffering (briefly mentioned earlier). In *On Life* Tolstoi states that suffering is part of life and some of it is necessary. For example, physical pain teaches us to avoid danger, while the pains of childbirth are indispensable for the continuation of life (26:433). As he differentiates among various causes of suffering, from natural disasters to illness and injuries, Tolstoi believes that the most torturous suffering is the mental anguish that stems from the awareness of one's sins, an incorrectly lived life and inner conflict. And since only adults can experience mental anguish because only adults can sin and feel an inner discord, children and animals do not suffer as intensely and painfully as adults. But if the key to dealing with one's own

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and in and of itself does not connote anything derogatory for animals as beings. N.V. Veikshan refers to Tolstoi's term of *'zhivotnaia lichnost'* (animal personality) as *'biologicheskii uroven' struktury lichnosti'* (a biological level in the human personality) (19).

suffering is acceptance of it and of one's responsibility, one must respond with compassion to the suffering of others, including animals, extending help and support.

Tolstoi's comparisons of animals and children in *On Life* show that he clearly distinguishes between animals as beings and the biological "animal" life many people without spiritual guidance live. He notes that childhood and animal life are similar in their innocent unawareness of contradictions and the complexities of life (26:342).[146] He expressed a similar idea a few years earlier in his pedagogical work *Who Should Learn How to Write From Whom: Peasant Children From Us, or We – From Peasant Children?* (1882), when he observed that a healthy newborn is in a state of perfect harmony with the truth, beauty and goodness that we all carry within us and seek and desire (8:322). In *On Life* he deepens this idea by emphasizing that animals live a "happy, blessed life" because they follow their God-given law (26:340). The word "blessed" (*blazhennyi*) refers to one's purity and innocence in God's eyes, and in Russian has strong associations with the Russian "holy fool" – a *blazhennyi* person who is considered to be closer to God than normal people.

While humans have to work on themselves to learn how to live according to their God-given law, animals do it naturally. These ideas suggest that animals seem to possess a certain supra-rational capacity (*vneratsional'noe nachalo*); they do not need to learn how to live correctly, they already know it. Uncle Eroshka's comment in *Cossacks* that "the beast knows everything" anticipates these ideas. Merezhkovskii writes that even "if the beast may not know everything, it knows something that the human does not, […] the beast has a certain type of knowledge – innocent" (133). Tolstoi's animals simply know

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[146] In *Anna Karenina* Tolstoi creates a positive association between an innocent baby and an animal when during her visit to Anna, Dolly sees Anna's baby daughter, who "with her sturdy red body and taut, goose-fleshed skin, […] looked at the grown-ups with shining, dark eyes, like a little animal" (19:193/618).

what humans have forgotten and need to rediscover in themselves. In *Confession* (1882), Tolstoi conveys this idea well: "And, indeed, a bird exists so that it should fly, gather food, build nests, and when I see how a bird does it, I rejoice with its joy. A goat, a hare, a wolf exist so that they should feed themselves, mate, feed their families, and when they do that, I firmly believe that they are happy and their life is rationally ordained (*razumna*)" (23:80).

Tolstoi's hierarchical view of the differences between humans, animals, plants and inorganic things as expressed in *On Life* is not based on the principle of superiority and inferiority (i.e., with "lower" forms understood as somehow inferior or incomplete), but simply on the differences in the "law" of one's existence: "If there were higher beings subjugating our reasonable consciousness the same way our consciousness subjugates our animal personality, and how our animal personality (organism) subjugates matter – these higher beings could see our intelligent life just like we see our animal life and the existence of matter." He points out that all living beings are given the capabilities to help them achieve their greatest good (*blago*) (26:340). Harmony and happiness ensue when all living beings realize their fullest potential according to the law God designed specifically for them.

As he tries to understand human and animal ways of being, he acknowledges that our access to animal consciousness and way of life is limited. He points out that humans form their ideas about "human" based on their knowledge of their own interiority and their observations of their own external life. Based on such cumulative information, one can acquire a certain external impression (*vneshnee vpechatlenie*) about others, but cannot really know them (26:355). Thousands and thousands of people "who once lived,

live and will be born whom one has never seen and will never see" compound the impossibility of true knowledge of human nature. This epistemological predicament deepens and increases when it comes to animals, who are numerous, diverse and differ not only from humans, but also from each other. While humans can gain some understanding about animals by extrapolating from their own experience, the fullness of animal consciousness is ultimately inaccessible (26:355). Thus, whether he portrays a hunting dog, or tries to convey what a hounded wild wolf may be feeling, Tolstoi often uses "seem," "as if," "as though" and similar words acknowledging his human limitations in understanding and describing the non-human other's mind. Drawing parallels between the obstacles to full knowledge about humans and animals, Tolstoi acknowledges the individuality of each and every animal. And while he believes that "reasonable consciousness" is God's law for humans, his awareness of humans' limited access to animal subjectivity leads him to acknowledge the presence of something similar in animals, however inaccessible for us. As he notes, "we see in animals personhood similar to ours striving for the good," but it resembles our reasonable consciousness only slightly, and communicating with it as with other humans is not possible (ibid).

Throughout the work he also emphasizes the limitations of science that tends to focus primarily on what is visible, mistaking it for real life.[147] One such mistake lies in studying humans' "animal personality," i.e., the biological/physiological side of life, and overlooking the invisible spiritual (26:353-355,367-374). Studying the laws that govern animals, plants and matter is important and necessary only when such studies have as their main goal studying the law revealed by reasonable consciousness that guides moral choices (ibid.). In her exploration of Tolstoi's literary animals, Miller points to the same

[147] Tolstoy's distrust of science is well known.

emphasis on humans' limited capacity to understand animal subjectivity in the "Second Epilogue" of *War and Peace*:[148]

> A bee settling on a flower stung a child. And the child is afraid of bees and declares that bees exist to sting people. A poet admires the bee sucking from the chalice of a flower and says it exists to suck the fragrance of flowers. A beekeeper, seeing the bee gather pollen from flowers and carry it to the hive, says that it exists to gather honey. Another beekeeper […] says that the bee gathers pollen dust to feed the young bees and rear a queen, and that it exists to perpetuate its race. A botanist notices that the bee flying with the pollen of a male flower to a pistil fertilizes the latter, and sees in this the purpose of the bee's existence. Another, observing the migration of plants, notices that the bee helps in this work, and may say that in this lies the purpose of the bee. But the ultimate purpose of the bee is not exhausted by the first, the second, or any of the processes the human mind can discern. The higher the human intellect rises in the discovery of these purposes, the more obvious it becomes that the ultimate purpose is beyond our comprehension. All that is accessible to man is the relation of life of the bee to other manifestations of life. (12:246).

Tolstoi concludes *On Life* reaffirming animals' subjectivity and the affinity between humans and animals. He repeats his main idea that human life should strive for the good (*blago*), and the true, real good is to be found in following the law of reason, expressed in love. Acknowledging this striving for the good in all living beings is essential to recognizing every horse, insect, tree and plant as distinct individuals (26:436). Returning to one of his favorite human-animal relationships, that between horse and rider, he states that "a human on a horse is not one, but two beings, because we recognize in them two distinct strivings for the good, while in ourselves we know only one" (26:435-436). While in the works we have examined he emphasizes the intuitive understanding and bond between rider and horse who ride as "one," when he writes here that "a human on a horse is not one, but two beings" he guards against the common

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[148] Miller writes: "Humans are but one among the species of animals, Within the group, each individual capacity for knowledge of the whole is always and necessarily partial, whether it is a human seeking to understand the bees, or a herd of rams observing that one of its number is growing much fatter" (*Tolstoy's Peaceable Kingdom* 66).

anthropocentric mistake of recognizing only the human subject and overlooking the horse's subjectivity. Emphasizing each and every animals' individuality and the closeness between humans and animals, he writes: " If I know that a horse, and a dog, and a tick, sitting on [the dog] – are living beings, and I can observe them, that is because a horse, and a dog, and a tick each has its own distinct goals – goals for each, for their own good. And I know that because I know myself [as a being] striving for the good" (ibid.). Thus, recognizing this striving for the good, which is life itself, in animals is fundamental to recognizing each non-human being as a distinct individual. Such honoring of life in each and every being as one feels in oneself is essential to feeling kinship with all other human and non-human beings. And, as Gustafson observes, from such a sense of connection with all beings emerges love for All and universal brotherhood.

Conclusion

Throughout Tolstoi's career, his literary animal representations are inextricably connected to his concerns with violence, suffering, faith and the meaning of life. His detailed and sensitive depictions of animals, especially his frequent comparisons of riders to their horses (instead of using the human as the measure of all things), humorously confirm his contemporaries' observations that some of his descriptions of horses are more elaborate than those of humans. For example, one of the first reviewers commented on *Anna Karenina*: "Isn't it curious? Five lines to describe a protagonist's appearance, and a whole page to describe his horse!" (Tkachev 367-8). One could add that in *Master and Man* even the description of the frozen Mukhortyi is more detailed than that of Brekhunov's frozen carcass.

Regardless of what may seem to be at times Tolstoi's imprecise or contradictory articulations of the differences between human and animal consciousness, such differences are not posited as the criterion for determining an animal's moral considerability.[149] Exploring Tolstoi's diverse ethical concerns and philosophical influences, Orwin notes that: "the synthesis that Tolstoy sought was always a moral one" (*Art and Thought* 9). Tolstoi's way of bringing together his thoughts and observations about human-animal relationships, especially while being aware of human limitations in accessing animals' subjectivity, represents a "moral synthesis," too. In *Path of Life* (1910), a philosophical and religious compilation of his own thoughts and quotes by famous philosophers and religious leaders written during the last year of his life, Tolstoi states that: "the same spiritual essence lives not only in humans, but also in all living beings" (45:50). Alluding to Christ's commandment to love one's close one, he asks: "if one says that birds, horses, dogs, monkeys are completely alien (*chuzhie*) to us, why can't one say that [people of a different skin colour] are, too, alien? Who is the close one then?"[150] In response, he offers only one solution: do not ask, who the close one is, but treat all living beings according to the Golden Rule (45:51). And as he did in *On Life*, in *Path of Life* Tolstoi reaffirms animal subjectivity by pointing out that "we feel in our hearts that what we call our real 'I' is the same not only in every human, but also in a

[149] Continually articulating and clarifying different ideas throughout his life, Tolstoi was aware that sometimes what he said did not accurately convey what he meant. For example, he reproves one of his sons for being "idiotically selfish" in a letter from October 23, 1896 (84:264-265), then in a letter to his wife from October 26, 1896 regrets his harsh words in, explaining that he wanted to help his son become more considerate of others, but "failed" (84:267).
The term 'moral considerability' comes from G.J. Warnock, *The Object of Morality*, (London: Methuen & Co. 1971). Later Kenneth Goodpaster adopted the term in his article "On Being Morally Considerable." *The Journal of Philosophy* 75:6 (1978), 308-25 and it remained in the environmentalist and animal studies discourse. Matthew Calarco uses the term extensively in his *Zoographies* (2008).
[150] In the English translation this commandment is "Love thy neighbor," but in Russian '*vozliubi blizhnego svoego*' the word '*blizhnii*' is broader than "neighbor" and literally means "one's close ones."

dog, and a horse, and a mouse, and a hen, and a sparrow, and a bee, even in a plant" (ibid.). In a 1904 *Diary* entry he writes that for the correct understanding of life and death "one must become aware of one's equality not only with other people, but also animals" (55:85). And, to avoid pride and vanity it is important to remember for him and others that all the ideas he has written down "are no more important than a well-mannered cat" (55:85).

Portraying animals with a respectful and sensitive attention to their thoughts, feelings and physical pain, Tolstoi completely avoids aestheticizing animal suffering. Whether he describes the gruesome slaughter of farm animals, or depicts a dying fictional horse, he affirms the subjectivity and personhood even of the minor animal characters. As a "profoundly visual author," Tolstoy knows that his readers are visual animals. So he creates powerful realistic descriptions, takes advantage of human voyeuristic curiosity and portrays animal consciousness in such ways so as to encourage an ethical engagement with the depicted animal characters and a life guided by a sense of kinship with and compassion for all living beings.

Chapter 4 – A. Chekhov

"Wonderful folk, dogs!" – Chekhov would say with a smile, as Aleksandr Kuprin recollected.[151] Animals surrounded Chekhov much of his life: the dogs Kashtanka, Kashtan, and Tuzik; a tame crane at his Yalta dacha; the mongooses whom he brought from India; mice that he used to trap and release; a rescued cat, Fyodor Timofeevich; and two beloved dachshunds Quinine and Brom.[152] In his letters he frequently addressed his wife by different animal terms of endearment, like "my beloved dog." For such an animal-loving author, his numerous animal characters must have been more than simply symbols and metaphors for human experience. Yet, many scholars only consider them from the point of view of their metaphoric or symbolic significance. In a characteristic example, Michael Finke writes that "Kashtanka" **(**1887**)** – a story about a dog with a chestnut coat – is "really about time and memory, [because her] descent into the hellish circus ring and her ascent to her former masters in the audience . . . constitutes a restoration of ruptured time ("The Hero's Descent" 80). Similarly, in analyzing "Misery" (1886)*,* Lawrence Jay Dessner downplays the significance of the horse and its portrayal

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[151] A. I. Kuprin. "Pamiati Chekhova," *Sobranie sochinenii v shesti tomakh* (Moskva: Izd-vo kudozh. lit-ry, 1957-58)*,* 6:546. S.S. Koteliansky and Leonard Woolf translate Chekhov's phrase "*Slavnyi narod – sobaki*" as "Fine race, dogs!" But the word 'race' tends to emphasize physical traits and is overall narrower than the word 'folk' that conveys kinship, a community of beings and is thus closer to the Russian word 'narod' and its usage in Chekhov's phrase. See A. Kuprin. "To Chekhov's Memory." *Reminiscences of Anton Chekhov*. Trans. S.S. Koteliansky and Leonard Woolf. (New York: B.W. Heubsch Inc., 1921), 37.

[152] Chekhov's biographies testify that he was fond of animals. James McConkey notes that one of Chekhov's brothers shared that their mother instilled in her children "a feeling of regard for all who were in an inferior position and for birds and animals" (85).

as a potentially sentient being (253).[153] In a slightly different vein, L.F. Mironyuk uses animals in Chekhov's stories to examine the importance of zoosemisms and zoomorphisms in his poetics (144).[154]

While interpretations of symbolic and metaphoric meaning of Chekhov's fictional animals are valuable and can provide new insights into Chekhov's ethics and poetics, they tend to overlook the significance of animals in and of themselves. This chapter will examine Chekhov's interest in real, living animals and in human-animal dynamics as reflected in his stories. Analysis of the selected stories will demonstrate how Chekhov not only created animal characters who retain their species specific characteristics, but also how he challenged the human-animal distinction ushered in by Descartes. By portraying animals who feel and reason – traits usually reserved for humans in nineteenth-century literature – Chekhov denounced modern notions of human superiority.[155] First, I will analyze "At the Wolf Baiting" *(Na volch'ei sadke)* (1882), "The Wolf" (*Volk*) (1886) and "Whitebrow" (*Belolobyi*) (1895) to identify Chekhov's main concerns about human-animal relationships. Then, I will trace these concerns in other selected stories. The stories under consideration span almost all of Chekhov's entire career, suggesting that such portrayals of animals are not isolated incidents, but a recurring interest for the writer.[156] I have chosen to begin with "At the Wolf Baiting," "The Wolf" and

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[153] For instance, whenever the narrator suggests that the horse may think, feel and/or possess any traces of consciousness similar to that of a human being, Dessner repeatedly states that horses "do not think," and considers such "sentimental notions" an "assault on our sensibilities" (253).

[154] *Zoosemism* is a term used to refer to the name of an animal species; *zoomorphism* is a term denoting figurative names of animal species applied to humans. See N.V. Solntseva, *Sopostavitelnii analiz zoonimov russkogo, frantsuzskogo i nemetskogo iazikov v etnosemanticheskom aspekte: dissertatsiia.* (Omsk, 2004).

[155] Darwin's works were influential in suggesting continuity between animals and humans.

[156] Other stories that feature animals and human-animal dynamics include "The Cat" *(Kot)* (1883), "The Bird Market" *(V Moskve na Trubnoi ploshchadi)* (1883/84), "Expensive Dog" *(Dorogaia sobaka)* (1885), "The Dependents" *(Nakhlebniki)* (1886), "A Day in the Country" *(Den' za gorodom)* (1886), "The Steppe" *(Step')* (1888).

"Whitebrow" because all three present Chekhov's main animal-related themes: animal abuse and moral degradation, hunting and animal consciousness. They focus on a confrontation between a human and an animal and show animals not as symbols or metaphors, but as feeling and thinking beings, as phenomenological subjects. All three present wolves, a predator with a complicated human-animal past in Russia, and two of them reflect Chekhov's changing attitude towards hunting.[157] Finally, none of the stories has been extensively analyzed, and, therefore, an exploration of them provides new insights into Chekhov's engagement with the theme of animals.

At the Wolf Baiting, The Wolf and Whitebrow[158]

By choosing wolves as the central animal character and including them in the title of the two stories examined here, Chekhov enters a polemic with the then contemporary hostile attitude towards the animal. At the time, large populations of wolves were responsible for attacks on livestock and humans (Helfant 64). Ian Helfant points out that in nineteenth-century Russia, "cultural demonization" of wolves was shared by both hunters and the non-hunting public alike, who viewed wolves as "a scourge to be combatted by any means possible" (ibid.). The hunting laws of the time sanctioned the eradication of wolves and other predators, but unlike the latter, wolves were stigmatized as a rabies vector species.[159] However, there were also voices working to counteract their demonization. Helfant notes that "The Russian Society for the Protection of Animals"

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[157] Will N Graves. *Wolves in Russia: Anxiety Through the Ages*. (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 2007).
[158] A.P. Chekhov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v tridtsati tomakh* (PSSP), Moskva: Nauka, 1974-83), references to PSSP also contain references to the English translation – the page is given after the back slash. The sources of translation sources will be indicated for each work.
[159] Will N Graves. *Wolves in Russia: Anxiety Through the Ages*, 2007; rabies vector species – animals with the highest risk of carrying the virus.

published several articles with more sympathetic depictions of wolves, adamantly criticizing the practice of wolf-baiting (64-65).[160] With his short feuilleton “At the Wolf Baiting” Chekhov joined these efforts, as he openly denounced the cruel institution and challenged the prevailing attitudes egarding the objectification of predators.

“At the Wolf Baiting” shows a crowd’s excitement as it watches how hunting dogs rip apart and kill trapped wolves and a fox.[161] From the start, the narrator makes his opinion of this event clear as he begins the story by questioning the idea of human progress: “They say it is the nineteenth century right now. Do not believe that, reader” (1:117).[162] As the story begins to unfold, it is not only this type of “spectacle” that the narrator denounces, but also hunting itself. He makes an earlier disclaimer: “I am not a hunter. In my entire life I have never beaten anything. I would hit only fleas, and even that – one on one, without dogs. Out of all firearms, I am familiar only with little tin pistols that I bought for my children for Christmas. I am not a hunter, and hence I apologize if I end up lying” (ibid.).[163] Under the guise of an apology for not being a hunter, he begins to convey his attitude towards the wolf baiting he is going to describe. In this apology, the word “hunter” begins without any special emotional charge. However, in the next sentence he uses the violent verb “to beat/to hit “(*bit’*), thus associating hunting with violence. When he humorously emphasizes that even when he would hit fleas he never used dogs and did it one-on-one, he conveys another reason for

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[160] About the Society see Amy Nelson. “The Body of the Beast. The Animal Protection and Anticruelty Legislation in Imperial Russia.” *Other Animals: Beyond the Human in Russian Culture and History*, ed. Jane Costlow and Amy Nelson, (Pittsburg: U of Pittsburg Press, 2010).
[161] Translation of “At The Wolf Baiting” is mine.
[162] A.P. Chekov. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v tridtsati tomakh* (*PSSP*) (Moskva: Nauka, 1974-83). All quotations come from this edition.
[163]This is the narrator speaking. Chekhov himself did hunt, but eventually stopped.

disliking hunting: hunting with dogs (and with firearms which he denounces in the following sentence) gives humans an unfair advantage over the wild animal. Finally, by juxtaposing firearms with what could be considered some of the ultimate images of innocence and peace – children and Christmas – the narrator completes his view of hunting as a violent practice. Thus, the first two paragraphs establish the main ideas: condemnation of animal cruelty as entertainment and of hunting more generally.

The narrator justifies his condemnation by pointing out that animals feel and suffer just like humans, while the abusers lose their humanity. To bring wild animals "alive" and to dehumanize the impatient spectators who came to enjoy this "show," the narrator uses synecdoche reminiscent of that in Gogol's *Nevsky Prospekt*. Similarly to the sideburns, hats, ties and uniforms that were walking along Nevsky Prospekt, in "At the Wolf Baiting" there are "carriages and luxurious sleighs crowding behind the gallery" (ibid.). Within there are "houndmasters, horsemasters, dogmasters" and all other "-masters" (*zherebyatniki, kobelyatniki, borzyatniki, perepelyatniki i prochie "yatniki"*) who sit in "raccoons, beavers, foxes and sheep," while in the upper rows some "schoolboy caps are flitting back and forth" (ibid.). Referring to the fur coats by the actual animals' names as if they were alive allows the narrator to bring these animals "back to life" for his readers, thus creating a dissonance between the animals that once were living beings and the fur coats that they became. This contrast between once live animals that became things and still alive humans who become things in the narrator's description – carriages, sleighs and schoolboy caps – further underscores the narrator's denunciation of violence towards animals and their objectification and breaks down a strict dichotomy between subject and object. He is careful about whom he includes in the

dehumanizing synecdoche and whom he does not: sledge-drivers and a little schoolboy are not subjected to this treatment, perhaps because they are present not of their own volition and, therefore, are not implicated in the "show."

The narrator emphasized the humans' "thirst for blood" when he describes how the spectators step on each other's feet as they jostle and hustle while impatiently waiting for the "show" to begin, and when he claims that these spectators want "the hounds to chase a wolf around the arena for a couple of hours, bite and maul him with dogs' teeth, trample him with hoofs, and only afterwards he can be slain with a knife" (1:120). And when he tells one of the spectators that the wolves should be just killed in the traps (or their "prison" [*tiur'ma*] as the narrator calls it) instead of subjecting the animals to such suffering, the spectator replies: "But listen! What kind of pleasure is it to see a killed wolf?" (ibid.).

In addition to focusing on the human spectators' "pleasure," the narrator emphasizes the savageness of the event by describing what the wolves may be feeling. When the third trap opens, the wolf in it does not initially move. Then, after someone cracks a whip right in front of him, "as if weary and broken-down, barely dragging his feet" the wolf rises, looks around and sees no escape. "But he wants to live so much! Wants to live as much as those who sit in the arena and […] look at the blood" (1:119). In this paragraph the narrator exclaims straightforwardly that these wolves suffer and want to live as much as humans. When the dogs attack this weary wolf and a "master" stabs him in the heart, such stabbing carries a symbolic resonance because poetically the human heart is the site of emotions.

This description of the wolf's killing resonates with Jeremy Bentham's denunciation of animal cruelty.[164] According to Bentham, animals "stand degraded into the class of things," [but] "the number of legs, or the villosity of the skin . . . is no reason why [they] should be abandoned without redress to the caprice of a tormentor." For Bentham "the question is not, Can they reason? nor, Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?... ."[165] Like Bentham, Chekhov's narrator draws attention to what should be one of the first and foremost "criteria" for determining the treatment of animals – our shared ability to suffer and inability to avoid such suffering. The narrator portrays the wolves ("the most respected animal in Russia," as he refers to them) as beings equal to humans in their vulnerability and suffering.[166]

This description of the death of the wolf that wanted to live as much as those in the audience brings the story to its climax. If in the beginning of the story the narrator conveyed his condemnation of such events more indirectly through synecdoche and contrasting images of children and Christmas, here he states it directly. He equates hunting with human bloodthirstiness, and acknowledges that such "quasi-hunting" events are even worse than regular hunting because they leave the animals without any chance for escape whatsoever (1:119). Finally, he openly undermines human superiority by saying that the slain wolf "is taking with him to the grave a poor opinion about the human… Very gravely the human brought shame upon himself in front of the wolves by initiating this quasi-hunting" (ibid.). Developing the theme of the closeness of humans

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[164] In his *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789), Bentham participated in one of the heated contemporary discourses on slavery and animal cruelty, expressing a hope that "the day may come, when the rest of animal creation" will be protected from cruelty and degradation. See Bentham. *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, (1996).
[165] Bentham, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, 283.
[166] It is possible that Chekhov read Bentham because Bentham was "widely read in Russia" in the early-mid 1800s. See Victor Leontovitsch. *The History of Liberalism in Russia* (2012).

and animals, the narrator uses the same adjective, “pretty” (*khoroshen’kaia*), to describe both the women in the audience and the little fox ripped apart by the dogs.

As the hounds kill the “pretty little fox,” the last wolf is stabbed, the audience is very satisfied and the ladies are ecstatic, the narrator closes the story by posing a question about its moral: “In conclusion, there is one little question: what’s the purpose of all this puppet comedy? One cannot boast about one’s dogs because there is not enough room: no space to show their prowess either. So what is the moral?” (1:121). His answer: the moral is of an “utterly nasty kind”; such spectacles “tickled women’s nerves” and grossed large profits, but no profits can “compensate for the small destructions that, perhaps, occurred in the little soul of the above mentioned schoolboy” (ibid.). Earlier in the story during the description of the killing of the wolves, the narrator relates a brief exchange between a little schoolboy and his mother when the boy asks her whether the traps were empty (after the wolves were killed). This short conversation intensifies the increasingly emotionally charged description due to the contrast between the savage “show” and the child’s innocence.

Thus, while the climax of the story focuses on one main idea – cruelty to animals is reprehensible because animals suffer just like humans – the final paragraph underscores a second main idea – participation in such events can destroy one’s humanity. Images of children punctuate the key points in the story simultaneously establishing a contrast between childhood innocence and animal abuse in the exposition, emphasizing the cruelty during the heat of the event, and helping the narrator to draw the moral of the story. Returning to the little schoolboy in the conclusion also fulfills a

structural function by creating a unifying arch with the children at Christmas mentioned in the beginning.

Chekhov's trademark use of understatement helped him achieve such a stirring portrayal of the baiting. For example, when he describes the stabbing of one wolf in the heart, Chekhov creates an incongruity between this cruelty and the wolf's "poor opinion of humans" which he is taking with him to the grave. In the following scene, the public is upset that the previous wolf was killed too fast, and so the dogs are allowed to grab the next wolf alive on the first round in order to prolong the baiting. When the narrator comments that the wolf, "happy" to be alive, is being put back in the box, the sarcasm of describing this wolf as "lucky" only emphasizes the hopelessness of the wolf's situation and the desirability of death as relief from the prolonged suffering to which he is doomed.

Chekhov published this story in the *Literary Appendix to "Moscow" Magazine* as a reaction to a real event that took place in January, 1882 at *Khodynskoe pole* in Moscow. Due to the poignancy and directness of the event's description, Chekhov's story stands out among other works that expressed outrage at this "show" of animal cruelty that appeared in various publications (1:573). By condemning the baiting and focusing on animals' and humans' shared ability to suffer, Chekhov includes animals within the circle of "moral considerability," to draw on G.J. Warnock's term. Warnock writes:

> Let us consider the question to whom principles of morality apply from, so to speak, the other end – from the standpoint not of the agent, but of the "patient"? What, we may ask here, is the condition of moral relevance? What is the condition of having a claim to be considered by rational agents to whom moral principles apply? (148).

Putting aside the anthropocentric criteria of language, rationality, intelligence, Chekhov foregrounds animals as subjects by presenting them as feeling, suffering non-human

beings worthy of moral attention. Although this collective condemnation by Chekhov and other authors failed to stop such baitings immediately and completely, this event was closed to the general public the following year.

The impact of Chekhov's brutally honest description of the wolf baiting on readers illustrates the potential of Derrida's thinking about an ethical encounter with the animal other. Beginning with Jeremy Bentham's well-known claim that humans' treatment of animals should be based not on whether or not they can speak or reason, but on the question: "Can they suffer?" Derrida reverses the question, by asking "Can they *not be able* [to suffer] ?" and draws attention to animals' inability to avoid suffering (28). He goes on to say that when we come face to face with animals' vulnerability, such encounters disrupt our egoism and prompt us to act ethically, for example, with compassion:

> And what of this inability? What of the vulnerability left on the basis of this inability? What is this nonpower at the heart of power? […] How should one take it into account? […] To what extend does it concern us? Being able to suffer is no longer a power, it is a possibility without power, a possibility of the impossible. Mortality resides here, as the most radical means of thinking the finitude that we share with animals, the mortality that belongs to the very finitude of life, to the experience of compassion, to the possibility of sharing the possibility of this nonpower, […] the anguish of this vulnerability and vulnerability of this anguish (ibid.).

The fact that the publication of Chekhov's story and similar expressions of outrage from other authors led to the event being closed suggests that this literary encounter with the suffering animal – the tortured wolves and foxes – elicited a strong ethical response in people. Thus, these hounded wolves and foxes became the other in the Derridian sense to many people who read this story.[167]

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[167] Similarly, Chekhov's 1891 story, "The Tricksters," which denounced the Moscow Zoo as "the animals' graveyard," aroused such public outrage that the Imperial Society for Acclimatizing Plants and Animals

In "The Wolf" Chekhov continues to challenge an anthropocentric view of animals and gives the readers an opportunity to experience the description of being looked at by a wolf.[168] The change from the story's initial title "The Fear of Water" to "The Wolf" further foregrounds the animal.[169] The story takes place during landowner Nilov and inspector Kupriianov's overnight stay at old miller Maksim's. Nilov encounters a wolf with whom he wrestles for his life. In the opening conversation Maksim wants to borrow a rifle from them and explains that he needs it because there is a "rabid" wolf in the area. The wolf has been there for two days, he only attacked a foal and two dogs – the kinds of attack common to wolves. He has not attacked people, nor has he exhibited any symptoms of rabies, yet people have already labeled him "rabid" (5:39/121).[170] Such labeling without any proof reveals a fear-driven human prejudice against wolves that was widespread at the time. Kupriianov, a typical fearful human, immediately believes old Maksim that the wolf is rabid. In addition, Maksim associates the wolf with the devil, calling him "cursed" (*prokliatyi*) and an "evil spirit" (*nechistaia sila*) (ibid.). Maksim's superstitious comments underscore the prejudicial nature of his fear of the wolf as "rabid." Thus, the reader first meets the wolf through the villagers' eyes as an evil, rabid predator.

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agreed to rebuild the zoo along the model of that in Hamburg, and to buy healthy animals. Donald Rayfield, *Understanding Chekhov: A Critical Study of Chekhov's Prose and Drama,* (U of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 256.

[168] The translation of "The Wolf" is by Arnold Hinchliffe (*The Crooked Mirror and Other Stories*, 1992). The page reference to this translation will be given after the back slash. In the translation, Maksim's calling the wolf "rabid" is omitted. As a result, the association of superstition and prejudice against wolves in Maksim's remarks is lost. Kuprianov becomes the first character to call the wolf "rabid."

[169] Initially, the title of the story was "The Fear of Water" (*Vodoboiazn'*- a popular Russian old-fashioned name for rabies). Then, Chekhov changed it to "The Wolf." (*PSSP* 5:616).

[170] Wolves attack farm animals for food, so this wolf's killing of a colt is a normal behavior for predators. Normally, wolves do not hunt dogs, so it is possible that the wolf attacked the dogs because the latter might have been guarding the horses, or out of hunger. In any way, both acts are normal for wolves. Yet, it is based on these attacks that people labeled the wolf "rabid."

Unlike Maksim, however, the narrator of the story does not make any anthropocentric judgments when he describes the encounter of Nilov and the wolf. After their evening tea, Nilov steps outside to get some fresh air, meets the wolf, and a physical wrestle ensues. The narrator's tone remains neutral as he relates Nilov's actions and those of the wolf; no words suggest that the wolf is "bad" for attacking Nilov (as was the case in Maksim's description). The readers do not even know whether the wolf attacked Nilov first, because according to the narrator "Nilov, a strong man, famous for his physical power throughout his province, became so at a loss [upon seeing the wolf], that he did not even understand who started the fight first: he, or the wolf?" (5:41/124). It is quite possible that Nilov may have attacked the wolf first out of fear. From the narrator's description of Nilov and the wolf's meeting, the readers learn that the wolf seemed to debate whether to attack Nilov or to ignore him, suggesting a kind of hesitation not usually associated with rabid animals.[171]

As the wolf and Nilov grapple each other, the narrator alternately relates Nilov's and the wolf's physical exertion in neutral language, showing that both Nilov and the wolf experience physical pain:

> [Nilov] only knew that a terrible critical moment had come, when he had to concentrate all his strength in his right hand and clutch the wolf by the neck. […] The wolf howled mournfully and jerked with such force that a layer of its skin, cold and wet, clutched by Nilov's hand, slipped between his fingers. Trying to free its neck, the wolf reared on its back legs. […] Then, so that the wolf couldn't bite his arms or turn its head, Nilov thrust the huge fingers of both hands deep into its neck like spurs. The wolf pushed its paws into Nilov's shoulders and, finding a point of support there, began to struggle with terrible force. It could not bite

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[171] While some rabid animals may become unusually "friendly," most become unusually aggressive, often attacking without any provocation. The fact that the wolf had been selective in whom he attacked indicates that he could not have been rabid. Even if hypothetically he was carrying the virus, the virus must have been in incubation since the wolf did not exhibit rabid behavior. In either case, there were no objective grounds for stigmatizing this wolf as "rabid." This detail is important because it undermines the rumor that the wolf is rabid, and by so doing makes the anthropocentric fear-driven branding as rabid and vilification of the wild predator more apparent.

> Nilov's arms and his [Nilov's] strong fingers kept its mouth away from his face and shoulders, thrusting and thrusting and causing great pain. […] Its back legs, seeking support, knocked against Nilov's knees[…] Then came the moment when he heard his own lacerating cry and felt a sharp pain in his right shoulder (5:42/125).

As Nilov and the wolf wrestle, the narrator suspends any anthropocentric judgment of the struggle and presents the human's and the animal's perspectives equally, not as a human vs. a predator, but as two beings of different species fighting for their lives.

The narrator further emphasizes this equality when he describes their physical limitations. When Nilov lifted the wolf, "the wolf's back legs, seeking support, knocked against Nilov's knees" (ibid.). Here the wolf is not a threatening predator, but a being whose shorter than human stature renders him almost helpless and requires him to use other means to defend himself. Nilov's own limitations are also made evident: he cannot scream loud enough because this may compromise his physical strength, and he begins to lose his grip as a result of his weakening and swelling hand.

The narrator continues to undo the opposition of a supposedly superior/dominant human and a threatening animal-predator when he literally brings the human's and the wolf's gazes on the same plane: "Both of them, Nilov and the wolf, their heads level now, looked each other in the eyes… The wolf snapped its teeth, made a squeaky sound and slavered ... […] The moon lit up its eyes, but there was nothing vicious to see there; they seemed to be weeping, like a human being's" (ibid.). Not only does the narrator align the wolf with the human physically, but also the wolf's eyes are described like those of a weeping human with both the human and the animal experiencing similar emotions ranging from fear to desire to live. Earlier, when Nilov first grabs him, the wolf growls

plaintively, imploringly (*zhalobno zarychal*) (5:41).[172] The “plaintive growl” removes his threatening predatory façade and reveals his emotional vulnerability.

Moreover, as the physical fight becomes more desperate, the intensity of Nilov’s and the wolf’s emotional states rises simultaneously. The narrator further reduces the gap between the animal and the human by distributing the intensifying range of emotions from imploring to screaming equally between Nilov and the wolf. Instead of describing Nilov’s groans and then his screams, and subsequently the wolf’s moaning and howling – the narrator alternates the recounting of these reactions, bringing the emotional heat to its climax. First, the wolf implores (*zhalobno zakrichal*), and then Nilov cries out quietly (*zakrichal negromko*). Next – the wolf makes squeaky sounds (*skripuchie zvuki*) and his eyes weep (*ego glaza plakali*). Finally Nilov sends forth a lacerating scream (*izdaet dusherazdirayushchii krik*), after which Maksim and Kupriianov come to his rescue. As a result of such “sharing” of emotions, there is no longer a hierarchical opposition between human and animal, both the human and the animal act and feel the same way, their voices sounding as though they were one and the same being crying out in distress.

The moment when the wolf and Nilov look each other in the eye is reminiscent of Derrida’s face-to-face encounter with an animal, with the animal’s gaze. Derrida writes that in order to recognize the other in the animal, the animal’s “unsubstitutable singularity,” one must be able “to see oneself seen by [this animal other]” (12). Chekhov’s narrator makes it ambiguous whether the description of the wolf’s eyes as weeping and resembling human eyes is the narrator’s description only, or if Nilov saw them that way as well. But because the phrase that the wolf and Nilov were looking each other in the eye directly precedes the description of the wolf’s eyes, it would not be a

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[172] Hinchliffe translates *‘zhalobno’* as “mournfully,” but I think “imploringly” is closer to *‘zhalobno.’*

stretch to assume that Nilov saw the pain and human semblance in the wolf's eyes, too. The force of Nilov's encounter with the wolf – with its mortal fear, danger, and enormous physical exertion – manifests itself in Nilov's dazed state after the rescue. Maxim and Kupriianov have to forcefully unclench Nilov's fingers and prove that the wolf was dead (5:43). He does not even begin to worry about the danger of the alleged rabies until later.

The theme of rabies actually has a similar effect to that of the description of the wrestling match, equalizing human and non-human animals by pointing to the shared vulnerability and inability to avoid suffering of which Derrida spoke.[173] This shared inability to avoid an incurable and agonizing illness that knows no species distinctions becomes "the most radical means of thinking the finitude we share with animals" (28). Even having killed the wolf, Nilov continues to experience the same vulnerability and helplessness that he felt during the fight. The wolf's possibly rabid bite exposes "the mortality," "the finitude" he shares with the killed wolf.

In "Whitebrow" *(Belolobyi)* Chekhov again juxtaposes human and animal characters, this time using humour to further challenge human superiority.[174] In the story, an old she-wolf grabs a puppy named Whitebrow by mistake instead of a lamb when she sneaks into the barn kept by an old security guard named Ignat.[175] The guard's

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[173] For both, humans and animals, the exposure to the virus happens by accident and at the time for both it was fatal with prolonged suffering. The rabies vaccine was developed and first tested in 1885, and the story, published in 1886, depicts events when the vaccine was unavailable.

[174] This translation of "Whitebrow" is from Anton Chekhov, *Later Short Stories 1888-1903*, translated by Constance Garnett, edited by Shelby Foote (The Modern Library, 1999). The page reference to this translation will be given after the back slash.

[175] In his insightful analysis, Bruno Osimo examines "Whitebrow" as a comparison of three levels of the evolutionary scale, in which dogs represent an intermediate level between the human and the wild wolf. From this angle, Osimo concludes that it seems that Chekhov shows Whitebrow the puppy to be "so stupid that it can't distinguish a fellow from an enemy." See Osimo. *Literary Translation and Terminological Precision: Chekhov and His Short Stories.* (First Digital Edition, 2013). Such interpretation of the little

interactions with his dog and Whitebrow reveal in him a very limited understanding of how to relate to animals, despite the fact that he lives with so many of them (e.g., dogs, cattle etc.). Even though Ignat knows that there are predators who visit his barn, it does not even occur to him that a wild animal and not Whitebrow could be repeatedly making a hole in the roof. Ignat's scolding and teaching the puppy to enter through the door emphasize his ignorance. Thus, unlike in "At the Wolf Baiting," here Chekhov treats one of the supposedly exclusively human attributes – reason – with irony and humor.

Besides human reason, Chekhov dismantles another major attribute often used to argue human supremacy over animals: human speech. In this story, human speech for the most part is meaningless: Ignat either talks to himself or shouts mechanical words. His expostulations have a somewhat sterile quality; they foster no communication, and the mechanical commands—which he also uses to talk to his dog—have no application in everyday life. Moreover, he treats himself and the animals as if they were machines, not living beings. For example, before stopping he shouts to himself: "Stop the machine!" (*Stop mashina*) (9:100/299). To his large black dog Arapka who runs too far ahead, he hollers: "Reverse action!" (*Zadnii khod*) (ibid.). When the she-wolf runs away the first time, Arapka begins to bark while Ignat steps outside yelling: "Full speed! Blow the whistle!" (*Polnyi khod! Poshel k svistku*) and begins to whistle like a machine, after which he shouts: "Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho!" (9:102/300). In this episode it is not even clear whether Ignat is telling himself to "go to the whistle," or if he orders Arapka, who would not understand these words anyway.

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puppy's friendliness reflects anthropocentrism because it interprets a puppy according to the human concept of "friend" vs. "enemy" and completely overlooks typical puppy behavior.

Chekhov further highlights Ignat's human ineptitude when he contrasts it with the descriptions of the she-wolf. The she-wolf can reason logically, as when she recalls that in the summer she saw a ram and two ewes pasturing near Ignat's house, and concludes that since it is already March, there definitely must be lambs in the barn (9:102/299). Even though she is starving and is constantly thinking about food, she cannot bring herself to eat the puppy who licked her nose, yapped at her thinking that she was going to play with him, and played and slept with her cubs. Although narrator suggests that the puppy's doggy smell disgusts her, she was starved enough to eat him if she wanted to. Besides being able to reason and feel compassion for a puppy, the she-wolf seems to possess some sarcasm. Feeling annoyed that the puppy kept following her after she dropped him (having realized he was not a lamb), the she-wolf thinks: "Why does he run after me? […] I suppose he wants me to eat him" (9:103/300).

As in "The Wolf" and "At the Wolf Baiting," Chekhov preserves some of the animals' species-specific characteristics, creating a believable animal perspective. By showing the importance of the senses of smell and hearing for the wild predator, Chekhov brings the readers into the wolf's world. [176] "The wolf had fragile health and would get startled at the slightest sound…and the smell of the tracks of men and horses, logs, piles of faggots, and the dark road with horse-dung on it frightened her" (9:100/298). By contrast humans are primarily visual creatures. The author also notes that it is because of her diminished sense of smell resulting from her age that she could no longer hunt large

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[176] Chekhov's focus on the sense of smell is significant and should not be taken for granted because some authors are not always aware of the animal's different perspective. For example, in "The Call of the Wild" (1903) Jack London writes that the dog 'Buck' wonders where all the other dogs disappeared and wanders about the camp "looking for them." Since Buck uses his eyes to find other dogs, he is not a real dog, but a human surrogate because a real dog would use its sense of smell to find other dogs. See Jack London. *The Call of the Wild, White Fang and Other Stories*, ed. Labor Earle and Robert C. Leitz III. (Oxford University Press, 1998).

animals, often confused fox tracks with those of a dog, and rarely ate fresh meat (ibid.). When she makes a hole in the roof of the barn, the first thing she senses is the warm smell of steam, manure, and sheep milk. Portraying the she-wolf as a real wild predator, Chekhov does not make any anthropocentric judgment that would label her intention to steal and eat a ewe as “bad” or “wrong.” He further acknowledges the natural “circle of life” of wildlife when he writes that, while the she-wolf was worried that someone might harm her cubs in her absence, she would take away a mother rabbit’s “children” when she stumbled across a rabbit’s nest.

Chekhov uses humor to dismantle the idea of human superiority. V. Kataev observes that one of the sources of the comical in Chekhov’s stories is misunderstandings and awkward circumstances that result from situations when everyone is engrossed in his/her own individual interests, when each person considers his/her views absolute, and all these “absolute” worldviews clash (*Proza Chekhova* 52). In “Whitebrow” the comical results not from the clash of worldviews within the story e.g., between Ignat and the puppy, but from the clash between what the readers know and what happens in the story. Thus, there is a comical difference between Ignat’s “absolute” confidence in his knowledge of the repeat offender who keeps reopening the hole in the roof, of the proper way to train dogs and of his belief in his own intellectual capacity, and what the readers learn about him. Chekhov further emphasizes the irony with which he shows human reason and speech when Ignat calls the puppy “stupid” (*glupyi*) and says, “I do detest stupid ones!” (*Smert’ ne liubliu glupykh*) (9:106/303). The ultimate irony lies in the fact that out of three main characters – Ignat, the she-wolf, and the puppy – it is the human who is the least intelligent and capable.

In a brief comment on "Whitebrow," Simon Karlinsky suggests that in this story Chekhov develops his "recurrent theme of the lack of mutual comprehension" by extending it to the world of animals, because "all the animals including the puppy's peasant owner misunderstand and continuously misinterpret each other's intentions and motives" (*Anton Chekhov's Life and Thought* 323). However, as this closer examination of the story demonstrates, it is only the "puppy's peasant owner" who is out of touch with his numerous animals and even himself. Whitebrow's "misunderstanding" of the she-wolf's intentions is not an instance of some existential lack of mutual comprehension, but a natural consequence of extreme youth, and the she-wolf does not misinterpret anything. She understands well what Ignat's intentions will be if he sees her, and that is why she runs for her life when the whole barn wakes up. She also knows what a puppy is (she has three of her own), and that is why she cannot eat him when he licks her nose.

As acknowledged in the "Introduction," such portrayals of animals often raise the question of anthropomorphism. Timothy Clark writes, "all human knowledge must needs be anthropomorphic in some way" (193).[177] He suggests that while extreme forms of anthropomorphism, such ascribing animals political views, obscure the animal, reasonable forms of anthropomorphism imply a continuity between humans and animals, and may help in understanding animals. At the same time, some literary representations of animals reflect the real animals with more convincing verisimilitude than others. Therefore, the focus should be not on anthropomorphism per se, but on the extent a given

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[177]Clark suggests a distinction between an extreme anthropomorphism as in "accusing a garden snail of religious heresy," and a reasonable form that allows for the possibility of humans and animals sharing certain emotions and attributes. In this light, Chekhov's description of the she-wolf as concerned for the safety of her cubs is a "reasonable form of anthropomorphism."

portrayal of an animal is anthropocentric, i.e., erases or does not erase the animal's individual subjectivity.[178]

In addition to Chekhov's personal close experience with his dogs and other animals, his reading of Darwin's "anthropomorphic" descriptions of animals may have influenced his portrayals of characters of different species. Darwin's *The Descent of Man* was published in Russia in 1871-1872, and *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animal* – in December 1872. Chekhov greatly admired Darwin, writing to V. Bilibin in 1886: "I am reading Darwin! I simply love him!" (1:212).[179] Darwin stated that the difference in mind between humans and animals is one of degree, not of kind, and "various emotions and faculties […] of which man boasts, may be found in an incipient, or even sometimes in a well-developed condition in the lower animals" (*The Descent of Man* 105). Through a naturalist's observation and evolutionist's perspective, Darwin writes about "cheerful" dogs and "affectionate" cats, applying such emotions as "love" and "joy" not only to mammals, but also insects (ibid., *The Expression of Emotion* 56). Like Chekhov (and Derrida), Darwin had a pet dog, and their relationship informed his understanding of animals' emotions.[180]

The closeness of Chekhov's and Darwin's perceptions of animals can be seen in the similarities of their descriptions and observations. For instance, Darwin describes a

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[178] Sam Cadman. "Reflections on Anthropocentrism, Anthropomorphism and Impossible Fiction: Towards A Typological Spectrum of Fictional Animals," (2016). 161-182.

[179] This translation is from Avrahm Yarmolinsky. *Letters of Anton Chekhov*. (New York: The Viking Press, 1973). It is not known which of Darwin's works Chekhov was reading at that moment. In his library there was found Darwin's *The Variation of Animals and Plants Under Domestication*, vol. 2, trans. V. Kovalevskii (1868). In a letter to Al.P. Chekhov from April 17/18, 1883 he writes that he "likes Darwin's method very much" (*PSSP* 1:65). And in a letter to the Chekhovs from April 23, 1890 he mentions Darwin's *The Voyage of the Beagle* (*PSSP* 4:66). Karlinsky notes Chekhov's constant reading of Darwin, see Karlinsky. Introducton. *Letters of Anton Chekhov*. Trans. Michael Henry Heim and Simon Karlinsky (London: The Bodley Head, 1973), 27. Thus, it is very probable that Chekhov read many of Darwin's works, not only the ones mentioned in his letters.

[180] Derrida had a cat.

dog's friendly body language as a downward, even crouching position, "flexuous movements" and wagging tail to show that the dog does not want to fight (*The Expression of Emotion* 56). He also writes that puppies and kittens seem to know not to use their teeth and claws too freely in play, as they growl, snarl and bite each other (*The Expression of Emotion* 66). These observations evoke Whitebrow's play with the wolf cubs. Whitebrow timidly approached the cubs, "alternatively squatting down and bounding a few steps forward. […] When he reached the cubs he stretched out his broad paws [and] laid his head upon them." The cubs responded by wagging their tails. Having thus greeted each other, the puppy and the cubs smacked each other on the head and the game began. Whitebrow "fell on his back and kicked up his legs, and all three of them fell upon him, squealing with delight, and began biting him, not to hurt but in play" (9:104).

Eileen Crist polemicizes with the twentieth-century scholars who downplay or even dismiss Darwin's depictions of animals as "anthropomorphic" because they conflicts with the "mechanomorphic" and skeptical views on animal behavior in the modern scientific community (11). She argues that "Darwin's language for representing animals is a resounding affirmation of the evolutionary continuity between animals and humans" (13). She points out that Darwin's "anthropomorphic" descriptions recognize animals as subjects, while the twentieth-century mechanomorphic approach objectifies them. Similarly to Darwin's descriptions, Chekhov's "reasonably" anthropomorphic fictional portrayals of animals recognize the animals' subjectivity that does not depend for meaning and validation on human experience. His "anthropomorphic" non-human

characters offer a perspective on “understanding animals in semantic kinship with the human world” (202).

The issue of anthropomorphism opens a space where questions about the nature of the human and other animals intersect. Chekhov navigates this terrain with the help of a technique that Kataev termed “appeared/turned out” (*kazalos’/okazalos’*) (*Proza Chekhova* 21-30). Kataev explains that the binary “appeared/tuned out” structurally organizes what he calls stories of discovery in which the protagonist experiences a realization, or even a paradigm shift because something, which could be an assumption, a perception or understanding of an event or a person, “seemed” or “appeared” one way, but “turned out” to be completely different (usually, too naïve, or too idealistic, or too simplified). For example, in “The Ballroom Pianist” (*Taper*) (1885) it “seemed” to Petia Rublev that as an educated man he could talk to his temporary employer as an equal, but it “turned out” that he was just another servant; in “An Upheaval” (*Perepolokh*) (1886) it “seemed” to Mashenka that only thieves and criminals could be subjected to humiliating searches, and that it was always possible to prove one’s innocence, but it “turned out” that even decent, honest people can be defenseless in the face of slander and disgrace. Chekhov uses this technique to reveal the inaccurate, limited nature of first impressions compared to the more complex perceptions that "turn out" to supplant them.

In his stories about animals Chekhov uses the same principle of “seemed/turned out” but with an opposite effect when he leaves this binary incomplete. There is no “turned out” that would finalize the realization. Without this, “seems/appears” rather than pointing to the erroneous understanding of something, opens up a possibility for a new, or different understanding. For example, in “The Wolf” the narrator says that the wolf’s

eyes looked human (*pokhodili na chelovecheskie*), where '*pokhodili'* is similar to "seem/appear." If Chekhov had completed it with "turned out" (e.g., if he wrote "… looked human, but turned out to be…" (*no okazalis'…*), "looked/seemed" ('*pokhodili')* would have acquired the meaning of a mistaken perception. Instead, it suggests the previously unexplored perspective that the wolf is capable of experiencing the same emotions as humans. As it often happens in Chekhov's stories, in "The Wolf," the suggested possibility is open for the readers rather than the protagonist. Nilov might be too frightened and too busy fighting for his life to really pay attention to the wolf's human, crying eyes, but the reader is not. Similar to "At the Wolf Baiting," in which the human characters have no access to the narrator's message that is aimed at readers, in "The Wolf" the frightened wolf's human-like crying eyes look the readers in the eye, hoping for the Derridian ethical reaction to the other.

I Forgot, Who Is To Blame?, Kashtanka, The Dependents, My Life, and Petcheneg

Chekhov's ambivalence about hunting, his interest in the animal's consciousness, denunciation of animal cruelty and compassion for animals can be found in many other stories.

In "At the Hunting" (*Na okhote*) (1884) Chekhov questions killing animals even though at the time he hunted himself.[181] In this very short story, the narrator shares a personal experience that happened after he accepted his uncle's cordial invitation to visit him and hunt. From the start, the narrator draws attention to his uncle's very individualized perception of dogs. If for the narrator dogs can be 'big, small, medium, white, black and grey, angry and calm," his uncle differentiates between various shades

[181] Translation of "At the Hunting" mine.

of coat, introduces his dogs by name, kisses them on the face and demands that the narrator touch their faces and paws, too. To emphasize his uncle's closeness to his dogs, the narrator notes that his uncle describes them in "a dog's language," and "if dogs could talk, they would speak precisely this language" (2:339).

Once they arrive at the hunting location, the uncle's "language" changes: as specific as he had been about each of his dogs, here he refers to the potential prey as a generic *zver'* (beast). The narrator protests he does not even know how to hold a rifle, but his uncle insists: "Stay here… As soon as the beast starts running at you from the forest, shoot!" Waiting and imagining how he, and not they, will kill "the beast," the narrator somewhat echoes Nikolen'ka from *Childhood* and Nikolai Rostov at the wolf hunt. When he hears dogs barking and the hunters' voices, he sees "the beast": "the strange looking beast, on long legs and with a prickly face, was rushing right at me… I [shot] and everything was over. Hooray! My beast jumped up, fell and began to convulse" (2:340). But the beast turned out to be his uncle's dog: "This is my Skachok! […] My dog!... My dearly beloved dog!.." As the uncle hugs his Skachok, the narrator flees. While the uncle evokes sympathy, his loss serves as a reminder that behind each shot "beast" there is a non-human individual whose death is as sad and senseless as that of one's beloved dog.

Similarly to Tolstoi, Chekhov pays attention even to his minor characters and wonders what they may be thinking. For example, in "I Forgot!!" (*Zabyl!!*) (1882), a short, humorous story about a landowner who forgot Liszt's name after his daughter asked him to buy sheet music, the music store features the storeowner's cat.[182] As the landowner is trying to recall the composer's name, he becomes distracted by the big grey cat sitting on the counter, strokes him, inquiring about his gender, guessing at his breed,

[182] Translation of "I Forgot!!" mine.

and even asking the cat: "What are you looking at? Do you catch mice?" in a humorous tone. Then, he wonders whether there is a kitten from this cat available, because his wife loves cats very much. As he tries to sing the melody, hoping the storeowner will recognize it, the narrator observes that "the cat looked at [him] in surprise, must have laughed, and lazily jumped off the counter" (1:127).

In another story "Who Is To Blame?" (*Kto vinovat?*) (1886), the narrator is interested in the psychology of a little kitten, whose owner – a dry, bilious teacher of Latin – is trying to teach it how to catch mice.[183] In his ignorance about animals and resulting abuse, this man anticipates Ignat from "Whitebrow": similarly to Ignat punishing the puppy for allegedly coming into the barn through the roof, the Latin teacher becomes angry, shaking and shoving the kitten who fails to catch mice. As he depicts an ignorant, abusive human, the narrator wonders what the kitten may be thinking and suggests that since the kitten has not had a real life experience yet, he could only think "instinctively and picture life according to concepts inherited, like his flesh and blood, from his ancestors, the tigers (*vide* Darwin)" (5:457/119). Although humorous, the reference to Darwin and a fairly accurate portrayal of the abused kitten's emerging fearful reflex at the sight of a mousetrap and a mouse show Chekhov's interest in the animal behavior and compassion for the kitten.

"Kashtanka" (1887) is arguably Chekhov's most well known story about a dog, and reveals his knowledge of canine behavior and his interest in understanding a dog's perspective.[184] As mentioned earlier, the story—about a dog who becomes lost, finds a

[183] Translation of "Who is to Blame?" is from *The Image of Chekhov. Forty Stories by Anton Chekov in the Ord in Which They Were Written.* Translated by Robert Payne, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969.
[184] Translation of "Kashtanka" is taken from *Anton Chekhov's Selected Stories,* ed. Popkin, Cathy, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014.

new home with a caring clown who has a cat and a goose, and eventually returns to her old owners—has inspired many diverse and provocative symbolic interpretations. But I agree with N.A. Dmitrieva, who writes that "Kashtanka" is a story about animals as they are, and that Chekhov attempted to portray a real dog, not a symbol, or an anthropomorphized creature (166).

From the beginning of the story, the narrator presents Kashtanka as a being whose dominant sense is smell. After she becomes lost, she begins to sniff the sidewalk, but "earlier some scoundrel had just walked past in new galoshes, and now all the delicate scents were mixed with the strong stench of rubber, so that it was impossible to tell one from the other" (6:431/132). When she wakes up at her new place, she begins to sniff everything: corners of the room, furniture, the new owner's clothes that smell like horses, and no sooner does she scratch open the door to another room, then she senses a suspicious odor. And when she sees her new owner in clown make-up for the first time, she recognizes him by smell.

Chekhov also accurately observes the responses a dog can have to loud noises. As her original owner, a poor, often drunken cabinetmaker, was talking to her on the street, suddenly a military orchestra appeared, and unable to stand the music "which upset her nerves, she rushed around and howled" (ibid.). When she saw that the cabinetmaker did not mind the music, "she howled even louder, then lost her head and rushed to the other side of the street," and this is how she got lost (ibid.). When the clown brings her to the circus for the first time, the "roaring" sounds and bright lights overwhelm her. The descriptions of Kashtanka expressing her excitement through waging her tail, jumping, and barking in various ways further emphasize her doggy nature.

The depiction of the initial hostility when Kashtanka meets the clown's cat and goose for the first time also accurately reflects how adult animals tend to react to a newcomer and demonstrates Chekhov's attention to the details of animals' behavior. Spreading his wings and hissing, the goose advanced directly at her. At the same time, the cat jumped up, arched his back, raised his tail and began to hiss, his fur bristling. Despite being scared, Kashtanka began to bark loudly and lunged at the cat, who arched his back even more, hissed and smacked Kashtanka on the head with his paw. In the meantime, the goose came up from behind and hit her on the back with his beak. Similarly to the depiction of Whitebrow and the wolf cubs playing, Chekhov's portrayal of the animals' body language in this scene is very similar to Darwin's descriptions. Darwin, too, observes a crouching defensive stance in dogs and that when a cat is threatened by a dog, "it arches its back in a surprising manner, erects its hair, opens its mouth and spits" (*The Expression of Emotions* 56). The animals' reconciliation signified by the goose not only letting Kashtanka eat his food, but also joining her is an accurate description of the animals' exchange of "signs" of mutual acceptance. The narrator is also attentive to Kashtanka's emotions in the scene when the clown finds her freezing in the snow and, during the goose's death, when Kashtanka's and the cat's behavior fairly accurately reflects domestic cats' and dogs' ability to sense their owner's distress.

In addition to providing species-specific details, the narrator poetically individualizes Kashtanka, presenting her as a being with a past and her own doggy quirks. For example, she steals the cat's chicken leg and hides it in a dusty spot between a cupboard and the wall, checking on it from time to time to ensure the clown has not found and eaten it. She remembers her old owners, especially the cabinetmaker's son and

his cruel games with her. And after she returns to them, the memories of her life at the clown's remain with her, however distant they may begin to seem.

Despite some unavoidable "reasonable" anthropomorphism, the narrator is cautious as he tries to convey the animals' consciousness. None of the animals speaks or understands human language. Kashtanka voices various "Grrrr"s, whines and howls, the goose stretches his neck and "talks very fast about something" and the pig who lives outside oinks. When the goose talks, Kashtanka does not understand what he is saying, but answers him with "Rrrr," while the pig ignores Kashtanka's growling and talks good-naturedly to the goose "about something." The narrator emphasizes that although Kashtanka does not understand the meaning of words, she senses and understands people's emotional states and reacts to the tone of voice. Thus, when the clown is talking to the dying goose, the dog does not understand what he is saying, but "watching his face she saw that he was expecting something horrible." When he tells her that "death has come to your room," she is pacing by his leg, not understanding why she feels this misery and why everyone is so worried, and trying to understand, "watching his every movement" (6:443/142). And when "sparkling drops like the ones on the window during the rain begin to stream down his cheeks," neither the dog nor the cat understands, but they stay close to the clown looking at the goose in horror.

The fact that Kashtanka forms her own associations with frequently repeated words and thus "understands" them is another realistic detail that Chekhov must have observed interacting with his own dogs. For example, as Kashtanka successfully learns various circus tricks, the clown repeatedly exclaims "Talent!" and she gets so used to the word "talent," that whenever the clown utters it, she reacts as if it were her name. Then

during her first and last performance the clown yells “Auntie, allow me to offer you a seat!” and she, “remembering what it meant, jumped up on the chair and sat” (6:447/145).

Although humans are secondary characters in the story, they are important, as one of the functions they fulfill is to reflect Chekhov’s attitude towards animal abuse. As Chekhov contrasts the cabinetmaker and his son’s essentially abusive treatment of Kashtanka with the clown’s kindness, he presents the joiner as an unsympathetic character, but the clown – as a caring and sensitive man. For example, when angry at her, the cabinetmaker could grab her by the ear and slowly say: “Drop… dead… you … cholera!”, while in a good mood, he would tell her that she was “an insect being and nothing else. Compared to a man, you’re like a carpenter compared to a cabinetmaker” (6:431/132).[185] But the clown’s first words to her are those of compassion when he inadvertently hit her with the door next to which she had dozed off freezing. And he always talks to his animals as if they can understand him. The narrator notes the clown’s warm voice and gentle eyes, while there is no physical description of the cabinetmaker at all: the only thing revealed about him from the start is his drunkenness and mistreatment of Kashtanka. Kashtanka’s own observation underscores the contrast between the two men: when she was sitting next to the clown’s dinner table, touchingly looking at him, “he never once hit her, or stamped his foot or shouted: ‘Get ou-u-ut, curse you!’ (*Po-oshla von, trekliataia*!) ”(6:433/134).

The clown’s work with animals and the cabinetmaker’s son’s “games” with Kashtanka provide a particularly stark contrast in animal treatment because both teach

[185] Popkin has “And you, Kashtanka, are a bewilderment,” but “bewilderment” does not convey the demeaning connotation of ‘*nasekomoe’* (“insect”) that the cabinetmaker uses. Likewise, Popkin uses “drop… dead… you…pest,” but the cabinetmaker’s word “cholera” is stronger and more abusive than “pest.” Therefore, I modified this translation using “insect” and “cholera.”

her “tricks.” As the clown trains his animals, he is never cruel, and Kashtanka enjoys learning all the new tricks he teaches her. The “tricks” the cabinetmaker’s son played on her were such that “everything turned green in her eyes” (*zelenelo v glazakh*) and all of her joints hurt (6:434/134). She remembered one particularly painful trick: he would tie a piece of meat to a thread, let her swallow it and then pull it back out, laughing loudly.

The fact that the son is supposedly a child makes this contrast especially morally unsettling, and the narrator emphasizes this effect by subverting the readers’ expectations when he introduces the son. As Kashtanka settles in for her first night at the clown’s, she “recalled [the the cabinetmaker], his son Fedyushka, a cozy spot under the workbench … She remembered that on long winter evenings while the cabinetmaker was planing a board or reading the newspaper aloud, Fediyushka used to play with her…” (ibid.). The endearing diminutive “Fedyushka” and the word “play” anticipate images of innocent childhood games, but the description of cruel tricks following the ellipsis leaves an impression of debased childhood. The narrator does not give Fedyushka’s age further complicating the son and his animal abuse: if he is an older boy, then he should know better; if he is a younger child, then such elaborately cruel “tricks” are even more disturbing. And it appears that the cabinetmaker does not interfere during these playing sessions.

“The Dependents” (*Nakhlebniki*) (1886) continues the theme of animal cruelty and also presents a gloomy vision of humans and animals as co-sufferers.[186] The story depicts a day in the life of Mikhail Zotov—a seventy-year-old extremely impoverished landowner, bitter and angry at his “dog life” and his “dependents,” a very timid and oppressed old dog Lyska and horse. The narrator describes the dog and horse in as much

[186] Translation of “The Dependents” mine.

detail as Zotov: all three look shabby, emaciated and old. Yet, despite the fact that embittered Zotov cannot feed them and constantly curses them, yelling at them “to go and die” and questioning “why they are still alive,” both animals still remain by his side.

Unlike animal abusers in “Who is to Blame?” or “My Life,” underneath this façade of bitterness Zotov still cares about his animals. Although he chases them away onto the street, he soon yells at them to return. He asks his neighbor-shopkeeper for some oats because “the horse is hungry,” even though he has nothing to eat himself. And when he resolves to move to his distant niece’s, he understands that he cannot take them, but is concerned that they will die in a locked up barn. So, he decides to leave his gates open so that the animals can go wherever they want.

Zotov’s visit to the shopkeeper, however, proves fateful. The narrator draws parallels between the animals and Zotov as the shopkeeper reproaches him for feeding the useless animals who should be brought to the slaughterhouse instead and says to him: “Why don’t you die?... You don’t even know what you are living for. Honest to God. But if God doesn’t give you death, go somewhere, a shelter or an alms-house” (5:285-286). After a couple of shots of vodka at the shopkeeper’s and more of his pressure, Zotov packs up and begins to walk to his niece’s, but he has barely gone a mile when he hears steps behind him: their heads drooping and tails tucked, the horse and Lyska are following him. Although he yells at them to go away, they keep trudging behind him. Angry and bitter, he remembers the shopkeeper’s piece of advice and takes them to the slaughterhouse:

> He remembers little of what happened at the slaughterhouse. […] When the horse was set on the bench, he heard two muffled thuds: one – on the skull, the other – of a fallen body. When Lyska, seeing her friend’s death, jumped at the butcher squealing, another strike abruptly stopped the squeal. And then Zotov remembers

> how he, foolish and drunken, upon seeing the two bodies, came up to the bench and put his own head on it … Later till the very evening his eyes were so foggy that he could not see his own fingers.(5:287).

In the middle of their struggle to survive, all three suspend their egotistical, biological drives and respond to each other ethically. Despite all his bitterness, Zotov sees the face in his destitute non-human others and at the expense of his own comfort procures some oats for the horse. And although the dog and horse have nothing material to give Zotov, they offer themselves: a faint wag of tail, a lick of the shoe and loyalty. Yet, while the animals remained loyal to Zotov and each other to the end, the narrator leaves Zotov ambiguous: he did care about them, he cries over them, but whether his decision was justified, compassionate or the result of vodka and the shopkeeper's pressure, remains hidden in the elliptical "…" for the reader to decide.

Beginning with the works in the late 1880s, Chekhov's treatment of the theme of animal cruelty becomes increasingly gloomy. To paraphrase Rayfield's observation that "in Chekhov's study of the peasantry, the gloom is lightened by individuals of natural goodness," the novella "Steppe" (*Step'*) (1887) is one of the last stories in which the human-animal tension "is lightened" by such individuals (*Understanding Chekhov* 186). As Rayfield notes, "Steppe" is "one of [Chekhov's] last romantic pieces" (52). Subtitled "The Story of a Journey," is narrated through the eyes of a nine-year-old boy who journeys across the steppe to live away from home. The eight episodes comprising the novella moves along the boy's observations of the steppe landscapes and fauna, as well as diverse people and the sad realities of peasant life.

One significant encounter is with the peasant Vasya, "an individual of natural goodness" who decries the senseless killing of animals. When one peasant killed a grass

snake, Vasya cried in a wailing voice: “Jailbird! Why’d you have to kill a grass snake? What did it do to you, curse you? […] what if somebody did the same to you?” (7:52/50).[187] Vasya’s very sharp sight may have contributed to his feeling of kinship with animals by allowing him to witness the non-human life in ways inaccessible to others:

> anyone crossing the steppes has seen [a fleeing hare or a flying bustard]; but it is not given to everyone to see wild animals in their home life, when they are not fleeing, not hiding or looking around in alarm. But Vasya could see foxes frolicking, hares washing themselves with their forepaws, bustards spreading their wings, kestrels beating their wings “in place.” Thanks to such keen eyesight, besides the world that everyone could see, Vasya had another world of his own, inaccessible to anyone else, and probably a very nice one, for when he looked and admired, it was hard not to envy him (7:55-56).

On the one hand, Vasya’s sharp distance vision helps him feel affinity with animals. The little boy even thinks Vasya himself resembles an animal, with his unusually sharp sight and “the tenderness with which he chewed the gudgeon” as they eat fish soup at a rest stop (7:60/59). On the other hand, Vasya’s ability to observe animals intimately conveys the disconnect between humans and nature, particularly wild life, that Chekhov always felt intensely. Most people are incapable of noticing all the rich non-human life around them, but even those who are able, like Vasya, remain only outside witnesses, unable to participate.

The novella “My Life” (*Moia zhizn’*) (1896) and story “Petcheneg” (*Petcheneg*) (1897) illustrate Rayfield’s observation that in the late 1890s Chekhov’s “overall vision of life grows darker and darker’ (*Understanding Chekhov* 183). In “My Life” the images of cruelty to animals act as a denunciation of the depravity and moral degradation that

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[187] Translation of “Steppe” is from Anton Chekhov. *The Complete Short Novels.* Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, London: Everyman’s Library, 2004.

engulf almost his entire hometown.[188] It is a story about Misail, an educated young man, disowned by his architect father, and mocked and despised by the townsfolk because he rejects his “privileges of capital and education” in favor of supporting himself through manual labor. His view on animals and animal abuse reflects this moral change in him. Growing up, his friend and he used to trap birds and sell them at the market. He recalls how they would ambush a pack of starlings and shoot them with small pellets: the wounded ones would “die […] in awful torment ([he] could still remember their moaning at night in the cage [he] had),” while those who recovered Misail and his friend would sell (9:209/453).

His memory of this childhood experience parallels his descriptions of the town folk’s animal abuse, thus showing what he, too, could have become. Describing crowds of ragamuffins who terrified local people, he notes that in order to entertain them the local shopkeepers would give vodka to dogs and cats, tie a metal can to a dog’s tail and would whistle so that “the dog would race down the street, squealing in terror, the tin can clanking behind it, believing some monster was chasing at its heels” (9:206-207/450-451). The dog would run far out of the town, into the fields, and collapse there exhausted. And he added that in town there were a few dogs who “trembled constantly, tails between their legs, of whom it was said that they were unable to endure such amusements and lost their minds” (ibid.). Misail begins to think of all the suffering he witnessed since childhood in his hometown: “people, who were slowly pushed out of this world by their family and relations, […] tortured dogs driven insane, living sparrows pluck bare by little boys and thrown into the water, - and the long, long series of obscure, protracted

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[188] Translation of “Steppe” is from Anton Chekhov. *The Complete Short Novels.* Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, London: Everyman’s Library, 2004.

sufferings" (9:269/524).[189] There appears to be no solution for this life of degradation, as Misail wonders how all these people could live like that while reading the Gospel, books and magazines.

In "Petcheneg" the focus is again on the interconnectedness of human and animal abuse as a result of the savage life of the poor and uneducated. Arriving late at a station, a young lawyer accepts the retired Cossack Zhmukhin's, nicknamed "Petcheneg," invitation to stay for the night at his house. But having witnessed Zhmukhin's family life with Zhmukhin's oppressed wife and two uneducated, savage sons, the lawyer hastily leaves at dawn. The problem of animal cruelty frames the young lawyer's brief stay. As Zhumkhin and the lawyer arrive at Zhumkhin's, the first scene they see includes Zhmukhin's two sons, one about nineteen years old, the other an adolescent: the younger son tosses a hen up, who begins to cackle flying in a curve, then the older son shoots her and the dead hen hits the ground. Zhmukhin explains that they are learning to shoot at a moving target. The story closes with the guest hastily leaving, while the sons are again outside: one tosses a grey rooster with a bright red crest into the air. As the rooster flies and turns over like a pigeon, the other son shoots it and the rooster falls like a rock. The narrator's attention to the birds' reactions – the hen's cackling, the rooster's attempt to fly and their helplessness in the air – as well as to the rooster's coloring individualizes the birds emphasizing the senseless killing.

Between the similar opening and closing scenes, the lawyer's vegetarianism (because "killing animals is against his convictions") starts a conversation and "inspires" Zhmukhin's philosophizing that eventually becomes unbearable to the guest. Zhmukhin

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[189] His inclusion of tortured dogs and sparrows along with innumerable suffering humans shows his moral growth and affirms the animals' moral value, somewhat echoing Father Zosima's inclusion of animals between adults and children in his injunction to love all of God's creation in *The Brothers Karamazov.*

seems to like this idea of all people and animals living in peace, but he cannot understand what he will do with pigs then, because they will multiply quickly and ruin the garden (9:328). As their conversation continues, the narrator complicates both characters. Kataev points out that despite his ignorance, Zhmukhin is searching for a significant idea to "guide his life" so that "it is not as frightening to die" – however faint the impulse, Chekhov notices it (*Proza Chekhova* 160-161).

The vegetarian guest's moral uprightness, however, becomes increasingly questionable. As soon as Zhmukhin steps out for a moment, his wife, a thin and oppressed woman, approaches the educated guest. She asks him for a piece of advice on how to put her sons in school. The mother wants her sons to become educated, at least the youngest one, because being uneducated is "worse than being] peasants" and without an education their only future is military service as Cossacks (9:329). She shares that her husband distances himself from them and does not let them into "the rooms." But soon Zhmukhin comes back and tells her not to bother the guest with her "savage prattle." Sh. Lipke sees in the vegetarian guest Chekhov's polemic with Tolstoi. As Chekhov writes to Suvorin in March 1894, "there is more love for humans in electricity and steam, than in chastity and abstinence from meat" (5:278, 319). Lipke observes that despite the lawyer's lofty convictions, he treats Zhmukhin's wife just like Zhmukhin, who does not consider a woman to be human (22-24). As Lipke points out, the guest defends animals five times, but does not respond to the oppressed woman's desperate plea (ibid.).

I would like to add to Lipke's insightful reading that the lawyer fails to protect not only the humans – the wife and the sons – but animals as well. Zhmukhin, who in his ignorance cannot understand what to do with pigs if humans stopped eating animals, and

his sons, who toss and shoot hens, are glaring examples of how ignorance can lead to animal abuse. Had the vegetarian guest, indeed, genuinely cared about animals, he would have tried to help educate the sons who abuse them. Zhumkhin's suspicion that the guest abstains from meat and behaves politely and meekly in order to feel good about himself appears to be confirmed by the authorial irony, which is difficult to miss in the repeated emphasis on the lawyer's "quiet, modest nature," and his "meekness and delicate" feelings (Lipke 24).

Compared to the ignorant Zhmukhin and his sons, the lawyer who had the opportunity to do something for both humans and animals, but chooses not to, turns out to be morally worse. His hypocrisy leads to the same question Chekhov raises in "At the Wolf Baiting" and in "My Life": what use are books, magazines, education, and progress if people fail to respond to and can even enjoy non-human animal suffering? To refer again to Rayfield's observation that "individuals of natural goodness lighten Chekhov's study of the peasantry," in Chekhov's study of human and animal abuse in "Petcheneg" there is no "individual of natural goodness" to lighten the gloom and save the wife, the sons and their hens and roosters.

Beginning in the late 1880s, Chekhov explicitly situates the theme of animal cruelty in his broader condemnation of societal ills, pervasive ignorance and moral degradation that lead to the destruction of nature, including animals. Already in the story "Panpipes" (*Svirel'*) (1887) about the encounter of a hunter and an old shepherd playing the panpipe, the shepherd, whose name Luka evokes Luke the Evangelist, laments the destruction of trees and disappearance of animals. Luka expresses an understanding of the

universal harmony that evokes Tolstoi's idea (articulated in *On Life*) that each category of beings has their own God-given law: "The sun, the sky, the woods, the rivers, living creatures – they've all been created and fashioned so they fit in with each other. Everything has its allotted task and knows its place" (6:323/105).[190] As he grieves the decline of animals, the felling of the forests, the drying up of the rivers and overall degradation of people, he notes that even when a single tree withers away, or just one cow dies it is already pitiful, but now all is doomed (ibid.).[191] His comment that "God's given folk brains, but he's taken their strength away. Folk have become feeble, mighty feeble" suggests a correlation between human degradation and the destruction of nature (6:325/106).

Luka's lamentation summarizes Chekhov's view of the interconnectedness of all living beings, and lost harmony between humans and nature. All creatures live in harmony according to God's will except for humans. The stories examined here, and the presence of similar lamentations in his plays *The Wood Demon (Leshii)* (1889), *The Seagull (Chaika)* (1895) and *Uncle Vanya (Diadia Vania)* (1898) support Valentine T. Bill's observation that Chekhov "adhered to this view to the end of his life" (153). The protagonist of *The Wood Demon* – doctor Khrushchev – appears to be "the first [hero] in Russian literature whose purpose in life is to preserve nature." (Chudakov and Graffy 373). Rayfield calls *The Wood Demon* "the first ecological drama in literature," highlighting its message of the interconnectedness of nature and of human.

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[190] Translation for "Panpipes" is from Anton Chekhov. *The Steppe and Other Stories*. Translated by Ronald Wilks, London: Penguin Books, 2001.

[191] Rayfield refers to all the animals whose disappearance Luka mourns as a "lyrical catalogue: of the birds – geese, cranes, ducks, grouse, snipe, eagles, screech owls; the mammals – elk, wolves, foxes, bears, mink; and fish – pike, burbot, perch – which have vanished from the impoverished countryside" (*Understanding Chekhov* 52). As Rayfield notes, this list recurs in Chekhov's letters as well (ibid.).

While Chekhov does not propose any specific vision of harmony between humans and nature like Dostoevskii and Tolstoi, his characters still dream of some distant future, when "two hundred-three hundred, or a thousand years from now a new happy life will come." And, like Dostoevskii and Tolstoi, Chekhov suggests that an individual's personal responsibility and active involvement are essential in bringing about this happy distant future. Khrushchev and Astrov in *Uncle Vanya* decry the continuous destruction of billions of trees that leads to the dramatic decline of some animals and birds, and the complete extinction of others. Echoing Luka the shepherd, Khrushchev admits: "Man has been given intelligence and creative power in order to increase what has been given him, but until now he has not created, but only destroyed" (12:140).[192] And dreaming of the future harmony of humans and nature, Khrushchev says:

> when I pass the peasants' forests that I saved from felling, or when I hear the rustling of my young forest that I planted with my own hands, I am aware that […] if in a thousand years humans become happy, at least in some small measure I will be culpable of that, too. When I plant a birch tree and then see it blooming and swaying in the wind, my soul is filled with pride at the thought that I am helping God to create a living organism (12: 141).

Conclusion

As this exploration of Chekhov's selected stories shows, when writing about animals Chekhov lets go of anthropocentrism and almost physically aligns his narrators and readers with the level of the animal's field of vision. With his technique of presenting what "seemed/appeared" without the finalizing "turned out" in "The Wolf" and "The Whitebrow," Chekhov reveals the animal's emotional states, carefully treading the uncertain terrain of anthropomorphism. His modified open-ended "seemed/appeared"

[192] Translation of Khrushchev's quotations mine.

device and non-judgmental, non-anthropocentric interest in the non-human being represent what Thomas Birch termed “universal consideration”: “giving others of all sorts a chance to reveal their value, and of giving ourselves a chance to see it, rather than approaching them in hostility as if they have nothing but negative value until they have proved otherwise” (328). While being ethically attentive to the rich possibilities of animals’ lives, Chekhov holds under scrutiny many of the modern assumptions about what it means to be human.

In these stories Chekhov questions the modern notion of human superiority over non-human life. At the same time as he acknowledges wild predators’ need to sustain their lives, Chekhov dismantles the supposed reason and “humanity” of humans who find great pleasure in officially sanctioned acts of animal cruelty (Rayfield xii). His examination of the human-animal distinction is especially powerful because his animal representations retain their species specificity. While the concerns of the Realist period with depicting the details of life could help explain Chekhov’s interest in such realistic details as animals’ species specific characteristics, the fact that he turned his “realist” gaze so frequently and probingly on animals and made so many of them protagonists or significant characters in his stories strongly suggests that the question of animals and human-animal dynamics interested him for their own sake. After all, “The Wolf” is named after the wolf and not Nilov or rabies (as he originally intended), the dogs are the eponymous heroes of “Kashtanka” and “Whitebrow,” and “the dependents” in the eponymous story are the dog and the horse.

As Chekhov explores human-animal relations, he avoids moralizing and lets the reader draw his or her own conclusions. In a letter to Suvorin (May 30, 1888) Chekhov

explained that the readers are the jury, and his job is "to be talented, that is to know how to distinguish important testimony from unimportant, to place my characters in a proper light and to speak their language" (2:280).[193] While he cannot literally speak the animals' language, he approaches them as closely as his talent and keen observation allow. Chekhov shows the reader the gruesome spectacle in "At the Wolf Baiting," allows the reader look straight in the eyes of a frightened struggling wolf and winks to the reader about Ignat. He gives his readers the opportunity to see that animals are sentient beings who feel and suffer much like humans and leaves it to the reader to determine the "message" of the stories.

Such portrayal of animals and human-animal relations reflects Chekhov's life-long love of nature in general and animals in particular. These stories also reflect Chekhov's changing attitude towards hunting, which he initially enjoyed in his youth. In "At the Wolf Baiting" although the narrator denounces not only such events, but also hunting, he seems to make a concession for the latter when he states that baiting is worse than hunting in a forest or in a steppe, where "human bloodthirstiness can be slightly excused" because a wolf will have an opportunity for "an equal fight," to defend himself, to run away. This weak concession may reflect the fact that at the time Chekhov himself hunted. Yet, the narrator's language – "human bloodthirstiness" and "slightly excused" – confirms his incipient condemnation of hunting, too. Then, "The Wolf" shows an example of an "equal fight" between a wolf and a human, while in "Whitebrow" he openly mocks a human with a rifle while telling the aging mother-wolf's story.

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[193] This translation is from Simon Karlinsky. *Anton Chekhov's Life and Thought. Selected Letters and Commentary*, 104.

One of the real life events that contributed to his rejection of hunting was an experience he had with Levitan in 1892, when Levitan wounded a woodcock and asked Chekhov to smash his head against the gunstock. In a letter to Suvorin (April 8, 1892), Chekhov wrote: "[when the wounded woodcock fell] I picked him up: a long nose, big black eyes and beautiful clothing. He is looking at me surprised. What to do with him?..." (*dlinnyi nos, bol'shie chernye glaza, i prekrasnaia odezhda. Smotrit s udivleniem. Chto s nim delat'*?). As Levitan is begging that Chekhov finish him, the woodcock continues looking at Chekhov surprised. After Chekhov finally killed him, he concluded that now there was one fewer "beautiful creature in-love," and two fools returned home and sat down to supper (*odnim krasivym, vliublennym sozdaniem stalo men'she, a dva duraka vernulis' domoi i seli uzhinat'*) (5:49). The defamiliarizing, almost Tolstoian description of the woodcock in beautiful clothing, with the look of surprise in his big black eyes is deeply unsettling. Later that year in another letter to Suvorin from December 17, 1892, he expressed his open distaste for hunting when he wrote: "If you see Leskov, tell him that in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, Act 2, Scene 1, there are a few good words about hunting. Shakespeare was a hunter himself, but in this scene one can see what a poor opinion he had of hunting and of killing of animals as such (5:144).[194] And in a letter to A. M. Gorky from May 9, 1899 in response to Gorky's offer to buy him a hunting rifle as

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[194] (translation mine).
... To the which place a poor sequester'd stag ,
That from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt ,
Did come to languish , and indeed, my lord,
The wretched animal heaved forth such groans
That their discharge did stretch his leathern coat
Almost to bursting, and the big round tears
Coursed one another down his innocent nose
In piteous chase ..." (W.G. Clark and W. Aldis Wright, ed. *The Best Known Works of William Shakespeare.* [The Book League of America]).

a gift, Chekhov politely replied that he used to love hunting, but now was indifferent to it (8:170).

As this analysis demonstrates, animals emerge as subjectively meaningful in Chekhov's stories. Rayfield points out Chekhov's concern for the environment, stating that he "subjugates all the old-fashioned, anthropocentric ethical systems of the past" to the idea of preserving the environment (vegetation and animals) (xii). While acknowledging Chekhov's tendency to avoid categorical affirmations, A. P. Chudakov notes that he "clearly sympathizes with those remarks by his heroes in which the appraisal of man's attitude to nature is placed on the same level as the value of spiritual phenomena" (*The Poetics of Chekhov* 374). Chudakov goes on to state that Chekhov "was the first literary figure to include in the ethical sphere man's attitude to nature." (ibid. 375). As early as in "At the Wolf Baiting" Chekhov suggests that an individual's treatment of animals is the yardstick by which to measure his or her moral substance. His famous phrase that "a good person can feel ashamed even before a dog" echoes that (17:152). A closer examination of Chekhov's numerous literary animals expands our understanding not only of his works, but also of his circle of moral "consideration" that affirms the continuity and shared experience between human and non-human folk.

Conclusion

Throughout their lives, Turgenev, Dostoevskii, Tolstoi and Chekhov frequently responded to each other's works, sometimes agreeing with each other, other times – polemicizing. For example, Dostoevskii's relationship with Turgenev was turbulent, as evidenced by his Karamazinov caricature of Turgenev in *The Devils*. Their ideological differences were the main reason for the antagonism between them: Dostoevskii's progressively nationalist views conflicted with Turgenev's Westernizer leanings.[195] While Turgenev and Tolstoi often admired each other, they, too, experienced a wide breach that was not mended for ten years. While Tolstoi's forceful moral stance sometimes irritated Turgenev, Tolstoi's comment that Turgenev's daughter's supposedly charitable gesture of mending clothes for the poor was insincere and hypocritical led to the quarrel and almost a duel. Chekhov and Tolstoi admired each other, although by the mid-1890s Chekhov expressed his disagreement with Tolstoi's moralizing.[196] If Turgenev and Chekhov considered themselves agnostics while continually returning to Christian themes and imagery, Dostoevskii and Tolstoi centered on faith even if the former stood by Orthodoxy and the latter believed in his own unique version of God and Christ.

But despite their differences in style, socio-political and religious views, all four giants of Russian literature seem to strive for a vision of universal harmony between the human and non-human worlds, including humans and animals as equals in their circle of moral consideration. Despite some individual differences in depicting nature and especially animals, such as, for example, Turgenev's restraint in psychological analysis compared to Tolstoi's attempts to portray the human and non-human other's

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[195] For more detail on their disagreement see K. A. Lantz, *The Dostoevsky Encyclopedia*.

[196] In 1894 in the letter, partially quoted earlier, Chekhov wrote: "Tolstoi's philosophy moved me deeply and possessed me for six or seven years. […] But now something in me protests. Prudence and justice tell me there is more love for mankind in electricity and steam than in chastity and vegetarianism." But Chekhov continued to respect Tolstoi, whom he visited in August 1895.

consciousness, the four authors share the same key concerns: respect for animals' subjectivity, denunciation of animal abuse, compassion for suffering animals, and acute awareness of the interconnectedness of human and animal fates.

In his influential article "What it is like to be a bat?" Thomas Nagel critiques reductionist theories of the mind and argues that consciousness has a subjective aspect that "is not analyzable in terms of any explanatory system of function states, or intentional states," (436). Acknowledging that conscious experience can occur in countless forms other than human and non-human mammals, Nagel maintains that regardless of the form, "the fact that an organism has conscious experience at all, means, basically, that there is something it is like to be that organism" (ibid.). And this elusive "something" is always "beyond our ability to conceive" (439). Exposing the limitations of human concepts and human language to describe the animal other's phenomenology, Nagel states that the "limits of our nature" "should not lead us to dismiss as meaningless the claim that bats have experiences comparable in richness of detail to our own" (440).

Depicting animals, Turgenev, Dostoevskii, Tolstoi, and Chekhov point to this "something it is like to be" the animal other. Similarly to Nagel, they also recognize humans' limitations in gaining insight into the animal other's subjective experience. Referring to Nagel's essay, Gary Saul Morson observes that: "for both Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, the important thing is to recognize that [consciousness] is a mystery" ("Paradoxes of the Double" 236). Morson's insight is valid for Turgenev and Chekhov as well. The risk of "distort[ing] the reality of subjectivity" was one reason for Turgenev's avoidance of open psychologizing (Orwin *Consequence of Consciousness* 43). And in the story "Who is to Blame?" Chekhov humorously states: "Another person's soul is

darkness, but a cat's – even more so." But while they acknowledge that the fullness of the animal other's point of view is ultimately inaccessible to humans, they recognize and focus on what humans and animals share. "Reasonable anthropomorphism" and such words as "seem," "appear," and "as if/as though" often help them to draw parallels between human and animal experiences, and at the same time leave open what that "something it is like to be" the animal other ultimately may be. Moreover, while Nagel's essay focuses on the bat-specific way of experiencing reality that is more or less the same for all bats, the four Russian authors are interested not only in the animal's species specificity, but also in the animal's specificity as an individual.
Their portrayals of animals go beyond the possible scientific understanding of animal behavior and instincts, and try to imagine a non-human being's inner life.

In their respect for animals' alterity, the four Russian authors also acknowledge differences between humans and animals. Writing about this difference, Cora Diamond observes that it "may […] start out as a biological difference, but it becomes something for human thought through being taken up and made something of – by generations of human beings, in their practices, their art, their literature, their religion" (351). Using Diamond's terms, these authors do not "take up" this difference and "make something of it." Turgenev and Chekhov observe how similar to humans "the lower animals" are, while Zosima's theology and Tolstoi's vision of universal brotherhood both embrace non-human beings within God's family.

All four authors assert their animal characters' individuality and consciousness. Donna Orwin observes that the greatest representatives of the Russian realist school "did not treat subjectivity as […] a delusion. They considered it 'real': the reality of

subjectivity is a cardinal principle of all great works of Russian psychological realism. As for Russian historian and critic D.S. Mirsky, he states that "the main principle of Russian realists is an equal, human treatment of all human beings regardless of class differences" (170). To extend Orwin's and Mirsky's observations to the four authors' engagement with animals, Turgenev, Dostoevskii, Tolstoi and Chekhov depict animals as subjects; and regardless of species differences, they are, for Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, equal to humans in God's family, and for Turgenev and Chekhov, Nature's offspring.

As they portray animals who feel, reason, and share vulnerability and finitude with humans, the four authors reveal the ethical face in the animal other. And even if some characters fail to recognize the animal's gaze—be it the glassy eyes of the wolf hounded by Rostov, or the terrified and pain-filled eyes of the wolf wrestling with Nilov—the reader experiences a kind of encounter with the literary animal. Morson writes that if "philosophers can teach us that we ought to empathize with others, […] great literature [involves the actual practice of empathy]" (*Prosaics* 208). Emphasizing the reader's identification with characters when reading literature, Morson observes that one "experiences from within what it is like to be a member of the opposite sex, belong to another social class, […] live in a different society, or take other assumptions or values for granted. One experiences feelings and perspectives that one either knew about only by hearsay, or never even suspected" (ibid.). This range of unfamiliar experiences can include "what it is like to be a bat," or a bludgeoned old horse, or a hounded wolf, or a hunting dog sniffing out game birds. And while one will never fully know a bat's perspective, just like one will never fully know what it is like to be another human, becoming aware of the many things humans and animals do share and identifying with

them through reading "great literature" can lead to the long-needed "shift in the ethics of reading and interpretation" that Wolfe calls for (568).

Costlow has argued that "professions of a deep, soulful affection for 'native nature'" constitute one of the central aspects of Russians' discourses on national identity. Certainly, many comments in the writings of Turgenev and Dostoevskii reflect such self-perception. In his "Review" of Aksakov's *Memoirs of a Hunter*, Turgenev praises Aksakov's accurate descriptions of wild birds and suggests that Russians are more observant and attentive to animals, noting that while "Germans consider a thoughtful, cautious goose stupid, the Russian noticed that the goose pays attention even to thunder, tilting its head and looking up at the sky." As for Dostoevskii, he was an adherent of the movement *'pochvennichestvo'* (from *pochva* – soil) that saw the educated class's return to their "native soil" as a way to reconcile the common people and the gentry. And while Dostoevskii decries the ignorance and oppression of the Russian common people that lead to both human and animal abuse, one of his characters, Ilyusha's father, asserts: "it is well known that a Russian boy is born with a little horse." Relating his conversations with a group of butchers in "The First Step," Tolstoi writes: "The majority of Russians cannot kill, they feel pity and express it by the words 'to be afraid' [to kill]." Tolstoi's beloved elder brother Nikolai –who created the game "ant brothers" and was very influential for him – claimed that Russians had a special appreciation for animals.[197] In his *Hunting in the Caucuses*, Nikolai Tolstoi compares the treatment of dogs by different ethnic groups, noting Tatars' disregard for dogs and nomadic peoples' closer bond based on needing hounds for hunting and guarding. By contrast:

[197] Although Nikolai Tolstoi's works are not analyzed in this dissertation, I believe his example is relevant not only because it is illustrates Costlow's point about Russians' self-perception as having a special relationship with nature, but also because he was very influential for Lev Tolstoi.

> A Russian soldier's passion for animals – is one of his wonderful character traits. Not to mention how our soldiers take care of their horses, cattle and pigs – and in every military division, even in the smallest one there is always either a cat or a dog, or some other animal that belongs to each and everyone. It is interesting to observe how each cares about this everyone's darling, how each feeds him, caresses him and participates in his training. No naturalist seems to have been as successful in domesticating wild animals as our soldiers: pheasants, partridges, deer, bears, wolves, jackals. And when they die, one should see their master's grief! Soldiers are never as saddened by the death of one of his comrades, as by the death of some four-legged Vas'ka or Mashka!

While these quotations provide examples of how these authors thought of the Russian people as having a distinct understanding of and relationship with animals, scholars such as Tom Newlin and Richard Gustafson suggest "Russianness" in the authors' shared vision of the universal harmonious union of all creation, especially human and non-human beings. Gustafson observes that "Russian epistemology assumes a center of knowing, what philosophy calls a subject, which is an active principle inherently connected to or capable of direct connection with others" (460). Quoting Gustafson, Newlin concludes that this "Russian tradition of total metaphysical unity" was predicated on a way of experiencing the world – what Gustafson calls "affective awareness" or "attending consciousness," and Tolstoi calls "love" […] – whereby one could actually overcome "the empiricist opposition of subject and object" by "transferring oneself by thought into another person, animal, plant, even a stone" (76). While acknowledging the influence of Romanticism in the attention to the relatedness in nature, Newlin draws on Gustafson's analysis that situates Tolstoi's longing for the unity with All within the context of Eastern Christianity. He notes that "despite its obvious surface roots in Romanticism, this yearning [for an all-embracing unity in and with nature] also had considerably deeper (and less apparent) roots in Russian religious thought" ("At the Bottom of the River" 76).

In tracing the links between Tolstoi's longing for the universal brotherhood of all and Eastern Christianity, Gustafson points to Dostoevskii's character, the father Zosima and his Chirst-like active love for all of God's creation. Connecting Tolstoi's and Dostoevskii's visions, he writes that "the theological vision of life in *The Brothers Karamazov* thus resembles the idea of the salvation of life in *War and Peace*, [and] Zosima's active love and theological vision of great hope and promise stands in total agreement with Tolstoi's theology of redemptive love" (463). And both Zosima's vision of God's family of all creation and Tolstoi's ideal of universal brotherhood embrace animals. The views of self-professed agnostics, Turgenev and Chekhov, do not align so obviously with Eastern Christian thought, but their longing for a harmonious union of humans and nature, and their lifelong interest in humans' and animals' shared experiences echo Dostoevskii's and Tolstoi's "vision of great hope" and love of All. Seeking to define a "uniquely Russian" approach to animals, Costlow, too, points to "the dominant presence of animals" in what she refers to as "utopian impulses that permeate Russian culture across centuries and diverse modes of artistic expression and social organization" (7). Leonid Heller also argues that a "utopia of inclusive rationality, the pansophism of the living world, the communal solidarity of humans and animals" is often found in Russian philosophy and science (as paraphrased by Costlow, ibid.).

The ideal of universal harmony of all living beings is also connected to the Russian peasants' pre-Christian traditional way of life as a commune, or *obshchina,* "organized around the principles of organic unity, congregation, tradition based on collective decisions and voluntary submission to the whole" (Hudspith 9). As Konstantin Aksakov pointed out, it was precisely because Russian people "from time immemorial

had integrated the lofty idea of the commune, [that they] accepted Christianity in its soul and were totally permeated by it."

This all-encompassing organic unity of all beings came to be expressed in the concept of *sobornost'* – "the idea of congregation not only in the sense of the visible gathering of many in a given place, but also in the broader sense of the eternal possibility of such a congregation, in other words it expresses the idea of unity in plurality" that gained popularity in the 1860s.[198] While Khomiakov is often credited with introducing the term *sobornost'* into theological, philosophical and Slavophile discourses in the nineteenth century, he simply articulated the ideal of free unity and mutual love that was already present in Russian life.

The mutual love and spirituality, so important in *sobornost*', are the crucial underlying principles for the vision of universal harmony and human-animal relationships for Turgenev, Dostoevskii, Tolstoi and Chekhov (8). When Khomiakov describes the Church as "Divine reality – God Himself in the revelation of mutual love," he implies the reciprocal love for others as innate and revelatory, rather than something that is arrived at through reason. Newlin observes that the state of "affective awareness" is "not intellectual in nature: at [its] deepest [it] involved a suspension or letting go of the intellect, for in the Russian view of things it is first and foremost the privileged striving of the rational mind that separates man, both as species and as individuals, from the rest of creation […]" (76). Khomiakov's understanding of mutual love and Newlin's observation

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[198] This is from Khomiakov's reaction to an article by the Jesuit Prince Gagarin who found the word*'sobornost'* to be an inadequate translation of "catholic." As this quotation shows, Khomiakov explained that the original Greek *katholikos* implied "universal" not in the physical, geographical sense, but in the spiritual sense. For more on Khomiakov and *sobornost'* see Khoruzhyi, S. "Khomiakov i printsip sobornosti" in *Posle pereryva. Puti russkoi philosophii*, 1994; Esaulov, I.A. *Kategoria sobornosti v russkoi literature,* 1995.

about "suspending the intellect" echo Levin's epiphany at the end of *Anna Karenina* about reason's inability to discover love for others because this love is innate. Turgenev, Dostoevskii, Tolstoi and Chekhov "let go of the intellect" and any other presumably uniquely human qualities as they affirm the kinship between humans and animals, and animals' moral worth.

Among the many examples of human-animal relationships examined in this dissertation, perhaps, Mumu, Gorianchikov's prison dog Sharik, Karataev's bow-legged Grey and Chekhov's "dependents" demonstrate the best these authors' "letting go of the intellect" because they stand in stark contrast to Levinas' prison dog Bobby. As much as Bobby helped Levinas and his fellow prisoners retain their humanity, Levinas denied Bobby moral considerability because Bobby does not have "the brains that can universalize maxims." Neither does Derrida address the possibility of the animal's ethical impulse. Yet, Turgenev describes Mumu's devotion to Gerasim, Tolstoi portrays Grey's attachment to and mourning for Karataev, Chekhov outlines the starving horse and the dog's loyalty to their poor owner who cannot even feed them, while Gorianchikov calls Sharik "his best friend" because Sharik helped him maintain his humanity in a hellish prison life. For these authors, neither rational mind, nor language, nor any other supposedly uniquely human attribute matters in recognizing animals as capable of an ethical response to the other.

None of the four authors had any illusions about the complexity of human nature and complicated human-animal fates. All four authors were acutely aware of the ruptured relationship between humans and nature in general, and animals in particular. All four held humans responsible for the destruction of nature and animal suffering. And feeling a

profound kinship with the non-human beings, all four authors longed for a restored harmony between human and non-human worlds. Even Turgenev, despite his feeling that the alienation between humans and Nature is insurmountable, shows the affinity with and continuity of humans and animals, and creates Kasyan and Lukeria who suggest ways to create a more harmonious co-existence. Dostoevskii and Tolstoi envision God's family of all creation and a universal brotherhood to which the union of animals and humans is central, and hold humans responsible for making such universal harmony possible. And similarly to Dostoevskii and Tolstoi, Chekhov emphasizes humans' responsibility for the restoration of the harmony between humans and the natural world. And although this perfect harmony is not attained, its force as an ideal remains as it affirms human-animal kinship and the dignity of non-human others.

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